

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

JANUARY 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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## NEW YEAR ADDRESS

The end of the old year must always be a time of gratitude for the people of God. Brought safely through another year, it is our mercy if we can sing with John Newton:

“Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.”

It is a good foundation: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” What He has been, He ever will be.

How uncertain, at times, the unknown way seems to be, but the prospect for God’s people is sure:

“Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the vail,  
A life of joy and peace.”

Things are bad in the world, the outlook dark, as we enter another year. We look back at the tragedies of the war in Iraq, and the constant casualties as there is an attempt to establish peace. Terrorism still continues to raise its ugly head, and recently the whole world has been shocked once more, this time by the horrific attack in Istanbul.

The resting place, the only resting place, for the people of God in such tumultuous times is the knowledge that the throne of God stands unshaken. “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” “The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.” And what of all those who oppose His divine sovereignty and righteous rule? He will always have the last word. “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” As Mr. Gosden used to remark, what a difference there is between the Lord’s sweet smile and His terrible laugh (Psa. 2. 4)!

In our own country immorality, violence, lawlessness prevail; in recent years there seems a loosening of all restraint. Our royal family continues to set a bad example, and some of its recent escapades would

be farcical, if not so solemn. And while the royal family loses respect and esteem, we find Prince Charles cavorting with Islam, and desiring to be a “defender of *faiths*.” Clearly does God’s Word condemn all approaches to a multi-faith religion. The words of the Lord Jesus will stand till the end of time: “I am the way .... no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”

The evil influence of television does not help. 2003 has been a year of anniversaries; but one that has been claimed is the 50th anniversary of television. In what sense, we do not exactly know – unless it be that 1953 was the year when its influence became prevalent in British homes. The claim is now made that 65% of children in this country have a television set in their bedrooms.

Yet during the year (April 7th) the *Daily Telegraph* published a long and interesting article. A family made the experiment of doing without television completely for five weeks. The results were amazing. Never had the children done better at school and, despite initial protests, never had the family been so happy. “Friends are incredulous,” the author wrote, “when I tell them that the children don’t seem to miss television.” One of the teachers commented on one of the children: “To say his reading and concentration have improved times one-hundred would not be oversteating the truth.” All this in a worldly family, and written by a radio script writer.

Another newspaper article (again secular) was entitled “The Death of Wisdom.” The summary was: “Never have we had so much expertise in our daily lives. But do we really know how to stay happily married, raise our children well or face death?” The answer given was No. We have so much learning, technology, scientific advance – but “we have a divorce rate approaching 50%, our courts are crammed with criminal and maladjusted youngsters, and our obsession with health fads indicates our growing belief that death can be infinitely postponed.” “When it comes to the basic wisdom that should be the very basis of our society, we have become intellectual paupers compared to our ancestors.” But all this is just as Scripture promised: “Lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?” (Jer. 8. 9).

So increasingly we have foolish, God-dishonouring laws, and good laws are abolished.

But what can we say of professed religion? “The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit” (Jer. 2. 8).

Perhaps the most scandalous thing of all that has happened in our lifetime has been the consecration of an actively homosexual man in the

Episcopal church (the American form of the Church of England) on November 2nd. Some things in holy Scripture may appear debatable, but nothing can be clearer than the condemnation of sodomy (as the Word of God describes it) as an abomination in the Lord's sight. Can this be the Church of Toplady and Newton? Those who have objected are accused of lack of Christian love. Does the love of Christ lead to immorality? Many, who should know better, have agreed. Many have been silent. Those who have opposed have often done so on false ground – simply that this will cause schism in the Church. Disgracefully, the police have even questioned the Bishop of Chester because he suggested that homosexuals could be converted to heterosexuality. It was left to the Archbishop of Abuja (Nigeria) to be the most forthright in his condemnation of the appointment in America.

“We totally reject and renounce this obnoxious attitude and behaviour .... It is devilish and satanic. It comes directly from the pit of hell. It is an idea sponsored by Satan himself and being executed by his followers and adherents who have infiltrated the Church .... A clear choice has been made for a Church that exists primarily in allegiance to the unbiblical departures and waywardness of our generation; a Church that enthrones the will of man over and above the authority of God and His revealed and written Word.”

It seems very sad that in the past we were sending missionaries to Africa, but now we have another African Archbishop stating: “A time has come when Africans should go to re-Christianise America and Europe .... Though they brought Christianity to us, some of the things some of them do these days have become un-Christian in outlook and should be corrected.”

But how we need to be kept from a self-righteous spirit! How we need to be delivered from the spirit of ancient Israel who were so happy to hear the transgressions of Gaza, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, Moab and even Judah denounced by the prophet Amos, but were offended when their *own* transgressions were denounced (Amos 1 and 2)! Or the spirit of Israel in Romans 2: “Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” We need to beware of our own faults, failures and sins, howbeit so different from those of the apostate church.

When we come to our own little group of churches, we have to make the same confession as the psalmist (Psa. 79. 8): “We are brought very low” – low in numbers, low in grace. “By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.” There can be no more suitable prayer for us than that with which the psalmist continues: “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy

name's sake" (verse 9).

Here a great and gracious God is addressed. Here are things sought for, things that are vitally needed. Here is an all-prevailing plea.

1. *A great and gracious God addressed.*

God is the "God of our salvation." No doubt the psalmist had in view the many occasions when the Lord had displayed His divine, almighty power in saving His people from their enemies and their fears. In a gospel sense we see it in the Lord Jesus, the God of salvation, who shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1. 21). We are reminded of another psalmist's cry to the God of salvation: "Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, *O God of my salvation.*"

2. *Three things sought for.*

i. "Help us." How suitable this prayer! It embraces everything. It can never be worn out. Day by day the Lord's people have to come with the Syrophenician woman's cry: "Lord, help me."

Faith at times views the eternal Father speaking in covenant of His eternal Son: "I have laid help upon One that is mighty." We believe that in the covenant of grace the Father saw all the help that all His people would ever need to the end of time, and He laid it on His dear Son. May we seek our help where the Father has already laid it from eternity.

ii. "Deliver us." God is an almighty Deliverer. The Word of God is a Book of deliverances. The experience of God's people is an experience of deliverances. The church of God needs it. Personally we need it.

"Then let our humble faith address  
His mercy and His power;  
We shall obtain delivering grace,  
*We shall obtain delivering grace,*  
In the distressing hour."

iii. "Purge us." The root of all our troubles is our sin. We need to be cleansed in the blood of Christ. Blessed be God for the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness!

But sin needs purging. A garment may be stained, and the stain can easily be cleansed; but some stains are deep, and need purging. So David: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Hyssop was the little plant used for sprinkling the blood; David felt his deep need of a personal application.

So we have that beautiful word: "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; *how much more* shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

There is another purging: "Purge out therefore the old leaven." All

that defiles, all that dishonours God, must be purged out – in our hearts, in our homes, in the church of God. This is not separate and distinct from the blood of Christ, but rather the sanctifying effect of it. “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

Varying the figure the Puritans insisted that sin or error must be dealt with like sparks from the fire upon the floor. Stamp them out. We need to be exceedingly careful in the church of God about error, especially error concerning the Person of the Son of God. How J.C. Philpot was vigilant to purge out the old leaven at the time of the eternal Sonship controversy, and the churches stood with him! Sadly today there is an indifference and lack of understanding concerning the vital doctrine of the Person of Christ – His Godhead and sacred humanity. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

3. *An all-prevailing plea* – “for the glory of Thy name”; “for Thy name’s sake.”

Especially is this plea urged for Israel’s deliverance from the heathen. Surely this is for the glory of His name? And can we not urge the same plea today, that true reviving in the church will be for the glory of God’s name? “Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?” (Psa. 85. 6).

But, in a gospel sense, “for Jesus’ sake.”

“I can no denial take,  
When I plead *for Jesus’ sake*.”

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

Sadly today we see little effect of the Word. O that the Word might “have free course, and be glorified,” the Holy Spirit sweeping aside all the rebellion and hardness of the carnal heart. We see few making an open profession of the Lord’s name. Few come to Zion’s solemn feasts. A spirit of darkness and bondage prevails. We long for “times of refreshing ... from the presence of the Lord.”

Our mercy is that “the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save.” Our churches may be like the man with the withered hand; but “this same Jesus” can still say, “Stretch forth thine hand.” We may be like the woman with the spirit of infirmity, bowed down and in no wise able to lift ourselves up. Jesus can still say, “Thou art loosed from thine infirmity.” We may even be like the young man, not only dead, but being carried out to his burial. He who is the Resurrection and the Life in compassion can still say, “Weep not”; “I say unto thee arise.”

Our minds have lingered around Elijah at the top of Mount Carmel. What a man Elijah was! But we have again and again come back to his first utterance: "The Lord God of Israel, *before whom I stand.*" We need Elijahs in the church of God today, "Amen men," as Luther called them; men whose eyes are singly up to the Lord, seeking His will alone and His honour and glory alone; willing to stand, without compromise, against all the priests of Baal, the hosts of hell.

So the Lord answered Elijah by fire, and vindicated His own cause. One man alone – against four hundred and fifty priests of Baal. But that one man was right, and God was with him. We are reminded of when Athanasius (296-373) was contending faithfully for the doctrine of the Person of Christ against the Arians. He was told he stood alone in the world. "Then," he said, "it must be the world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against the world." And what a glorious victory was gained for the cause of God and truth!

Mount Carmel was the place where sin was judged, the place where the priests of Baal were slain. Sin must be judged before prayer is answered, before the blessing comes.

But Israel's great need was rain from heaven. None can command it. "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain?" Like Israel, the church of God today has known a terrible drought. Our great need is for showers of blessing!

So Elijah prayed, and God answered his prayer. God has promised that, in times of reviving, "the excellency of Carmel" shall be given to the waiting church. Carmel is the place of answered prayer.

But notice how the prophet heard "a sound of abundance of rain" – not natural hearing, but the hearing of faith; there was not a cloud in the sky. He heard the sound in God's promise (1 Kings 18. 1); in his own spirit; in his liberty in seeking it. But hearing "a sound of abundance of rain" led him to prevailing prayer, wrestling prayer. Compare Daniel, when he had a wonderful promise, but this made him pray very earnestly for what God had said He would certainly do (Dan. 9. 2, 3); and Ezekiel: "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them" (Ezek. 36. 37).

Notice three things in Elijah's prayer.

1. "Elijah went up to the top of Carmel," the secret place, alone with God. He *went forth*, weeping, bearing precious seed, and enjoyed the Lord's *doubtless*, coming again rejoicing with his sheaves with him. He obeyed the Saviour's command: "Enter into thy closet, and ... shut thy door."

2. "He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." *He couldn't get low enough.* He who stood boldly before the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal is prostrated in humility before his

God. This is the secret of real prayer.

3. He persevered. After such prayer one might have expected the immediate opening of the heavens. But when Elijah's servant returns, the verdict is: "There is nothing." How often it is so with our prayers: "There is nothing"; but do we "go again seven times"? At last prayer was heard and answered. First of all, "a little cloud, like a man's hand." Then "it came to pass ... that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

May we, in our day, know such answers to prayer. We need the showers from heaven to soften, refresh, revive, satisfy and make fruitful.

It may be objected, "But that was Elijah!" Almost as anticipating that objection, the Lord tells us that even Elijah was "a man subject to like passions as we are" – the same sins, and difficulties, and problems. But "he prayed earnestly." The margin says, "He prayed in his prayer." How often we do not! M'Cheyne lamented, "O my prayerless prayers!" "He prayed earnestly, and the heaven gave rain" (Jas. 5. 17, 18).

So we venture into a new year. May it be "upheld by Thy supporting hand." The days are dark, the outlook bleak. (May we see the *uplook* bright.)

God's people have many fears; hence the Lord, who remembers them in their low estate, puts so many "fear nots" in His Word. May those who fear the unknown way know the three in Isaiah chapter 41:

1. "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" (verse 10).

2. "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (verse 13).

3. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel" (verses 14, 15, 16).

A worm – and a mountain! What greater contrast can there be? Yet worm Jacob threshes the mountains, makes them small, and sees them blow away as chaff. We have our mountains. They loom before us, some very great. The only way we can thresh them is by faith and prayer. But a worm – weak, helpless, worthless, rising no higher than the earth! The power is in worm Jacob's God. He has a blessed ability to remove the highest mountain in answer to His people's poor prayers.

We send our good wishes to our friends at home and abroad. We think of friends in our congregations in the U.S.A. and Australia. We also think of the suffering church of God, worldwide – for the most part unknown to us, but all known to God. We believe many are in poverty in Africa and many enduring severe persecution in the Middle East.

We also think of our young people and our children. May they, may we, be “under the shadow of the Almighty” – the shadow of a Father’s love, His sovereign protection, His all-wise providence, especially under the shadow of the Saviour’s blood.

“There is a safe and secret place  
Beneath the wings divine,  
Reserved for all the heirs of grace;  
O be that refuge mine!”

May “Jehovah-jireh” be the blessed portion of us each throughout the year 2004 – “the Lord will provide.”

Yours affectionately in the gospel,  
The Editor  
B.A. Ramsbottom

### **LONGING TO SEE GOD’S GLORY**

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond,  
on July 18th, 1951.*

**Text:** “He said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory” (Ex. 33. 18).

Moses was one of many instruments God raised up to fulfil His purposes among men, and particularly among His ancient people here, and his leadership was attended with unparalleled difficulties and with obstacles and mountains which appeared impassable, and difficulties which in the nature of them were well nigh overwhelming. But no difficulty is too hard for God, no mountain too high. Hence He endued Moses with grace and strength to bring His people forth out of Egypt into the wilderness, the wilderness of discipline and of many sharp trials and deliverances, to the borders of the promised land.

Here, and in the chapter before, we have a record of the base idolatry of the children of Israel when Moses was away from them, in the making of a golden calf and worshipping it, and thus in their impatience and rebellion provoking the wrath of God against them, whereby they were visited with judgments resulting in the death of many people. One of the most solemn things attending this was the indication that God would not



go up with them, that He would send an angel before them to drive out their enemies, but that He would not go up in the midst of them because they were a stiffnecked people, lest He should consume them in the way. That evidently solemnly affected the people more than anything else did, because when they heard these evil tidings, they mourned and no man did put on him his ornaments. God had said unto them, "Put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb." They had taken off their golden earrings before in their rebellion to indulge in their idolatrous practices, but now they took off their ornaments to mourn and repent in dust and ashes.

Who can visualise the issues of sin when people depart from God and serve other gods? Moses was enabled to plead with the Lord concerning them, wherein in some particulars he may stand as a type of the Lord Jesus in His intercession. He pleads not because of any redeeming features in the people but upon the ground of the Lord's own promises. Particularly he pleads for guidance: "If I have found grace in Thy sight, shew me now Thy way"; that is, direct me in the way that I have to go and make that way known to me, "that I may know Thee," that I may know Thee to be my covenant God in vouchsafing that guidance and in directing me in the way that I should go. "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence," and what a confirming promise the Lord gave him! He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This may be very confirming to some conditions of God's people, under particular burdens or some weighty exercise where they may feel to have special need of a word from the Lord thus to guide and direct them. Moreover, Moses says that the Lord's presence with the people was that confirming witness that they were a people separated from all other people upon the face of the earth. "Wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

Here are two points for some consideration. First, if the Lord departed from the people, that is, if His presence was not with them, no more solemn judgment could befall them. This brought a great mourning among the godly, who stripped themselves of their ornaments and humbled themselves before the Lord. There can be no clearer witness with respect to a people that they are the people of God than if the Lord be with them in confirming tokens of His grace and presence. What an amazing thing it is that the infinite God should condescend to presence Himself with a people, a community, an assembly, a congregation, a church! And is not this according to His promise concerning His people? For He has said, "In all places where I record My name I will come unto

thee, and I will bless thee.”

I believe it is Dr. Owen who said that the life of a church consists in the presence of the Lord in it. I feel I can believe that, for nothing can take its place, *nothing* can take its place. There is in it a power, an unction, an influence, a sacredness, a beauty, a majesty that can never be defined in words but is only known as it is felt in the gracious experience of it. And is it not a great thing when there is such an inward witness, even in a sanctuary, so as to cause one and another to feel that the Lord is in this place?

“He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Nothing would give such rest as that. We may be careful and troubled about many things, burdened, under weighty temptations, anxious; but when the Lord comes in a particular experience, His presence in the heart brings such rest with it. I should like to be able to describe it, but I know what it is. He brings His own rest and when He fills your heart nothing can disturb you. “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” “And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name.”

Then Moses, having obtained favour of the Lord in that degree, proceeds to ask for even greater things. “And he said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory.” There is something very striking about the way this is put before the Lord, “I beseech Thee,” in the form of an earnest entreaty, as though it is of more importance to him than all beside. Whatever I may possess, if I possess not Thee I am undone. It seems to express the yearning of the soul for God. “*I beseech* Thee, shew me Thy glory.” Have you ever come in here in your soul’s feelings? It is like a venture of faith, to ask another favour of the Lord, under a consciousness of His approbation. “I beseech Thee.” You may have been favoured with some tokens of His mercy and yet feel you lack something in your soul that you cannot describe, and yet for which you yearn. Thus getting some hold of the Lord in prayer, you entreat Him as though your very soul moves in earnest longing for that sweet blessing.

“I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory.” There is a glory that cannot be seen, as we read in this particular chapter: “There shall no man see Me, and live.” There is a glory that cannot be seen by any creature in this mortal state, as pertaining to God. Yet there is a glory that can be seen, not with a mortal eye (though there is a glory that can be seen even with a mortal eye); but there is a glory to be seen by faith that is altogether peculiar to those to whom the particular revelation is made. It must be said here, I believe that we see in this aspect more of the glory of His mercy than of His majesty for we could not bear very much of that. So it appears to have been here, it was a felt glory that Moses saw.

"I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." It is a remarkable manifestation of God's sovereignty that was made to Moses here, and which is referred to by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans where he says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.... It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." How free and yet how sovereign is that mercy, and we shall never see the glory of God in an acceptable way, in a gracious way, unless we see mercy mingled with that glory. If we were to see that glory without the mingling of mercy with it, we should be utterly consumed. God is a glorious Being, who dwelleth in the light, to whom no man can approach.

The Lord said to Moses, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen." The majesty of God could not be borne by a creature and yet, you see, He blessed Moses, even to see the glory of His back parts. He put him where he had a firm standing. So it must be with a child of God, to see this glory. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Rock of Ages, and this is the foundation of the church, and the only standing ground where they can firmly stand to witness the veiled glory of God. The cleft of the rock may indicate the wounded, bruised, dying Substitute, who by His substitution afforded a shelter, a cleft in the rock, a hiding place where the glory of God may be bearable.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me;  
Let me hide myself in Thee."

There is a glory to be seen in God that is effective according to the measure of it upon the subject who is favoured with it. "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory." For instance, is there not a glory in *the presence of the glorious Godhead*? I cannot bring it before you but I believe I have had a moment or two in my life when I have felt melted in my soul under a view of the blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, spoken of by John in his Epistle, where he says, "For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One." Have we ever seen this glory? Have you had a few moments in your spiritual life when the veil has, as it were, been a little lifted from your heart and you have seen the beauty and majesty of the blessed Trinity, three glorious, co-eternal Persons, possessing the fulness of Deity inherent in this one God and yet distinct in Their personality; each essential to the salvation of the church and her ultimate

glory in Him? Sometimes in prayer there is just a little opening of the wonder and majesty and glory of the Trinity. You may understand me; it has a wonderful liberating power in your heart when you get it. You can pray then. That is to say, your heart seems drawn to the mercy seat to plead for Christ's sake and to venture into the presence of the Father through the merit of His precious blood; by the Holy Spirit as Paul has it: "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." O but it is just a faint glimpse but wonderful to see and most confirming to believe.

Not only so, is there not a glory in *the perfections of the Godhead* in the attributes that essentially pertain to Him and which constitute Him so, so that we can plead what He is? I have no need to name them particularly but all those attributes pertain to His power, His omnipotence and His immutability, His justice, His grace and His mercy, all blend one with the other in a glorious harmony so that no attribute clashes with another in the Godhead. Is there not a glory here? Perhaps you say, "But all that is a long way away from me; I do not know anything about it." But you may know something about it and you will know something about it, because in the dealings of the Godhead with your soul at times there will be what I might term a solemn awe upon your heart and a little opening perhaps of His immutability, His faithfulness, His holiness, His justice, His mercy, His grace.

"I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory." There is a peculiar glory in *the Person of Emmanuel* that is at times just seen, though but slightly, by the eye of a believer. There is a glory there. His Person is essentially glorious in its complex constitution as very God and very Man. None can compare with Him. He is fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into His lips. Is there any difference between you and me and the world? In the prophecy of Isaiah we read that to some He is a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, and no beauty that we should desire Him. Is that what He is to you? Is there nothing more than that? Or is there in Him something which draws the affections of your soul towards Him at times in holy worship? As we read in the Song of Solomon, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Has He ever been made precious to you in this aspect as being so eminently suited to your case? "Shew *me* Thy glory." O does not this describe the longing of a living soul? You would not want to see the glory of Christ unless you were one of His. He is not a root out of a dry ground, is He? No, say you. O but perhaps you say, "I would love Him if I could, but I am such a poor, dry, withered stick." He can soon turn your wilderness into a standing water. The Holy Ghost alone can reveal Him. "He shall glorify Me: for He shall

receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." That religion will take you to heaven. I do not believe that you will ever really feel the Lord to be precious in your soul and eventually drop into the bottomless pit. No, not if that preciousness is real; it binds you to Him.

"I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory." O say you, "But I have never seen it." Well, if you feel you have never seen it, can you come in with the prayer of Moses, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory"? Is there a vacancy in your heart that only the Lord can fill? Do you really long for Him to come and form Himself in your heart, the hope of glory? "Shew me Thy glory." There is something to be seen and perhaps you say, but I do not see it; no, and yet is there not in your very soul the secret longing to see Jesus?

"Shew me Thy glory." Is there not a glory in *His incarnation*? There must be a glory in that because that glory was seen by His disciples. "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." We beheld His glory; and this is the point with the Lord's children, what was the glory that John saw? It was the glory of His divine Sonship, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

"Shew me Thy glory." Is there not a glory too in *His substitution*? The view of that and the knowledge of it filled the apostle to the exclusion of everything else. "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." How absorbing and confirming it is when it is given to you to see Him! You lose sight of everything else. And the glory of the cross is that glory that poor sinners long to see because that is the remedy for all their guilt. This is the Lord's provision, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Has the Spirit of God ever discovered the glory of Christ? Have you felt at times a ray of hope in your soul as you have got just a glimpse by faith of a once-crucified Man?

"Here it is I find my heaven,  
While upon the Lamb I gaze."

"Shew me Thy glory." Does not this also follow in relation to *His exalted divinity and majesty at the right hand of God*? "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." There is a glory that His people at times are favoured to see in a living Jesus, living representatively as the first fruits of the glorious harvest. Show me this glory. Perhaps sometimes some of you read in the Scriptures of the Lord Jesus and have to say, "Show me the glory there is in this. Lord, open my

poor blind eyes and let me see something. Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.”

When the Lord reveals Himself in these particulars some measure the glory of His grace and of His mercy to you; when He makes it known and gives you to feel it and brings into your heart a taste of forgiveness, what effect has that? One effect is *worship*. It will always produce worship. It will not make the things of God and eternity light but it will produce in your heart a sacred awe that words cannot describe yet which is very blessed to feel. It produces worship. You fall before Him and it is a sweet falling.

“The more Thy glories strike my eyes  
The humbler I shall lie.”

That is true, is it not? and that is *real humility* when it is really felt. “Jesus Christ,” said Goodwin, “is most glorified in secret.” How those tokens of grace will flow together in your heart and all to lift Him up in your affections.

“Sinners are high in His esteem,  
And sinners highly value Him.”

It will produce *repentance*. It was so with Job after all he passed through; nothing really brought him down but a view of God. His three friends could not do it; they did not understand him; neither did Elihu, although he had a very quieting effect upon his spirit. But it was the view he had of God that brought him down into deep repentance. “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” O this is where His glory is seen and this is where it will be above all the ignorance and confusion of face that can be felt. How glorious He is to the eye of faith at such a time! None can compare with Him.

“Shew me Thy glory.” Another effect is *conformity*. A sight of His glory in these particulars will conform you in some measure to His suffering image and produce a willingness to bear your cross for Christ’s sake. “Shew me Thy glory.” Another effect is *love*; when He reveals Himself love flows out toward Him because it is His love entering into your heart. “We love Him, because He first loved us.”

But there is a glory that can be seen by believers even with their mortal eyes, and that is the glory of His works both in grace and in providence. If we look up even to the visible heavens, we see the glory of God; that is if we have open eyes to see it. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork,” and there is something very real about this when the Lord blesses your soul and brings pardon and peace and sets your soul at liberty. You will see His

glory in the leaf of a tree; everything will speak it. It is as it were so many voices speaking the glory of God and if we may be favoured to feel that this God is really our God, is there not a glory in the sense of that relationship? "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."

Have we ever seen the glory of God in a faint measure, had a glimpse, a blink of His glory? It is the glory of His mercy and the glory of His sovereignty and the glory of His goodness. That was what He proclaimed to Moses and that is what He will proclaim in your heart. When He reveals this glory, He will bring His goodness to you, poor, unworthy sinners that you may feel to be, His goodness in His blessed gospel, and He will proclaim His name before you and give you to know who He is and what He is. He will give you to see the glory of His sovereignty and He will make it known in your soul that you are to speak of His sovereign mercy. I "will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."

I think it may be said that as to our knowledge of divine things here, even if we are graciously taught, it is more of the glory of His mercy that we see than the glory of His majesty. Yet you cannot see the glory of His mercy without seeing His majesty in it. O have there not been moments when His mercy and His majesty, His justice and His grace, have mingled in your feelings so as to enable you to say,

"Compared with Christ, in all beside  
No comeliness I see;  
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,  
Is to be one with Thee?"

Amen.

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### COMFORT IN SORROW

*A letter from John Newton to John Ryland, author of "Sovereign Ruler of the skies."*

My dear friend – I feel, but I do not fear, for you. The God whom thou servest, He can support and deliver you. He is all sufficient, and His promise is sure.

Plenty of advice is at hand, but I dare not offer you much in this way. You are in the heat of a trial; I am at present in quiet. It would be easy for me to press patience and resignation upon you, and to remind you that a pardoned sinner ought never to complain. You could speak the

same language to me, if I were in your case, and you were at ease.

Yet though we may and ought to compassionate one another under our various trials, and to speak with tenderness where the heart is wounded, there are truths which, if trouble hides them from our view, it is the office of a friend to recall them. You and I are ministers. As such, how often have we commended the gospel as “the one thing” that is needed, affording those who truly receive it a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care!

How often have we told our hearers, that our all-sufficient and faithful Lord can and will make good every want and loss! How often have we spoken of the light of His countenance as a full compensation for every suffering, and of the trials of the present life as not worthy to be compared with the exceeding abundant and eternal weight of glory to which they are leading! We must not therefore wonder if we are sometimes called to exemplify the power of what we have said, and to show our people that we have not set before them unfelt truths, which we have learnt from books and men only. You are now in a post of honour, and many eyes are upon you. May the Lord enable you to glorify Him, and to encourage them, by your exemplary submission to His will!

You are doubtless allowed to pour out your heart before Him, and even to pray for Mrs. Ryland’s recovery, and I will join with you so far as I dare. ... I pray for her, that He may enable her quietly and cheerfully to commit herself into His hands; and I pray for you, that you may do the same. You may be assured He will not try you beyond what He will enable you to bear. If it be for your good, especially for your chief good, His glory, she shall recover; He will restore her, though a hundred physicians had given her up. If otherwise, I doubt not but He will help you to say, Thy will be done. And hereafter you shall see that His will was best.

Accept this hasty line as a token of my sympathy. I was not willing to wait till I could find more leisure. May the Lord bless you both. And may we all so weep as becomes those who expect, ere long, to have all our tears wiped away.

I am sincerely and affectionately yours,

John Newton

January 23rd, 1787

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The iniquities of us all, the Lord hath laid upon Christ; they cannot lie upon Christ and upon us too; if they be reckoned to Christ, they are not reckoned to him that doth receive Christ.

*Crisp*



### A PURITAN PRAYER

*Edmund Calamy's prayer at St. Mary's, Aldermanbury, London, at the time of his ejection from the Church of England in 1662*

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O most Holy, Thou ever blessed Lord God, Thou fillest heaven and earth with Thy presence. We pray Thee fill all our hearts with the presence of Thy grace, and let it appear that Thou art in the midst of us, with that powerful assistance of Thy Spirit, that we may receive a token of love from Thee at this time. It is a singular favour that the doors of Thy sanctuary are open to us, and that we may meet together in Thy name. We pray Thee, continue it to us, and sanctify it to us, that every Sabbath may add to our stature in Jesus Christ.

We confess we have forfeited all our mercies; we have heard much of God, Christ and heaven with our ears, but there is little of God, Christ and heaven in our hearts. We confess, many of us by hearing sermons are grown sermon-proof; we know how to scoff and mock at sermons, but we know not how to live sermons.

It is a miracle of free grace Thou hast not taken Thy gospel from us ere this time, but Thou art a merciful God, and though we cannot please Thee, yet mercy pleases Thee; and we have no argument to bring along with us to beg Thy favour but Thy mercy in Jesus Christ. We pray Thee that Thou wilt glorify Thy sovereignty, in being gracious to us, and pardon our many and great transgressions.

Thou makest use of the malice of men for Thy glory; Thou killest Goliath with his own sword. O help us to put our trust in Thee; Thou that canst kill, and cure by killing.

Bless these nations of England, Scotland and Ireland and find out yet a way to save us. Pour down Thy blessing upon the head and heart of our Sovereign, Charles, by Thy grace, King of Great Britain. Thou hast done great things for him, let him do great things for Thee. Bless him in his royal consort, in his royal relations, in his council; bless the magistrates and ministers of this realm.

Lord, forgive us, for we live as if we had been delivered to work wickedness. We cannot sin at so cheap a rate as others do. We pray Thee humble us under our great and grievous sins. Give us repentance unto salvation, and a lively faith, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Quicken our graces, forgive our sins, make alive our souls. Let us be such as Thou wilt have us to be. Make us Christians, not only by outward profession, but an inward heart-experience, that we may live in heaven while we are on earth, and come to heaven when we shall leave the earth.

To that purpose bless Thy Word unto us at this time, and give us all grace to make conscience of what we hear, and how we hear; and all for Jesus Christ's sake, to whom with Thy blessed Self and Spirit be all glory and honour. Amen.

## WHY HAS GOD NOT ANSWERED OUR PRAYERS?

*From John Flavel (1628-1691)*

*If providence delay the performance of any mercy to you that you have long waited and prayed for, yet see that you despond not, nor grow weary of waiting upon God for that reason.* It pleases the Lord oftentimes to try and exercise His people this way, and make them cry, “How long, Lord, how long?” (Psa. 13. 1, 2.)

These delays, both upon spiritual and temporal accounts, are frequent, and when they befall us, we are too apt to interpret them as denials, and fall into a sinful despondency of mind, though there be no cause at all for it (Psa. 31. 12; Lam. 3. 8, 44). It is not always that the returns of prayer are dispatched to us in the same hour they are asked of God; yet sometimes it falls out so (Isa. 65. 24; Dan. 9. 23). But though the Lord means to perform to us the mercies we desire, yet He will ordinarily exercise our patience to wait for them; and that for these reasons:

1. Because our time is not the proper season for us to receive our mercies in. Now the season of mercy is a very great circumstance that adds much to the value of it. God judges not as we do; we are all in haste, and will have it now. “For the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are they that wait for Him” (Isa. 30. 18).

2. Afflictive providences have not accomplished that design upon our hearts they were sent for, when we are so earnest and impatient for a change of them; and till then, the rod must not be taken off (Isa. 10. 12).

3. The more prayers and searchings of heart come between our wants and supplies, our afflictions and reliefs, the sweeter are our reliefs and supplies thereby made to us. (Isa. 25. 9): “This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” This recompenses the delay, and pays us for all the expenses of our patience.

But though there be such weighty reasons for the stop and delay of refreshing, comfortable providences; yet we cannot bear it, our hands hang down, and we faint (Psa. 69. 3): “I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.” For, alas! we judge by sense and appearance, and consider not that God’s heart may be towards us whilst the hand of His providence seems to be against us. If things continue at one rate with us, we think our prayers are lost, and our hopes perished from the Lord; much more when things grow worse and worse, and our darkness and trouble increase, as usually they do just before the break of day and change of our condition. Then we conclude, God is angry with our prayers. See Gideon’s reply, Judges 6. 13. This even staggered a Moses’ faith (Ex. 5. 22, 23). O what groundless

jealousies and suspicions of God are found at such times in the hearts of His own children (Job 9. 16, 17, Psa. 77. 7-9)!

But this is our great evil, and to prevent it in future trials I will offer a few proper considerations in the case.

1. The delay of your mercies is really for your advantage. You read Isa. 30. 18: "Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious." What is that? Why, it is nothing else but the time of His preparation of mercies for you, and your hearts for mercy, that so ye may have it with the greatest advantage of comfort. The foolish child would pluck the apple whilst it is green, but when it is ripe, it drops of its own accord, and is more pleasant and wholesome.

2. It is a greater mercy to have a heart willing to refer all to God, and to be at His disposal, than to enjoy presently the mercy we are most eager and impatient for; in that God pleases you, in this you please God. A mercy may be given you as the fruit of common providence, but such a temper of heart is the fruit of special grace: so much as the glorifying of God is better than the content and pleasure of the creature, so much is such a frame better than such a fruition.

3. Expected mercies are never nearer than when the hearts and hopes of God's people are lowest. Thus in their deliverance out of Egypt and Babylon (Ezek. 37. 11), so we have found it in our own personal concerns: "At evening time it shall be light" (Zech. 14. 7). When we look for increasing darkness, light arises.

4. Our unfitness for mercies is the reason why they are delayed so long. We put the blocks in the way of mercy, and then repine that they make no more haste to us. "The Lord's hand is not shortened ... but your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isa. 59. 1, 2).

5. Consider, the mercies you wait for are the fruits of pure grace; you deserve them not, nor can claim them upon any title of desert, and therefore have reason to wait for them in a patient and thankful frame.

6. Consider how many millions of men, as good as you by nature, are cut off from all hope and expectation of mercy for ever, and there remains to them nothing but a fearful expectation of wrath. This might have been your case, and therefore be not of an impatient spirit under the expectations of mercy.

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To receive Christ's righteousness alone, His blood alone for salvation, is the sum of the gospel. When the soul, in all duties and distresses, can say, "Nothing but Christ; Christ alone for righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption (1 Cor. 1. 30); not humblings, not duties, not graces," then the soul has got above the reach of the billows.

*Thomas Wilcox*

## THE CONVERTED ATHEIST

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*Considerable interest has been shown in chapter 18 of the new biography of William Gadsby – Edward Blackstock's amazing account of the first time he heard Gadsby preach. We have therefore felt led to publish the equally-remarkable account of Blackstock's call by grace. Much of this appeared in a small book published by his pastor, William Roby, from which we have used the title The Converted Atheist.*

*Roby (1766-1830) was a leading minister among the old Independents. It is unusual that both John Warburton and Edward Blackstock first found peace under his ministry, but later both felt they had to go to Gadsby.*

*Edward Blackstock's autobiography was published under the title Manifested Mercy to a Chief Sinner, and it is from this work that the following account is taken.*

*In later years William Gadsby would have nothing to do with Edward Blackstock, especially because he went as pastor to Gower Street Chapel, London, as a mixed communionist. From a careful reading of Blackstock's life, he appears to have been a very gracious man and minister, but never settled in his own spirit as to whether "strict communion" is scriptural or not. At that time there were many godly Huntingtonians, who were not Baptists, and ministers like Henry Fowler and John Grace practised "open communion." Gadsby, however, who always saw issues in "black and white," would not countenance one of his old church members renouncing his former strict communion position.*

The name of my father was Samuel Blackstock. He was a native of Scotland, born near Dumfries in 1752. When a young man, he and his youngest brother removed to Halifax, in Yorkshire. He married Elizabeth Ogden, of Denholme, Bradford. After their marriage my parents went to reside at Manchester, where my father became a master cotton-spinner; that trade was then in its infancy. The two younger children died early; I was the third son, and born May 20th, 1791, at Oldham Road, Manchester.

My father was a Presbyterian, and had me baptized after their manner. They attended the ministry of Dr. Jack, of the Scotch Chapel in Lloyd Street, until his decease.

I hope that both my parents were possessed of the grace of God. I used to think my father very strict, and rather austere in his manner towards me, but he was a good father and meant well; he set me a good example, took me to chapel as soon as I could walk there, gave me good advice, and did not spare the rod to spoil the child. Whilst under his roof he never suffered me to use improper language, to play in the streets, or

to associate with evil company.

My mother was an excellent mother, kind, tender, affectionate and gentle to me. She gave me the best advice, and as far as lay in her power restrained me from all evil. I was early taught Watts's Hymns for Children, and the Assembly's Catechism. She made me read the Word of God to her frequently, and would question me on what I had read, explaining its meaning in a most serious manner, and commenting on the lot of the righteous and the wicked with great solemnity. She told me I was a sinner and needed a Saviour. Her conversations often affected me, especially when she entered upon the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, and told of His kindness to many children whom she had personally known. Young Josiah and Timothy were often dwelt upon by her, together with other Scripture characters, my dear mother hoping by such means as these instrumentally to allure me into the paths of wisdom, and to deter me from the pursuit of evil. Her influence over me was sufficiently powerful to alarm my natural conscience, and to awaken those feelings of apprehension and anxiety which are so often mistaken for the work of the Spirit.

I remember, between seven and eight years of age, when there was a rumour of the French invasion, these fears prevailing to such an extent that I used to pass many disturbed nights, terrified by the thoughts of death and of judgment; the slightest appearance of any attack of illness, or the tidings of the death of a neighbour, were sufficient to excite in me the most dreadful terrors. But these were purely natural convictions; there was nothing spiritual in them. There was no divine change whatever wrought in my soul at that period. My parents, however, thought otherwise. They had observed a change in my conduct and feelings, and mistaking natural pliability of character, and the effect of human argument and persuasion, for divine influence, they looked forward with satisfaction and pleasure to my eventually becoming a minister of the gospel, and laid plans for carrying out these views. My father was then in prosperous circumstances, and expected like many around him who had commenced business under less favourable auspices, to rise in the world and to become affluent. I often overheard him discussing with my mother their plans for my education, and heard him express his intention of sending me in due time to the University of Edinburgh for the completion of my ministerial studies.

About my ninth year, my dear mother was seized with a violent attack of fever and suddenly carried off. Her death was a strange shock to me. I was unable to comprehend it, and could not be brought to believe that I should no more see her. I looked everywhere for her. I remember, long after she was buried, when sent on an errand, that I used to run like one frantic from street to street, hoping to find her, and crying

as if my heart would break when she was nowhere to be found. Her death was to me the beginning of sorrows. I loved her dearly, and up to the moment of my writing this, I cannot think of her but with strong emotion. Her loss, both to my sisters and to myself, was unspeakably great.

My father shortly after married again. His second wife was much his junior, and inferior to him in every respect. She was a widow with a young family and treated her own children with great partiality, while we were harshly used and made to feel her severity. To me she was the instrument which God had ordained to alter the purposes which my parents had had in view for my future prospects, and was the procuring cause of much of my bitter suffering and misery.

My father's marriage displeased all his friends, and it seemed to stand in the way of his advancement, for he never prospered after it. And it was a singular thing that, although both my father and mother were personally unacquainted with this individual, my dear mother pointed her out as the person who would fill her place; and she actually predicted many events precisely as they afterwards occurred. My mother had then a strong impression that her own death would shortly take place. This impression, unhappily for us, was too soon verified.

Between the period from the death of my mother and the second marriage of my father, an aunt (sister of my mother, married to a Mr. Whitley, of Bingley, in Yorkshire) invited me to join their family. Her husband was a very kind, feeling man, and from the first undertook to receive me as one of his own family, to educate me with his own sons, to procure employment for me when properly qualified, and to further my prospects in life. Mr. Whitley being in prosperous circumstances and appearing so favourably disposed towards me, I felt extremely grateful for his kindness, and began to hope that a gleam of providential sunshine was about to fall upon me. But, alas, my happiness was of short duration! Before seven months were over my aunt became jealous of her husband's friendly feelings towards the young stranger, and apprehensive lest I should reap advantages which she wished to be confined exclusively to her own children. I perceived that her manner was changed towards me, and I often had the mortification to overhear her urging my uncle to send me back home. The second marriage of my father afforded an occasion for strengthening her cause; and although her kind husband resisted her arguments for a long while, she finally prevailed by unceasing perseverance, and he most reluctantly yielded in the end to her request, and I was sent home.

My uncle was of the Independent persuasion, a generous and a most friendly man. He was like a father to me; I loved him much, and many a secret tear did I shed in grateful memory of his kindness. "The righteous

perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come” (Isa. 57. 1).

On my return home I was sent to school, and when about eleven years of age I obtained employment in a warehouse, and was afterwards removed to a second, where my salary was higher, with the promise of increase.

I now seemed in a fair way of advancing in the world, and I confidently expected to make my way with credit and benefit to myself, and I hoped that Providence was once more smiling upon my path. But again disappointment followed.

My step-mother, anxious to have me removed from the paternal roof, employed every argument with my father, until she finally succeeded in persuading him to apprentice me to a trade. By this extraordinary step, which greatly astonished all our friends, I was taken from a line of business which I greatly liked, and in which there seemed a certain prospect of success, and for which moreover I was considered specially qualified, and bound in my fifteenth year to a man of whose character and habits of life my father knew nothing. His wife alone was aware of the kind of man into whose hands I was being committed. My father was the dupe of her artifices, and I became (as I considered) the unhappy victim of her misrepresentations. The decision was a dreadful blow to me. I was grievously distressed and mortified, but there was no escape.

On September 9th, 1805, a day never to be erased from my memory, I entered the dwelling of Mr.—; there were three in-door apprentices besides myself, all strangers to me. Mr. — I soon found to be a most tyrannical and cruel master; he was of republican principles, an infidel, an awful swearer, a bold blasphemer, and a drinking man. During the whole period of my apprenticeship I worked sixteen hours daily, both summer and winter. No rest was allowed us through the day but what was necessary for swallowing our meals. Here I felt the weight of the libertine’s arm, and was almost crushed beneath it. My three companions had not been brought up as I had; I therefore seemed to live as in the suburbs of hell.

Nothing that I could do seemed to satisfy or please my tyrannical master, and although from the first I worked very diligently (after a few months gaining for him by my labour thirty shillings, and latterly three guineas a week), he would for the slightest fault or failure beat me unmercifully, tear the hair off my head, and kick me until my body was discoloured with bruises. His hard words and offensive epithets were still more galling; yet I can now look back upon that period and solemnly assert that I was to him a good and faithful apprentice.

The inhuman conduct of this man and his wife, for she was little

better in her treatment of the apprentices as far as respected abusive language, almost broke my heart. My mind was naturally sensitive, and I suffered what I can never describe, in that worse than Egyptian bondage. At times I was driven to meditate self-destruction, and one day feeling my condition to be hopeless and beyond further possibility of endurance, I hastened to a canal near the place, fully determined to put an end to my miserable existence; but when I reached the spot, the thoughts of eternity and judgment arrested me in my sinful act. The invisible hand had interposed to save me from perdition.

During my earlier years, and for some time after I entered the dwelling of Mr. —, although unacquainted with real religion, I had been kept by the restraining and favouring hand of God more orderly in my general conduct than many. Also, I had the privilege of attending twice every Sabbath on Dr. Jack's ministry (a stipulation that my father had made in binding me apprentice), and I have often promised God, under the miseries which I had to endure, that if He would bring me through this and that trouble, I would turn from evil, and serve Him all the days of my life. But Ephraim's "goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (Hos. 6. 4.) Although in listening to Dr. Jack's discourses I have often trembled, like Felix, as he talked of death and judgment, yet bad example, evil communications and a sinful nature were not long in overturning all my best resolutions and undermining my principles.

Before this period my father's prospects had begun to decline. The branch of trade in which he was engaged, and which had hitherto been so successful, showed symptoms of the general depression complained of in Manchester. The powerful friends, who in my mother's lifetime had willingly offered assistance in any difficulty, had, upon the second marriage, all discontinued their intimacy; and when my father required to be supported, none of his former friends offered their aid. My father struggled against adversity as long as he was able, and finding it hopeless to persevere, he made over his machinery and effects to his creditors by a deed of assignment, and was then compelled by circumstances to enter into the employment of the very persons with whom he had set out as master cotton-spinner. He was in this way reduced to poverty, and had to work for his living until he was upwards of seventy years of age, the period of his decease.

I have already said that the influence of evil associates and evil conversation began seriously to affect my principles. I think that from this period, which was before I had served half my apprenticeship, I gradually declined in morals and in the profession of religion, until I ceased to preserve even the external form of it.

When about eighteen years of age I drank into a curious spirit of



inquiry as to which was the right religion amongst the various sects around me. I observed that they all drew, or pretended to draw, their opinions from the Bible. I was naturally of an inquiring character and fond of an argument, and I thought that I would pursue the investigation in a deliberate manner. But as this spirit of inquiry proceeded less from an honest desire for truth than from a speculative turn of mind, that which began in the flesh soon ended there. I had by this time lost all desire – if ever I really possessed any – for divine teaching. My resolution was to think for myself or, in other words, to lean entirely to my own understanding, and to sift all the opinions which I had received from early education, whether parental or ministerial. The veneration in which I had hitherto held religion and religious people had already begun to decline, and a suspicion that my father had led me blindfold made me now resolve to believe nothing which appeared to be beyond my natural comprehension, or opposed to human reason, and to discard every statement as unworthy of credit which could not be reduced to mathematical demonstration.

I am fully convinced that infidelity lies at the bottom of every man's heart in the fall, and it would require no great foresight to predict the issue of my newly-acquired sentiments.

Formerly, as stated before, I had made many attempts to become religious, and had occasionally succeeded in effecting a change of external deportment and in attending to the observance of certain forms and duties; but finding these fits of religion invariably give way after a short trial, and that I relapsed to my old ways and habits, I began to entertain a suspicion that the ministers of religion had either wilfully misled me, or knew very little about it themselves, and that their statements of man's having the power to turn to God and be saved must be altogether erroneous.

Satan now prompted me to commence my search after truth at the groundwork, and he set me to examine the doctrine of the *ever-blessed Trinity*. Upon this point I had often been much perplexed. I had consulted my father, and had attended a course of lectures by Dr. Jack on the subject, but with no satisfaction or useful results. Therefore, resolving to act upon my newly-adopted system (to withhold my assent to that which was beyond the limits of human reason), I stumbled, through pride, ignorance and unbelief, at the very threshold of divine revelation, and denied that holy truth.

Upon the subject of *election* I was next assailed, the natural enmity of the heart readily aiding in opposing a doctrine which placed the salvation of man in the sovereign will and choice of Jehovah. My froward, pharisaic mind at once learnt, not only to reject, but to revile that doctrine. Arminianism suited me better; it held out a chance of salvation

to every man, and I determined to abide by that creed. I never liked Arminians and never associated with them; but their doctrines of freewill and human merit are pleasing to the proud nature of man. Yet let me at this time say that, whatever the Arminian heresy might do for others, it led me rapidly into the depths of infidelity.

*(To be continued)*

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## KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH

*By J. C. Philpot*

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We are not carried to heaven as passengers are carried by express train to Holyhead, so that if once in the carriage they may go to sleep, look out of the window, or read the newspaper, without fear of losing their way or not reaching their destination. Though “kept by the power of God,” we have to fight every step of the way. It is this living, fighting, struggling, and yet eventually conquering faith, which sets the tried and exercised child of God at such a distance from the loose and careless professor, who is hardened and emboldened to presume, and even to walk in ways of sin and death by holding the doctrine of being “kept by the power of God,” without knowing anything of the secret way by which this power works and keeps.

To such we may adapt the language of James: You believe that the elect of God are kept by His almighty power unto salvation? Thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble – which you do not if you be one of these loose professors. But does God keep *you*? Does He preserve you from evil, that it may not grieve you? Does He keep your eye single, your conscience tender, your heart prayerful, your life and walk circumspect, your eye from adultery, your tongue from folly, your hands from covetousness, and your feet from the ways of pride and worldliness? You have no evidence that you are an heir of God and are being kept by His power unto salvation unless you have some experience of *how* He keeps, and that as it is by power on His part, so it is through faith on yours.

Whenever we slip, stumble or go astray, it is through the power of unbelief; and whenever we stand, fight, prevail, it is by faith. It is through faith that the power whereby God keeps His people acts and is made known, and it is very instructive and encouraging to be able to trace in our own hearts the connection between the power of God and the actings of faith.

## NONE BUT CHRIST

*One of James Bourne's "Morning Readings." See page 28.*

Jan. 25th, 1841. – Isaiah 63. 18: "Our adversaries have trodden down Thy sanctuary." This sanctuary is the heart of a sinner in which Christ dwells; and it is trodden down by sins of various kinds, but especially by unbelief. Yet he pleads, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer." Now this is the way to get Him to return – to plead, "Thou hast made me Thy sanctuary – Thou hast dwelt in my heart, Thou hast engaged my affections, Thou hast been my Friend." Now do you who have known the love of Christ plead in that way – that your heart is His sanctuary, your enemies are His enemies?

But there is a way whereby many stumble in inconceivable darkness, and say, "Well, I was not so bad today; I did watch a little more; I had a little help"; and so with these things they stop short of Christ; as if Christ would help them in some trifles, and yet would not apply His blood to their consciences. I cannot express the folly of such trifling, nor the danger of such a proceeding. If you would, instead of first correcting your outward walk, *first* seek to get Christ into the heart, this would correct the outward walk. There will be such wisdom when He dwells with you, such peace, you will attend to your business with such meekness, the heart and the best affections will be so set on Christ that it will be impossible to leave a corner for sin. But a legal, self-righteous walk is what God detests. Murderers, whoremongers, all that is bad is not so evil spoken of by our Lord as those good people who will not understand that Christ came into the world to save *sinners*; and thus the conscience becomes covered with such heaps of rubbish that there are mountains between it and God that none but He can rend. But then these pray, "Where is Thy zeal and Thy strength?" – that is, Jesus Christ, "the wisdom of God and the power of God." If they who fall into this legal way and get so scattered belong to God, He will be unto them a little sanctuary, even when they are far off. There will be a little godly fear, which hinders them from going clean into the spirit of the world; a little terror and dismay, as if all was not right; and now and then a little ray of light which increases this godly fear; till God comes (generally in some terrible way) and awakes them and leads them to seek Him with downright earnestness. But as for this patching and mending and trying to set things right *first* without Christ, it only makes things worse.

May the Lord instruct us, and teach us in His way; for whilst we walk in that self-righteous way we have just spoken of, though we entertain hopes of salvation, it is not because we have come to Christ, but because of some tenderness we think we have that may lead to Him. But

it does not do that. The psalmist prays to see the face of God in Christ: “Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength.” “Turn not away the face of Thine Anointed.” That is, “Let us see Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” There is no other way of ceasing from our own works and entering into rest. And the apostle says, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Morning Readings**, by James Bourne; hardback; 336 pages; price £12.00 plus £3.67 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from 12(b) Roundwood Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 3DD, or from agents.

The little group of people who gathered round the Gilpins and Sukey Harley in Pulverbach has always been of great interest to the people of God. Many were the writings from that period as the Gilpin family had a wonderful ability to note down the experience of so many of the poor miners and cottagers and then to publish them. J.H. Alexander's *More Than Notion* gathered together much of what took place and revived the interest in these godly people. The one point that stands out is the deep, vital, experimental knowledge of the truth which so many of them possessed.

Not the least in interest and importance is James Bourne (1773-1854). It was his visits to Pulverbach and the morning readings he took in various homes which God used to carry on this revival of vital godliness in this small Shropshire village.

James Bourne is an interesting character. Of gentlemanly birth, he was concerned what to do for a living. It was as if a voice from heaven said, “Draw” – and he proved to be a most accomplished artist, travelling about the country instructing wealthy families. Some of his water colours can still be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is still possible, occasionally, to purchase a James Bourne water colour, usually of a pastoral scene, and they are, of course, costly. One is kept in the Bethesda Home at Harpenden, and another is produced on the cover of *Morning Readings*.

*The Life and Letters of James Bourne* has long been highly esteemed. This new publication consists of 138 morning readings which he gave between 1837 and 1841, seemingly in his own home in London. Later he became pastor at Maney Chapel, Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham.

These “morning readings” are not Bible studies in the normally accepted sense – that is, not so much an exposition as a profitable application of the passage read. Originally they appeared in the *Gospel Standard* during J.K. Popham's editorship, and are now gathered together for the first time. (Mr. Popham received continual help in his work from James Bourne's granddaughters, the Misses Benson.)

One or two letters also appear and a little account of Watkin Maddy, who took the notes of the Bible readings. A short biography of James Bourne would have been helpful.

The book is very beautifully produced.

**A History of the Work of Redemption**, by Jonathan Edwards; hardback; 440 pages; price £14.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

About fifty years ago, Herbert Butterfield, a University professor, produced a remarkable work, *The Christian Interpretation of History*. Just how sound on the truth it was we cannot remember, but at the time it was very widely read. But surely the classic work on this vital theme is Jonathan Edwards's *A History of the Work of Redemption*.

*A History of the Work of Redemption* is based on thirty sermons that Edwards preached in Northampton, New England, U.S.A., in 1739. In it he sets out to survey the whole work of redemption from the Fall to the consummation of all things. At the heart of all God's dealings with mankind is the redemption of His people in Christ. Everything looked forward to it; everything follows it.

*A History of the Work of Redemption* is very simple, very beautiful. The author has a wonderful insight into Scripture and God's way of dealing with men. Some things brought forward we should never have considered to have any bearing on the work of redemption – but Edwards shows how *all things* are bound up with it.

It is foolish to compare one man with another; yet many have contended that Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was God's greatest gift to His church since the days of the apostles. Not only was he an eminent preacher, like Whitefield, greatly used of God, but also an able writer and theologian, and even counted one of America's greatest philosophers. He himself was a sinner in the dust at Jesus' feet.

This year, of course, is the 300th anniversary of Jonathan Edwards' birth, and once again we are deeply indebted to The Banner of Truth Trust for producing such an excellent book.

**Canon Richard Hobson**, an autobiography; hardback; 359 pages; seventeen photographs; price £13.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Our day must surely be one of the saddest in the history of the Anglican church. At our local cathedral (St. Albans) "holy fools" have been brought in to entertain the worshippers on the Lord's day. An ordained minister was there to give a sermon juggling three hoops and balancing on a wire, while other clowns gave Bible readings. In America we have seen the consecration of the first openly homosexual bishop, in support of which came his incredibly solemn, almost triumphant, admission (with no shame or fear): "We've gone against, absolutely against, the word of Jesus." We are left wondering to what further depths our national church can plummet. And so it is with mourning that we read the autobiography of one of her godly ministers of former years.

Canon Hobson, for thirty-three years Vicar of St. Nathaniel's, Liverpool, was born in 1831 in County Wicklow, Ireland. As a teenager he suffered poverty and hardship, especially during the famine resulting from the failure of the potato

crop. He lived in "a small house, wretchedly thatched, not weather proof, with an earthen floor, in the lowest part of the town. When it rained heavily I used to help mother to ladle out the water in buckets." For some years he served with the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, frequently facing the fury and brutality of the Romish mob. "But," he says, "we were encouraged by a conviction that the cause was God's, and that He was with us."

At the age of thirty-two he entered St. Aidan's Theological College, Birkenhead, and after two years was ordained a deacon of the Church of England. He writes: "During that time I gave myself to much prayer; to much introspection as to my spiritual state, as to my motives for the step I was about to take, as to whether I was indeed moved by the Holy Spirit to seek the office of a minister in the church of God. I sought to carry all the past, with my own poor self, to the fountain of Christ's most precious blood, for washing and acceptance afresh by God, my Father, in Christ Jesus; and to the Holy Spirit for the blessedness of sanctification." As he began his ministry his prayer was: "I thank Thee that I am not sent to preach my own vapourings, or Church authority, but that my commission from Thee this day is to preach Thy gospel as it is in Thy holy Word." This he was enabled faithfully to do for the next thirty-six years until ill health forced his retirement from the full-time ministry. His first sermon was preached in Christ Church, Birkenhead, from John 4. 49: "Sir, come down ere my child die." In spite of all his fears, he was able to record: "The Lord gave me great liberty in preaching."

The book traces the building and establishment of the new St. Nathaniel's Church in the worst district of Liverpool, styled "sixteen acres of sin," socially and morally the lowest area imaginable, and a hotbed of fever and other deadly diseases. Passage through the streets was considered unsafe, and eighteen public houses served the drinking propensities of the population. One area was known simply as "the little hell."

It was in this unpromising place that the church, hemmed in on three sides by poor streets of wretched houses, was consecrated on July 17th, 1869, by the Bishop of Chester, Dr. Jacobson. Of his induction as vicar Canon Hobson writes, "I was well nigh overcome by contemplating the awful degradation, and the terrible poverty, in which a large proportion of the people were living, or rather existing. Over and over again I had recourse to the throne of grace for guidance, direction and strength." Systematically visiting seventy-five families a week, Romanists included, he soon became known and loved in the area. "Hearing of a distressed family in one of the courts, I went at once to visit it, and found the place bare and filthy. On an old sofa lay a dead child; near it was another child, ill. There was no fire, no food. Upstairs lay the father on a wretched bed, suffering from typhoid fever." His visiting continued unabated throughout a serious smallpox epidemic. "This was a testing time. Shall I visit such cases, and risk infection, or shall I not? I came to the conclusion that I ought to do so. Never before or since was work so trying, and so loathsome, as visiting these smallpox sufferers in their filthy, fetid homes." Later he said, "I will venture to say that during my thirty-three years' ministry nothing so won the confidence, or secured the good will, of the people, as my ministrations during that terrible visitation."

As the first old year closed, and the new year opened, the 11 p.m. service

“was crowded, chiefly by the lost and degraded; men in their working clothes, and unwashed; women in dirty aprons and unkempt hair. As I glanced round that motley assembly I cried, from the depths of my heart, ‘Lord, save this people; Lord, bless Thine own Word tonight. Make bare Thine arm to save these lost ones.’ The Canon was a man of much prayer. We do not, of course, for one moment agree with the baptizing of infants (and in the book will be found other practices we could not countenance) but never was any ordinance or custom of the church carried out without much prayer, much spiritual exercise.

His Bishop was Dr. J. C. Ryle – “My beloved Bishop.” The love was mutual. Bishop Ryle preached often in the church (frequently seven times in a year) and when possible assisted with the administration of the Lord’s supper, and carried out the confirmations, often over a hundred new members at a time. On one occasion confirmations included three Roman Catholics and five Quakers, whose profession was “after the Church’s scriptural standard of the new birth and sins forgiven.” Confirmation was no light matter. Canon Hobson writes: “In consequence of the sifting and testing nature of my teaching in the confirmation classes, towards the close many came to the conclusion that they were not fit, and therefore ought not to be confirmed; but I dared not, by pressing them, be the means of their making what might have been an unreal profession.”

There is no doubt that the leading doctrines of God’s holy Word were taught in St. Nathaniel’s, including “the total depravity of man,” “God’s electing love in Christ Jesus,” “the atonement efficacious in the elect,” “the absolute necessity of the new birth,” to name just a few of the doctrines mentioned by Canon Hobson. (How strange, then, that he approved the use of Sankey’s hymns at their mission services!) At one point he tells us he lost a few members to the Particular Baptists. This would have been during the time of Mr. J. K. Popham’s ministry at Shaw Street Chapel – but whether they attended there we have no means of knowing.

Just one example of helpful comments from the lips of this man of God must suffice (speaking of the Lord’s gracious command to cast all our care upon Him): “How often we ‘cast’ it, but do not ‘leave’ it there; as it were, rolling it upon Him for the time being, but taking it away from Him, and bearing it again just as before.”

Time and space do not permit us to enlarge on the church’s Sunday School work, the ragged schools, the cottage readings work, and other agencies employed. In spite of his evident “success,” to the end Canon Hobson remained a humble servant of his Lord and Master – his feelings he expressed in verse:

“Oh to be nothing, nothing!  
Only to lie at His feet.  
A broken and emptied vessel,  
For the Master’s use made meet.”

We recommend the book as one of the most interesting and thought-provoking we have read for a long time, and in parts there is much that is truly profitable. The book is marred by misquotations of Scripture, numerous spelling mistakes (inexcusable today), and our copy was so tightly bound that it was a long time before it would lie flat.

Would to God that we might again see men of Canon Hobson's calibre raised up in the Anglican church! Here was a man that truly loved the pure gospel, in his opinion a gospel that had power "to lift up the fallen, to purify the immoral, to make the thief honest, the liar truthful, the drunkard temperate, to heal the soul-sick, and convert the sinner."

T.H.W.S.

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### TOMORROW

*"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow" (Jas. 4. 14).*

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'Tis to us no cause of sorrow,  
That we cannot tell today,  
What it is will come tomorrow;  
'Tis enough that we can say,  
"He, whom we our Father call,  
Knows the future, knows it all."

Happy they who, all committing  
To their Father's care and love,  
Let Him choose what most is fitting,  
And of all He does approve;  
They are free from anxious care,  
Blest in this His people are.

Teach us, O our God and Father,  
Teach us to obey Thee thus;  
Be Thy choice our portion, rather  
Than what might seem good to us;  
'Tis not meet we should refuse  
Aught that Thou, our God, shalt choose.

Future things with Thee are present,  
All to come Thine eye can see;  
Safe it is for us, and pleasant,  
Future things to trust to Thee;  
Then Thy people happy are,  
When on Thee they cast their care.

Thomas Kelly (1769-1854)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
FEBRUARY 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**“IT WAS NOW DARK”**

*Sermon preached by J.E. Hazelton (1853-1924)*

**Text:** “And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them” (John 6. 17).

The scene of these words was the Sea of Tiberias. Many a dark night had rested upon that sea. Many a storm had swept its surface, of which we have no mention. Many an earthquake had convulsed its bed, which finds no place in history; millions of waves had risen and fallen over its blue expanse, and many a scene and many an hour of danger had the steep hills witnessed that were around part of its shore. All these things have passed away in silence, but there is one particular night of which the record has been kept in the Word of the living God; one blast of wind which has been written down in the history of God’s Word for the strengthening and reviving of His people upon whom the ends of the earth have come. One storm which swept the surface of that lake has been made in this narrative memorable for ever, for the peace and the joy of God’s people.

Look at that which leads up to our text. Our blessed Lord had fed five thousand men, besides women and children. Five barley loaves and two small fishes in His wonder-working hand more than sufficed for the wants of the people. They, having seen the miracle and partaken of the food, were moved to declare Him a king. Their flesh had been wrought upon, their minds were excited, and they said one to another, “He who can thus feed us shall be proclaimed our king.”

The Lord was pleased to take two steps. First of all, He immediately sent His disciples away, that they might not be carried along by this stream of carnal and fleshly excitement; and having sent them away, He went to a mountain apart, there to speak to His God and His Father. The disciples, ordained to go in that ship, we see making for their home on the western shore of the lake. Darkness supervened; a high sea began to run; a great wind began to prevail, and their Lord, their Saviour, their Friend, was not come unto them. Their hearts began to sink with fear; their nerves were stretched to the uttermost tension, so that when the Lord appeared to them walking upon the waters, they cried out with fear, supposing that they had seen a spirit. Nervous, broken-down men in the darkness, with the high sea raging, with the fierce wind blowing, and Jesus had not come unto them.

In an instant our blessed Lord, who “knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust,” said to those faint-hearted men in that ship, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” The warring of the elements was nothing to the Lord Jesus Christ. The heaving and tumult of the sea were nothing to Him. Those waves, which were lifting up that little boat high and then casting her down, formed the crystal pavement upon which the feet of Love and Mercy stood as firmly as upon the dry ground. Over that heaving and tumultuous waste of waters, Jesus Christ travelled forward, walking upon that pavement, cheering His people, assuring them with, “It is I; be not afraid.”

Peter was the first fully to recognise the Lord. “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” “Come,” said our Lord to poor Peter, and as long as Peter kept his eyes fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter’s feet travelled as did our Lord’s upon the water, as if it had been dry land. But when the wind whistled in his ears, and he looked upon the boisterous waves, then he began to sink. O, dear friends, there can be no mingling of nature and grace. Peter, with a whole-hearted, naked, simple faith, first walked on the water. Very soon after, the waves and the sea, the tumult and the mystery, began to tell upon him and straightway he began to sink. But the blessed Lord, who had thus come over those stormy waters, took the hand of that poor, nervous child of His, and said, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Our mercy is that not with cruel reproofs, not with harsh chidings, our blessed Lord draws near. He knows *your* nervousness; He knows *your* doubts and fears; He knows you would be rid of them by His grace and blessing.

So lifting Peter up, He takes him with Him into the ship, which was just about half-way over that storm-tossed lake, and *immediately the wind ceased*, instantly their fears vanished, straightway their toil ended, and immediately, with Christ on board, they were at the place where they desired to be. O what a difference does the manifestation of a precious Christ make to us! No matter what may be our difficulties; no matter how nervous we may feel; no matter how the wind may blow and the waters rise, when Jesus comes, when Jesus speaks, when Jesus takes us by the hand, our heart-toil – for the time being – ceases; the wind drops, there is a great calm, and we are at the place where we desired to be.

Consider for a moment, ere we pass on, the significance of this appearing of our blessed Lord. Let us ever remember for our soul’s strengthening and comfort, that every word, every act, every step of God’s eternal Son manifest in the flesh, in the days of His sojourn upon earth, was vital; that is, our Lord never effected a useless act; our Lord never passed a casual hour. There was no event in His life which was outside the pathway which in the covenant He had undertaken to walk

along. Every word He spoke, every act He performed, every promise He gave, every manifestation of His Person, had been determined before ever He came forth from His Father’s bosom to this planet on which we dwell. And it was the same wisdom and love which planned and undertook and accomplished our salvation, the same wisdom and love which undertook our cause in the eternal councils, which governs the universe, which brought the Lord Jesus, after a season of absence, to this stormy lake, and led Him to utter the words which I have already quoted.

The Apostle John, in the closing verse of this gospel, says that he supposes that if everything that Jesus did had been written down, the world itself would not be able to contain the books that should be written. Men say this is figurative. Well, I find no fault with that. But I am firmly persuaded that if everything that Jesus has done and said *were* written down, everything in the past eternity, everything in the covenant and in connection with His life on earth, this little world of ours could not contain the books that should be written, for David says His thoughts towards us are without number; they cannot be reckoned or counted.

Here, then, is an appearance of our blessed Lord which is full of deep and divine significance to His people in every age of the world. Let us seek to ask what this significance is. Of this I am sure, that when heaven touches earth, glory glances from the point of contact; that is, when heaven impinges – if I may so speak – upon earth, something is seen, something is felt and known. When God by His grace touches a human soul, there is glory in the contact. When God comes by His Word and by His Spirit to the fainting and weary hearts of His people, religion is proved to be “something more than notion,” something then “is known and felt.” There are no little things in God’s account, no little things in the everlasting gospel. The little things become superlatively great when God shows them to be the hinges upon which eternal realities and purposes turn.

I was thinking yesterday that the whole of the surface of this earth must be dotted with the birthplaces of God’s children. Where is there a land where poor sinners have not been born again? Where a great man was born in our own city and land, a plaque is placed in the front of the house; for instance, in Bread Street, that there John Milton was born. But where God’s children have been born, where those chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, loved with an everlasting love, have been brought out of darkness into God’s marvellous light, is not known upon earth, but the geography and topography are known in heaven. And so the places where God’s children dwell, and where they are, have an abiding memory in the Eternal Mind, and over them the angels are brought to rejoice.

Then there are the memorials of the lovingkindness and faithfulness of God which He has been pleased to leave standing for the cheer and encouragement of His dear people. Here, in the darkness, Jesus coming to His disciples is one of the memorials which have been left for us, that we by the grace of God may be cheered and strengthened and encouraged. "My meat," said the Lord, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." It was part of the will of our Father in heaven, it was part of the work which the Lord so gloriously finished on Calvary, that these disciples should, for a season, have no realisation of the presence of the Lord, and then Jesus Christ should appear for their souls' peace and strength.

Let us now speak of *the love of the Lord* as displayed in this narrative. Sometimes Jesus does not come in the darkness to His people at the time that they expect, and at the time that they hope. "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them." Here was an act in the covenant of the unchanging One; here is a principle which runs through the administration of our most blessed Lord, into whose hands all power in heaven and in earth has been committed. Variation will take place in the form and in the circumstances, but right through the ages God's people have proved this experience, "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them." It is proved in Scripture; it is proved in the history of the church; it is proved in our own personal experience.

The Fall took place; "it was now dark," and it remained dark for an unrecorded period before the voice of the Son of God was heard as He walked in the garden in the cool of the day. The Old Testament dispensation was to a large extent a dark and cloudy one. "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them," so that in the Canticles the word is given, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away ... be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." After the age of twelve, our blessed Lord disappeared into the obscurity of Nazareth for eighteen years – "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come" manifestly and visibly to the waiting hearts and beclouded lives of those who looked for redemption in Israel. Sickness comes upon the household of Bethany; Lazarus is sick even unto death. A message is sent to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He tarries for two days in the place where He was, and He assigns to His disciples the reason for this tarrying: it was for the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. I can well imagine Mary and Martha going pretty well every hour outside the house at Bethany. There was Lazarus upon his sick bed, tossing and groaning; his face becoming thinner and the ashen hue of death gradually spreading over his features, and the sisters must have said, "He who loves us will surely come." Outside the door they must have stood and shaded their eyes with their hands, and looked down the long stretch of

white road. “It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.” It is a principle in the administration of our blessed Lord.

Here the disciples are about four miles across the lake – about half-way across the lake – they had had a night of toil; they were unable, owing to the violence of the wind, to erect a sail; they were all despondent and weary. The Lord loves His people with an *unforgetting* love. He came at the appointed time. He came to Adam and Eve, and gave the blessed promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. He came in the fulness of time to fulfil all the desires of the psalmists, all the predictions of the prophets, all the hopes of the Old Testament church. He came forth in the fulness of time from the obscurity of Nazareth, and in the synagogue there He preached His first sermon to declare that God had anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor, and to open the prison to them that are bound. Lazarus dies, and is buried; four days he rests in the grave. “It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them,” but when He came it was to bring life to the dead, joy to the sad hearts of the sisters; to wipe away tears from their faces; to demonstrate again to them His unforgetting love.

Our blessed Lord said, in relation to the giving of the Holy Ghost, “It is expedient for you that I go away,” for if He had not gone away to present Himself in all the glory of His Manhood, in all the beauty of His Person, in all the accomplishment of His work, the Holy Ghost would not have come down at Pentecost. When our blessed Lord does not come to His people, when they say, “It is now dark,” it is expedient for them that He should go away. It is expedient for us that He should, for a season, be absent in our apprehension that He may bring grace and peace to our waiting hearts. “I go away,” says the Lord. Why did Jesus go? It was to try their faith, but not to break it. The Lord never breaks the faith that He gives. All the faith that He bestows is destined to be tried; is it not well for us that the faith which we believe we possess, and which God has given to us, should be tried? If it is God’s gift it will stand, and if it is not His gift, but stands in the wisdom of men, it will inevitably disappear. It will be a mercy to be delivered from a faith which is not of God’s giving, and it will be a mercy to have our faith so tried that it will prove to us that it is “a good Jerusalem blade,” and will stand the trial.

Our blessed Lord was on the mountain top whilst the disciples toiled, and though away from them, He knew, He saw, He felt; for in the darkness, miles away, “He saw them toiling in rowing.” And He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” This very moment He is on the mountains of myrrh and the hills of frankincense, and He sees us here today as clearly, as distinctly, as perfectly, as He saw those disciples when they were toiling in rowing. He saw that each man was a bundle of nerves; that each one was becoming more and more despondent. *He*

*saw, He knew, He felt*, and His love is the love of an forgetting Saviour; His love is that which is set forth by the words, "I will watch over My vine; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

Never read this into the words, "It is now dark, and Jesus has not come"; *therefore* He has forgotten us and cast us off, and is engaged on some mighty issue in connection with His government. Why, beloved, before He came, as the eternal Son of the Father it is recorded that His "delights were with the sons of men," and He "rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth" (Prov. 8. 31). His delights were with His people when He came, and He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth. And now He who came and sojourned here has gone up again within the veil, and His delights are still with the sons of men. Love detains Him within the veil, but when the time is ripe, the Lord of life and glory will most surely come even as He did, walking upon the waters to those poor, storm-tossed disciples of His. That sea represents the peoples of the world; that sea represents the stormy main of temporal trials and circumstances; that wind represents the power which stirs up the waves to storm, and causes the sea and the waves thereof to roar, and those disciples represent each loved, and chosen, and called, and blood-bought child of God who will not be suffered to sink to rise no more.

What is it that sinks a ship? *Not* the water outside, however stormy, but the water that gets inside; and so the waves may rise mountains high, but the good ship rides triumphant over them. But when the ship springs a leak, then it begins to sink. And so, dear child of God, no storm of circumstances, no national storm, no European crisis, no difficulties in your life and mine, however forbidding and terrible, shall be suffered to sink that vessel which has been launched by love and mercy. We often ship, as the sailors say, a great deal of water in a storm, and that water is exceedingly uncomfortable to those on board. But not one child of God has ever sunk to rise no more, and whilst we ship water, the vessel on which the Lord of life and glory is shall attain unto the harbour and haven of rest.

"Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." Just look what a blessed word we have in the seventh chapter of Revelation and the third verse. I would like just to read this, as setting forth another aspect of the subject. There were angels standing, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds were not to blow on the earth, or sea, or any trees. Never to blow? Yes, but the angels were holding the wind back. What for? The divine voice said, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Did not God seal you, in this sense of the word, when He brought you as a poor, guilty, hell-deserving sinner to the footstool of love and mercy? O what a seal – speaking of it from this point of view –

what a seal is the conviction of sin, and the awakening to a sense of need of a precious Saviour! There is no mistaking a person who has been brought to say,

“A guilty, weak and helpless worm  
On Thy kind arms I fall;  
Be Thou my Strength, my Righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my All.”

He is sealed in his forehead. What a seal that is when we are brought to know and rejoice in the accomplished salvation and finished work of Jehovah-Jesus! What a seal when the Lord was pleased to bring you through that deep, personal affliction years ago, for every deliverance is a renewal of the seal. Every time the Lord brings you through, it is a token of His love and favour.

In the 107th Psalm we have the word to those who go down to the sea in ships, and those who do business in great waters. Have you had business in great waters? The Lord does so, too. The storm is made to help God’s business. How this War\* is going to do that, it is not for me to say. The devil has raised the wind, but the storm is going to help God’s business. For a time He seems absent. The church in the Canticles says, “I sought Him, but I found Him not.” His presence was not realised, but the bond is not broken, although there may be no joy. What does the psalmist say in the 130th Psalm? “I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope.” “If the vision” – the vision of the Lord Jesus by faith – “if the vision tarry, wait for it.” The sun is not always seen, but its power is always felt. The sun at night holds the earth with the same power of gravitation that it does in the day. When the sun rises in the day and the dawn comes, there is the same holding, but there is the blessedness of the light. And so Christ our Lord holds us in the night of peril, sorrow, bereavement. To us this word stands sure, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Here, then, are some of the reasons why “Jesus was not come to them”; “it was now dark.” He had not forgotten them; He saw them and came at the *appointed* time. All was for His glory and for the honour and glory of our Father and our God.

A word now, in conclusion, concerning this passage as setting forth the life of His people. “They shall never perish,” for “none shall pluck them out of My hand.” Matthew was there, Peter was there, as much proof of His power spiritually as the risen Lazarus was to be naturally and literally. “I have chosen you.” The vessel was midway between the two shores. But the Lord does not cause the vessels of His grace to go to the middle of the sea to be sunk, but to “pass over to the other side,” for immediately when Jesus was manifested they were at the place

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\* Preached during the First World War (1914-1918)

whither they desired to be. We have read in the papers of late that our Government wisely, in relation to our commercial shipping, has taken all war risks, and I thought at the time, our blessed Lord has taken – speaking from the human point of view – all war risks, mercantile insurance; every vessel of grace is insured in heaven; Jehovah-Jesus has taken all upon Himself that we call risks, and He comes to His people walking upon the waves. What a mercy it is to have faith in our blessed Lord in act and exercise! Peter was described by our Lord on this occasion as “thou of little faith.” Nicodemus had faith, but little faith; but see, Little Faith comes at a strange time, but always to the right Person. He came to Jesus by night, but that little faith conducted him to the right Person. On the mountain, where our dear Lord was, He felt the touch of these trembling men. They longed for His presence, and they were destined to know that they were to be piloted by Omnipotence, and brought to the desired haven.

Let me read a word, in relation to this, in the 31st Psalm. In the nineteenth verse the psalmist says, “How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!” I do fear the Lord, don’t you? There is “goodness laid up” for us behind this dark cloud; “which Thou hast wrought” – just the kind of goodness that we want – “for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men.” What will He do for them? “Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man.” The secret of the Lord’s presence, not a curtained and cloistered privacy; the secret of the Lord’s presence is that in which those who fear His name, those of this nation who trust in Him, are hidden and kept in the midst of all this strife. The Lord says here by His servant that His people shall be kept in the “secret of His presence.” The Hebrew, we are told, means “the covert of Thy countenance.” Is not that blessed? When the disciples on the lake saw the Lord, they said, “Surely this is the Son of God.” They felt they were covered by the light of His countenance, who holds the waves in His fist and the waters in the hollow of His hand.

His people cannot be stoical or indifferent to these things. Though storm and darkness may make our hearts quiver, we have Him who knows what pain and trial are, even the Saviour of Bethany and of Gethsemane, who wept at Bethany, who agonised in Gethsemane. O weary heart, often distressed and cast down, long in thy toiling in rowing, Jesus from the heights of heaven sees, knows, feels and comes; and though for a time we may not be apprehensive of His presence, yet His love is round about us.

“Calmly He stood with sovereign will  
And hushed that storm to rest.”

“Why ours this unbelieving care?  
Christ says, ‘To yonder shore.’”



## HEAVENLY TEACHING

*By C. Neele, minister at Aagtekerke, Holland. Translated from an article in De Saambinder.*

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“Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? (Job 38. 31, 32).

Job has to suffer much. He becomes plunged into abject poverty, and endures the loss of all his children. He is seized of the most fearful disease. His wife does not comprehend his spiritual life. Standing upon a high point of assurance he says, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” But he remains not upon those heights. He comes to curse the day of his birth. Questions full of unbelief arise. His friends stand no longer beside him but above him. Yet he can at times look higher. God is not forgetful of His child. Job is even enabled to cry in chapter 19, “I know that my Redeemer liveth”! Then it was well. Do you know anything of such a comforting, faith’s view of the precious Saviour? Yet Job remains not upon this high point of faith either. In chapter 23 he complains: “Behold I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him.” He has lost sight of Christ, and that is deep darkness in the life of the church – after so many blessings and mercies received to end as it were in death.

But Job is, under all this, still not at one with the Lord. He cannot bow under this way. What will become of Job? Perhaps you ask this question at times. So blind in the way of salvation; no access anywhere. What is needful then? Heart teaching. And this instruction Job receives from a fourth friend, Elihu. He tells Job that he must bow under God’s justice – then he will find deliverance and pardon. But this kind, outward instruction does not bring Job to his right place, so God Himself begins to speak. He comes in a whirlwind, so we read in chapter 38. And then the Lord instructs Job, and brings him into the right way. He does so by opening to him the wonders of creation, with the end of humbling His child, causing him to bend.

So God enquires: “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?” The Lord points out to him a constellation. Actually it is a little group of stars in the constellation Taurus. Pleiades or the “Seven Stars” can be clearly seen in winter. You then observe six, or with good eyes seven stars which are very close together. But if you look with a telescope you will see within that little group no less than 623 stars. The old Arabic astronomers called the Seven Stars a cluster of jewels. God had assembled that little cluster and displays it unto men. And now the Lord speaks of the sweet influences of the Seven Stars. The little bundle of jewels has a very sweet radiance. The Lord has created this group of

stars with His right hand (Isa. 48. 13), and so to them too those words of the psalmist apply: "At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." By pointing to the Pleiades the Lord shows forth the power of His love and in so doing asks Job, Canst thou bind these sweet influences? or in other words, Is the power of My love in your hand? Do you rule over My love? O Job, if you would but taste something of love, you would bend. One drop of love and your heart melts; the enmity is broken. Have you, reader, ever tasted a little of that love? Then you know what it means to bow or bend. The Lord makes plain to Job how dependent he is upon the power of God's love.

But the Lord asks further, "Canst thou ... loose the bands of Orion?" Orion is a glorious winter constellation. Three stars in the middle, the so called "Belt," and around them at some distance four other stars are to be seen. It appears just as though those three middle stars are bound with cords to the outer four stars. Now the Lord asks Job if he can break these four cords. Job has no such power. But the Lord means more with this question. The old astronomers said that every year there came a moment when those cords were broken. This happens at the end of winter when the constellation slowly sinks from view. Then those strong cords become as it were loose. Eventually Orion disappears before coming into view again the following winter. Now, said they of the ancient East, when the cords break, "Spring is coming!" The Lord then is asking Job, in effect, "Can you make it springtime in your life? Let the spiritual winter of storms and rain then come to an end – is it then within your power to bring forth the dawn of a spiritual song-time, when the flowers appear on the earth?" The Lord will break the enmity in his heart. Job must learn again to live in dependence.

"Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?" (verse 32). There are differing explanations of the word Mazzaroth. Our Bible translators have left the word in the original, because they were doubtful as to which constellation was intended. Later commentators, helped by the increase in the knowledge of astronomy, point to the constellation Centaurus. Job would have been able to see this constellation at the beginning of the month of March. Bright stars lie in the southern sky. Now the Lord asks Job if he can make these stars appear in their time. No, Job can do no such thing. Yet the Lord "bringeth out their host by number ... by the greatness of His might" (Isa. 40). That is a lesson for Job. The Lord saves in His own time – not at the time which you determine in the spiritual strife. The writer of Psalm 69 was favoured to know and confess that there is an "acceptable time." Have you learned this lesson? God's time is the very best time.

"Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" (verse 32). This question of the Lord's points to the constellation "The Great Bear" – or

as we often call it, the Plough. This is visible all the year round in the night sky. The old Arabic astronomers saw in this group a wagon or wain carrying a bier. In front of the bier went the children of the departed. Now the Lord asks whether Job can guide this wagon with the children. The Lord means that He and not Job reigns over life and death. All through the year the preaching of death and life is to be seen in the starry heavens. This brings Job to consider his guilt. He had not been pleased that God had given him life. He had cursed the day of his birth. He would rather that he had died. He was not pleased with the path of his life. But now the Lord says that *He* has control of it. Job must learn to follow. Then he will see by faith that Another shall taste death and shall triumph over it with an everlasting victory.

Job was favoured to bow beneath the divine instruction. He could say, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job is brought to his right place. He is nothing but a sinner without rights – "That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest; and be clear when thou judgest." But this bowing sinner is led in chapter 42 to the altar – to the blessed Substitute who has wrought out an everlasting righteousness. Then can he sing from the heart:

"The Lord preserveth the simple:  
I was brought low, and He helped me.  
Return unto thy rest, O my soul;  
For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

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## A COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST

*By J.C. Philpot*

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What heart can conceive or tongue recount the daily, hourly triumphs of the Lord Jesus Christ's all-conquering grace? We see scarcely a millionth part of what He, as King on His throne, is doing daily; and yet we see enough to know that He ever lives at God's right hand, and lives to save and bless. What a crowd of needy petitioners every moment surrounds His throne! What urgent wants and woes to redress; what cutting griefs and sorrows to assuage; what broken hearts to bind up; what wounded consciences to heal; what countless prayers to hear; what earnest petitions to grant; what stubborn foes to subdue; what guilty fears to quell! What clemency, what kindness, what longsuffering, what compassion, what mercy, what love, and yet what power and authority does this almighty Sovereign display! No circumstance is too trifling; no petitioner too insignificant; no case too hard; no difficulty too great; no suer too importunate; no beggar too ragged; no bankrupt too

penniless; no debtor too insolvent, for Him to notice and relieve.

Sitting on His throne of grace, His all-seeing eye views all, His almighty hand grasps all, and His loving heart embraces all whom the Father gave Him by covenant, whom He Himself redeemed by His blood, and whom the blessed Spirit has quickened into life by His invincible power. The hopeless, the helpless; the outcasts whom no man careth for; the tossed with tempest and not comforted; the ready to perish; the mourners in Zion; the bereaved widow; the wailing orphan; the sick in body and still more sick in heart; the racked with hourly pain; the fevered consumptive; the wrestler with death's last struggle – O what crowds of pitiable objects surround His throne; and all needing a look from His eye, a word from His lips, a smile from His face, a touch from His hand! O could we but see what His grace is, what His grace has, what His grace does; and could we but feel more what it is doing in and for ourselves, we should have more exalted views of the reign of grace now exercised on high by Zion's enthroned King!

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### LIVING SPRINGS

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Dear Brethren – I now drop a line to say that (God willing) I mean to be at home on Thursday, the 4th of June; and I do hope that the dear Lord will come with me, for sure I am that without the supporting, teaching, guiding and unctuous power of God the Holy Ghost, both you and I shall make miserable work in matters of religion. At least, I must confess for myself, that I feel myself such a dead lump of vileness, that nothing short of the divine life and energy of God the Holy Ghost can raise me up out of the dreadful dust, and off the filthy dunghill of old fallen nature, into the solemn enjoyment of Christ and His glorious salvation. Talk about it I both can and do, when, God knows (and I speak to my shame), I do not feel the sweetness and power of it.

O, my friends, what a difference there is between uttering forth sound words, and speaking them under the springing-up of the life-giving and life-drawing power of God the Holy Ghost! The one is a mere tinkling sound that at times may appear to chime very well, but it is a sound without life; the other is the sweet, cheering, reviving, succouring, supporting streams of a springing well, yea, a divine river springing from the Fountain-head, whose waters carry life to everything that liveth and moveth, wherever they flow (Ezek. 47. 9). And when this glorious river flows into and blessedly springs up in our hearts, we feel its glorious, reviving power; and, as we feel and enjoy it, each for himself is saying, "Spring up, O well; sing, Grace unto it!" The minister then gives some

proof that “out of his belly flow rivers of living water,” both in private before God, and in his public ministry; and, as the blessed Spirit is communicated to you, and springs up in you, you will give living proof of the same God-glorifying truths (John 7. 38, 39); and both you and I know that without this divine spring, all is dry.

I have not time to say much, so you will excuse me. I hope that the dear Lord will bring me home in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace, that is, in the solemn enjoyment of the divine unction of God the Holy Ghost in the glorious mystery of God the Father and of Christ; and that you will be blessed with the same glorious unction in hearing, that we may all drink of the Spirit of Christ, under the glorious power of the Spirit of Christ baptizing us in love and blood. Then the world will drop its smiles, yea, and frowns too; for then, in very deed, we shall feel that God is All and in all, whatever men may say or do. There is such a living reality in the glorious power of vital religion that nothing will do as a substitute for it; nor can anything, either pleasing or distressing, overturn its majesty in the conscience while a Three-One God maintains it there in His own glory and by His own sovereign, reigning and solemn power.

My dear friends, may that religion which stands in God’s power be ours; and may we never be satisfied with anything short of its vital power felt in the conscience. Feel and enjoy it always in this vale of tears, sin and woe, we never shall; but to feel satisfied with unfelt religion is to be in an awful state. True, our feelings make no change in the Lord, nor are our feelings the ground of our hope; but we can only prove the real glory and power of the ground of hope in vital faith and feeling. To make our feelings into Christ, and so rest in them, or to boast of a Christ while we are strangers to vital power and feeling, are both of them things that a real believer cannot be satisfied with. That the God of peace may be with and bless you, is the prayer of your loving pastor,

W. Gadsby

May 19th, 1840

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### PHILPOT’S PORTIONS IN ALBANIAN

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Readers may remember that in the January 1996 *Gospel Standard*, it was mentioned that J.C. Philpot’s *Ears from Harvested Sheaves* had been translated into Albanian by the Albanian Evangelical Trust.

We have recently been informed that a church in Athens was so pleased with this translation that it is putting a daily reading on its website, which means this may be seen by Albanians anywhere in the world who look at this website.

## THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION

*By James Durham (1622-1658)*

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There is an eternal transaction between God and Jesus Christ the Mediator concerning the redemption of sinners. His actual redeeming, by being wounded and bruised, supposes this. For the Son is no more liable to suffering (not to speak of His suitableness) than any other of the Persons of the blessed Godhead, had there not been an antecedent transaction. There was no obligation nor tie on Him to be wounded, and to enter into the room of sinners as their cautioner [surety], for payment of their debt, if there had not been a prior engagement; neither could His wounding and bruising have proven useful, or have brought healing to us, if this prior engagement had not been.

This is it which we call the *covenant of redemption*, which we would not extend so as, in all things, to stretch it to the properties of these covenants and bargains which are amongst men, it being in some respect an expression used to make grace more discernible to us, that can conceive so little of grace's way. This transaction, or covenant of redemption, is sometimes called *the Father's will*, and *His law* (as Psa. 40. 8): "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." And it is called so (John 6. 38): "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." So also (John 17. 4), it is called the Father's *work* in one respect, and the Son's *work* in another respect. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do"; which is the prosecution of the same contrivance, usually called a covenant because, as to the essentials, it has the nature of a covenant, to wit, two parties agreeing, and terms whereupon they agree, and is well ordered in all things for prosecuting and carrying on the design of saving lost sinners, called (Acts 2. 23) the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." There was a plot and design in God's counsel concerning Christ's sufferings, whereof His sufferings were the execution.

To clear it a little, we would consider these five things in it: 1. The Parties. 2. The matter about which it is. 3. The rise and occasion of it. 4. The terms wherein the form of it stands, or the means whereupon it is undertaken. 5. Some properties of this covenant.

1. For the Parties: upon the one side is God essentially considered, or all the three Persons of the glorious Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who are all concurring in this covenant, it being the act of the determinate counsel of God. And in this respect God is the Party to whom the satisfaction for lost sinners is made, and He is also the Party condescending to accept of the satisfaction. Upon the other side, the Party engaging to make satisfaction is Jesus Christ, the Second Person of

the blessed, dreadful and adorable Trinity, personally considered, now becoming the Head of the elect, that He may have them all with Himself to be one mystical body. In the first respect, all the three Persons, that same one blessed God, give the command or require a satisfaction as God, and concur, as the infinitely-wise Orderer of the decree; and in the second respect, Jesus Christ as Mediator, undertakes to make satisfaction (Psa. 40. 6, 7): “Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire”; God, as it were, making the offer\* – “What can, or shall be given to Me, for the redemption of sinners? Sacrifice and offering will not please, nor are accepted by Me.” Then follows the Mediator’s part: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God.” For though in the first respect, all the Persons in the Trinity be on the one side, being of one will, yet in the other respect, Christ Jesus, as Mediator, comes in on the other side, to do His will.

2. As to the matter about which this covenant is: it is about the satisfying of justice, and making of peace between God and lost sinners; it is that we might be pardoned, justified, have peace made with God, and be healed. It is true, there is an end above and beyond this, even the glory of God’s rich grace and condescending love that stoops so low to save sinners; but sinners’ pardon, and peace with God, and their healing, is the immediate end. Or, if we come nearer, the matter about which it is, is the redeeming of the elect. For these words in the text, *we* and *us*, are of equal extent with them that are justified and reconciled, and whom He actually healed by His wounds and stripes; so that whoever they be who are never justified and healed, they are not comprehended in this bargain.

3. The rise and occasion of this covenant may be gathered from these three. i. There is the supposing of man’s sin and fall; for whatever election does, redemption does most certainly suppose man to be lost and under sin. ii. There is God’s decree not to pardon sin without a satisfaction. iii. There is God’s election preceding, or His purpose to save some, for the glory of His grace, which are the elect, who are said to be *given to Christ*. These three are the rise and occasion of the covenant of redemption: man has sinned, the threatening must be executed and justice satisfied. And yet God has, for the glory of His grace, elected a certain number to life, and that must needs stand firm; and these three, seeming to thwart one of them with another, give the occasion and rise to the excellent and admirable contrivance of this way, how the lost sinner shall be saved, yet so as justice shall be satisfied and not wronged in the least, and justice so satisfied that yet the decree of election by grace shall stand.

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\* In speaking of the covenant between the Father and the Son, the Scottish covenanter James Durham uses terminology that would be used between man and man.

4. As for the terms (wherein the form of the covenant stands) and the means by which these ends may be brought about – to wit, how the redemption of lost sinners may be attained, justice may be satisfied, and the glory of grace made to shine, and how anything that makes these seem to jostle and thwart might be guarded against; and that was it, which (to speak so with reverence) put God to the consultation about it, which shows the excellency of the covenant of redemption, and the deep draughts that are about it; for otherwise, and properly, God need not consult or advice – they are shortly these:

i. God's offer to redeem man, if His justice may be satisfied, and if any responsible person will become cautioner, and undertake to pay the elect's debt. ii. The Son's accepting of the offer, and undertaking or engaging to pay their debt, upon condition that His payment and satisfaction shall be accounted the elect's and accepted for them. iii. The Father's acceptation of this engagement and undertaking according to His offer, and the Mediator's accepting of it, and acquiescing in it; He holds the bargain (to speak so) and so it is a closed covenant.

The first is comprehended in these words: "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire" (Psa. 40. 6, 7), insinuating that God did desire something. The second in these words: "Mine ears hast Thou opened ... then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will"; which implies the Father's acceptance, as well as Christ's undertaking. And it also points at the way how the satisfaction is made effectual. Especially if we compare these words of the Psalm with Heb. 10. 5, 6, we will find that they relate to Christ's humiliation in general. For it is in the Psalm, "Mine ears hast Thou opened"; but in Heb. 10. 5, it is, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." And where it is said in the Psalm, "I delight to do Thy will," the apostle says, "By the which will we are sanctified." The Father makes the offer on the terms of a satisfaction to justice; the Son as Mediator accepts the offer, and undertakes for the elect: "Here am I, to do Thy will on the same terms that the offer is made." And the Father accepts of the Son's engagement, according to that word (Matt. 3. 17), "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He offers Himself Surety for sinners, and the Father is content to accept of Him as their Surety. In the one respect it is called the *Father's pleasure* (Isa. 53. 10), "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him," etc., because the terms were so proposed; and in the other respect, it is called the *Mediator's pleasure*, or *satisfaction* (Isa. 53. 11), because the condition proposed is satisfying to Him, "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." He undertakes to pay, and God accepts of His undertaking, and obliges Himself to absolve the believer; and the words following, "He shall see His seed ... and of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous



Servant justify many," are promises made to Him, on supposition of His making satisfaction. The first part of the transaction is (2 Cor. 5. 21), "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." And the other part of it is, "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." He, accepting of the bargain, obtains a right to a justifying and absolving sentence by virtue of His suffering; for which cause these words are added, *in Him*, or *through Him*. This shows the clearness of God's justice in proceeding with the Mediator; the ground of sinners' justification through Him; and gives sinners a warrant to make use of Christ's satisfaction as theirs, because it was so agreed upon in the counsel of the Godhead.

5. We come now to speak a little to some properties of this covenant, and shall content ourselves with three or four of them that make for the scope. As i. The justice and equity of it. ii. The faithfulness of it. iii. The freeness of it. And iv. The wisdom that shines in this bargain; passing by the rest.

i. The justice and equity of His transaction may appear in these respects: [1] That the Father should be satisfied; and that He that was wronged should have His honour restored; that the threatening given out in His law should light and take effect; that the soul that sins should in his own, or in the surety's person, die; and that a suitable recompense should be made to justice, before the sinner should be absolved.

[2] Justice appears in this respect, that when the Son of God, the Mediator, offers to become man, and to endure and suffer all that the elect should have suffered, His sufferings should be accepted as a satisfaction; because the justice of God, yea, the holiness, power and greatness of God, are as gloriously manifested in Christ's satisfaction as if man had suffered. Nay, there would not have been such an amends and satisfaction made to justice if all creatures had suffered. Justice by this means has more satisfaction than it could have had otherwise; and hereby the holiness of God, and the severity of His justice, as well as the condescending love of God, is the more manifested, that He Himself should condescend to satisfy. Therefore (Rom. 3. 26), it is said, "That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." God is just, in that He will not only have satisfaction, but an equivalent satisfaction, for the restoring of His justice to its declarative glory, wherein is suffered by man's fall.

[3] Justice appears in this respect, that the Mediator satisfying justice, these for whom He suffered should be acquitted, and have the sentence of absolution passed in their favour; which the rather we would take notice of, that we may know the redemption purchased and bestowed by the Mediator is by an exact satisfying of justice. Therefore (Luke 24. 26), it is said: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,

and to enter into His glory.” There was a necessity of it, because of the justice of this covenant, for the Son, not only to become man, and be in a low condition, but to become a curse, and to die the cursed death of the cross.

ii. A second property is faithfulness on all sides. Faithfulness on the Father’s side, in His word and promise to the Son. All that are given of the Father are made to come to Him; and there is nothing lost (John 6. 37, 44-45). Faithfulness on the Son’s side, performing all according to His undertaking, fulfilling all righteousness. Therefore, when in the one word He says (John 12. 27), “Save Me from this hour”; in the next word He says, “But for this cause came I unto this hour”: ‘It was My errand into the world, and now I am to go about it by and by.’ “And I lay down My life for the sheep.... I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10. 15-18). His faithfulness also appears in keeping all that are committed to His trust. “None of them shall perish, but He shall raise them up at the last day.” Therefore He is called the good or faithful Shepherd.

iii. It is a *free* covenant. It is just, as between God and the Mediator; but as to the elect, it is most *free*. By His wounds we have pardon, and by His stripes we have healing; the chastisement of our peace was on Him; there is not one grain-weight of worth to be satisfied by us. He was made sin for us, He was made the curse, even the wrath-pacifying sacrifice and offering; “That we might be made the righteousness of God,” not through aught in ourselves, but “in Him” (2 Cor. 5. 21).

iv. It is most *wise* contrivance, for if the Son had not become Man and Mediator, how could justice have been satisfied, or the elect pardoned and healed? They could not satisfy for themselves, and no creature could satisfy for them; therefore the only-wise God finds out a wise means for such an end, as is the saving of the elect, in a way wherein justice and mercy, or free grace, sweetly kiss each other, and wherein they both shine forth conspicuously and radiantly.

That which we would say in short concerning this covenant is this: that Jesus Christ has undertaken to pay the elect’s debt, and has stepped in unto their room; and God has imputed unto Him their sin, and accepted of a satisfaction from Him for them; and all this in a legal and just way, so as there is access before the throne of God for them to plead for the application of His righteousness by virtue of this covenant. That as really and faithfully as Christ performed His undertaking to God, and His satisfaction was accepted for them, they may as really and on good ground expect the application of it to them. For though all be of grace to us, yet it is a bargain on just and legal terms between God and the Mediator; therefore there is a title and right in justice for the elect, when

they come to Christ, that His satisfaction shall stand for them, as being members of His body, and in whose room and place He satisfied. Hence it is said (1 John 2. 1), "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And whereon is this righteousness sounded? The next words tell us, "He is the propitiation for our sins"; He has paid the price that was due by us, and we may seek the application of it to us, according to the transaction passed between the Father and Him, now performed.

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### ANSWER TO QUESTION

*By J. H. Gosden, 1946*

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*Who is the "elder brother" as set forth in Luke chapter 15, the parable of the prodigal son?*

Various interpretations have been made of this character. In the parable (Luke 15) the chief interest centres in the prodigal; the elder son is subsidiary and teaches us that we must not grudge others the blessing, as if we were more worthy. Some suggest that he could not be a child of God because he professed never to have transgressed; others, that he must be one because it is said, "Son, all that I have is thine."

Such arguments, however, may be classed with what Paul calls "doubtful disputations." Like all parables, it has one chief element of instruction: the Lord's mercy to penitent sinners; His inalienable love to His elected and adopted children; His covenant faithfulness (implied in the ring); the justice of divine remission (set forth by the killing of the fatted calf); the righteousness of Christ imputed (by the best robe); the feast and merry-making indicating the holy satisfaction of partaking of Christ, the paschal Lamb.

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### JESUS ONLY

*The preface to a sermon preached by Ebenezer Erskine in 1724*

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We do not read of any plaster that the stung Israelites were to make use of for their healing, but only looking to the brazen serpent. If they had made a confection of the best herbs in the wilderness, or a plaster of all the sovereign ingredients in the world, and withal heaped up mountains of prayers, or poured out seas of tears, all would not have helped, if they had not looked unto the brazen serpent. God had appointed that as the only way of relief; and therefore nothing else could perform the cure.

God hath set up His Christ as the only way of life. He hath lifted Him up on the pole of the gospel, that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” And though we should spend our whole time and strength in praying, and mourning, and other acts of obedience, all would be of no avail, unless we made use of God’s remedy, in a way of believing, and that is: “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth” (Isa. 45. 22).

Seeking the cure is not the cure. In reading and hearing we are directed how to come at the cure, but these are not the cure. Let us never put our duties in the room of Christ. The man that rests in anything on this side Christ will at last rest on this side heaven. All our duties and works of obedience will be but as ropes of sand, or chains of glass, too brittle to draw our souls up to glory.

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### A PRAYER MEETING ADDRESS

*By J.K. Popham*  
(1 Peter 1. 1-9)

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This beautiful chapter is full of instruction and comfort and peace to the people of God; only they need the Holy Ghost to bring these blessings into their hearts. What a word is this – *Elect*! Sometimes it is so full of beauty and blessedness, and such a hope comes into the soul that one is elected, that there seems no other word so good or so big as this word *elect*, chosen. Chosen out of the mass. A sinner chosen out of myriads of sinners, no better himself than others who are left. A solemn word is that in Malachi, quoted by Paul in Romans: “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

“Elect according to the foreknowledge” – the eternal prescience – “of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience.” The gospel is preached for the obedience of faith among all nations (Rom. 16. 26). “And sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” – bringing peace into the conscience. “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” This is the salutation of Peter to these Hebrew strangers in foreign lands: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers” – the people of the dispersion, as they are called; Hebrews “scattered” – from their own country – “throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” To these, Peter wishes grace and peace to be multiplied.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Begotten, regenerated, born again, quickened, instructed, brought under the law, passed under the rod, and brought into the bond of the covenant, “unto

a lively hope" in God, a hope that has His glory connected with it: "Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." No real religion, no gospel hope apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. What a hope is this! a sweet hope, sweetening trouble.

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." Every inheritance of this world has sin in it and is corruptible and passes away, but this heavenly inheritance has no sin, no defilement; therefore can never perish. "And that fadeth not away." Health fades, possessions fade, families fade; all things here below fade. But God the Holy Ghost brings sometimes the heavenly inheritance to view, and drops some sweetness from it into the soul.

"Who are kept by the power of God." We need keeping. What troubles may come to us, we know not; but this we know: we have no power in self, no wisdom in self to bear trouble. We need to be kept; kept in the hour of temptation, from being overcome by it. We do not know how weak we are until we are tried, or how liable to fall. When we hear of people falling, making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, it is very solemn, and puts the soul, as it were, to it. "How stands the case with thee, my soul? Hast thou good reason to hope such will not be thy case? So and so has fallen; do you hope that you may be kept from falling? Such and such a professor has made an end of faith and good conscience; have you a hope that you will be kept from doing so?" Very solemn questions, and where grace is in exercise, where living faith moves, that soul goes to God. He does not say lightly: O I shall get through. He does not say merely: I have had good things from God to give me a hope, and I believe. He might have reason to say he has had good things from God, yet when he sees and feels his own weakness, the weakness of his faith and the strength of his unbelief, and understands from experience the strength of temptation, then he cries: "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not."

"Kept" in the hour of trouble, kept not from trouble but in trouble; kept not from temptation but in temptation; kept not from weakness in self, but "by the power of God" notwithstanding your weakness. The Holy Ghost keeps "through faith unto salvation"; faith in the bleeding Lamb; faith that has a blessed hold of God sometimes; faith that flies to Him, as feeling the case admits no stay. Fly, sinner, to the throne of grace, go to that blessed God who has helped you in the past and upon whose Word you have hoped; fly to Him. When you feel the power of temptation, when Satan tempts you, when circumstances tempt you, when something may be proposed to you in providence which is but a temptation, then faith goes to God: "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." My brethren, this is our best course, our only safe course. Fly to

the throne of grace by that faith that God has wrought in you.

“Faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” God has fixed a time for us, and a time for Himself to come. For us there is a time to be born and a time to die; a time to gather stones and a time to cast them away; a time of prosperity and over against that a time of adversity. In all these times there is a trial of faith which is more precious than of gold that perisheth. The trial of faith puts poor people to it much. What is this for? Conscience says you went astray. Yes, but that is not the only thing. God’s purpose in and by and over that, the people of God have to learn something about. “If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” There is need of it.

Yet there is a rejoicing: “Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.” Do you feel sometimes as if it is too much for *you* to rejoice? You are so vile, have gone astray so much, have dishonoured God so much, how can you think it proper to rejoice? Well, it may be that the Holy Ghost will so come and drop the gospel into your heart that you say: My sins are enormous and dreadful, but they are finite: not so great as grace, not so great as the blood of Christ, not so great as the faithfulness of God, not so great as His power. And so there really is in the midst of trial a rejoicing in Jesus Christ. Says Paul to the Philippians: “Finally my brethren, rejoice in the Lord ... and again I say, Rejoice.” Christ said in His last prayer before His suffering: “These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves” – in My poor, tried people.

Faith is such a precious grace, it so honours God in every movement of it. Unbelief its opposite, its enemy, always dishonours God. Whenever your faith struggles to reach God, when you fight through difficulties, whenever you feel you must pray though the devil stands in the way and though your sins stand in the way, though your corrupt desires stand in the way – such exercises of faith please God. The trial of faith is very precious. Gold perishes, but faith though it be tried by fire, will “be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” God will honour the faith He gives, and He will honour the believer one day who by faith cleaves to Christ, follows Him, prays to Him, looks to Him, leans on His power, pleads His promises, trusts His faithfulness.

So that though God puts faith into a fiery trial, the end is that the dross is taken away, the scum removed, and the tried faith will shine and God will shine into the believer’s soul. Look, my tried friends, look for this. You will get it one day. See how your faith hangs about Christ. Wait on Him, wait for Him, and the end will be: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

“Whom having not seen, ye love.” There are moments, happy moments, when faith in the soul moves it to say: “I love the Lord.” Some of you know what that is, I am sure: “I love the Lord for what He is, for what He has done, for what He has done in my soul, for what He has promised to do for me.” “Whom having not seen” as the apostles saw Him, and as the more than five hundred brethren saw Him after His resurrection. We have not seen Him in that way, and shall not. But “though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” Faith lays hold of that salvation. O that it would please God to grant us this!

Lift up your head, O believer, for “now is your salvation nearer than when you believed” – nearer than when you first had a revelation of Christ; nearer than when you were so low that you said God had forsaken you, yet He brought you forth; your salvation is nearer than those days of trial and of merciful help. Think on these words, dear friends, in this blessed chapter. May the Lord speak them to us in His power.

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### **“OUR BELOVED BROTHER PAUL ALSO”**

(2 Pet. 3. 15)

*By J.K. Popham*

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“I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days” (Gal. 1. 18).

What sweet communion, what blessed fellowship, must those two eminent saints and servants of the Most High God have enjoyed during those fifteen days! With what humbling sorrow and joy would Peter recount his call by the voice of the Lord Jesus; his vision of the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration; his sad and destructive self-confidence; his foretold fall, then the Lord’s unparalleled love and tender but effectual look upon him now all defiled with his unexampled, his cruel apostasy; his deep sorrow, his bitter, copious weeping over an injured Lord, his anguish and self-reproach. How would this favoured apostle of the circumcision tell of his Redeemer’s marvellous kindness and tender pity in sending by the angel a special message – “and Peter” (Mark 16. 7) – of His glorious and oft-predicted resurrection – Peter, who could not now regard himself as a disciple, must have an individual, in-bringing word. The greatest sinner must needs have the greatest mercy. O how must the sweet, bitter, melting memory of these sins and this mercy have warmed Peter’s heart and oiled his tongue!

And Paul. He too has a testimony, a wondrous tale. The “injurious

person,” the “exceedingly mad” persecutor of all whom he found “of this way” of life, worshipping the Lord Jesus, he shall now tell his brother Peter how he came to preach the “faith which once he destroyed.” How would he with godly shame recount all this! How, too, would he tell Peter of the blinding blaze of divine glory – the killing voice, which was as the sound of many waters, of the persecuted Jesus, the question, the answer and the prayer (Acts 9. 5, 6); of the sorrowful, humbling entry, led by the hand, into those gates through which he had thought to pass in triumph, the three days’ fasting, without sight, with conviction and prayer, then the coming of Ananias (previously seen in vision); – all these points would doubtless be recounted; then his reception of the forgiveness of sins by the Holy Ghost, his baptism, together with his commencing to preach the gospel and subsequent events of his ministry.

O wonderful fifteen days spent in fellowship by those two mighty champions of the Lord Jesus!

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### THE CONVERTED ATHEIST

*The experience of Edward Blackstock (1791-1852)*

*(Continued from page 26)*

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Having thus abandoned those doctrines of grace which I had received from childhood, and to the truth of which my natural, unrenewed mind had assented, I at once degenerated in moral character, and lost even moral perceptions. And, alas! I began to slight and despise the Word of God, and to curse and swear.

For a period of some months I imbibed the worse than hellish principles of Atheism; but the writings of a certain apostle of Deism (who pretends to prove the Being of God from the existence of creatures) falling in my way, I became a convert to his opinions, and remained a Deist for five years. I now openly denied that the Bible was a Book of divine revelation, and ventured to suppose that it had been put together by a set of monks. I questioned whether Jesus Christ had ever lived upon earth, and positively denied His being Deity. I had no regard for one sentence in the divine Word, and I made a common jest of Bible saints. I blasphemed the name of Jesus, denied that there was any sin in the world, and believed neither in a judgment to come, nor in the doctrine of eternal punishment. I thought that there was a God, but of His nature or His attributes I could come to no definite opinion. I doubted whether man had a soul, or whether there was a hereafter, but I concluded that if it were so, God being merciful, all mankind would be happy. I flattered myself that God was so good that He never would visit a soul with



everlasting punishment for a few faults committed in this short life. I fancied that God must necessarily be pleased with all His creatures, and that there would be no devil and no hell. I acknowledged that in this world there were vice and virtue; they appeared to me as the dark and bright shades in the picture of human life. I supposed the dark to be needful in heightening the effect of the bright ones, but I concluded that the Deity was pleased with the whole as a whole. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Psa. 50. 21).

Having with much mental labour and ingenuity fabricated this scheme, with which I was then pleased and not a little proud, I called these my principles, and boasted that they would never be overthrown. I praised virtue and censured vice, and yet mine was but a miserable kind of virtue, for I frequented the theatre, fairs and races, and was guilty of swearing, of telling falsehoods in jest, of blaspheming, and of associating with evil companions. I longed for the pleasures of the world, and sighed after its vain delights; and many follies that circumstances prevented me from committing, I followed in my idle imagination.

At length my apprenticeship was ended, and with what delight did I hail this freedom from restraint, and rejoice in the prospect of liberty to swim unmolested through an imaginary ocean of pleasures! What pictures had I drawn of this alluring, flesh-pleasing world! and what schemes had I laid for its enjoyment! With all the eagerness of pursuit I hurried after its pleasures, and I am now persuaded that had not an unseen but mighty hand prevented, I should have gone far more deeply into evil; but through the restraining power of God, I was kept entirely from falling into the sin of unchastity, a mercy for which I desire to bless God while I have a being.

Yet pleasure, sinful pleasure, was the god I then worshipped, and although in the pursuit of it I experienced continual disappointment, and my pride received repeated wounds, and my ambition many a mortification, yet I still pursued the phantom; I constantly hoped at some time or other to attain that happiness of which I was in search. But I was seeking that which I believe no-one ever did find, or ever will find, in this vain, transitory world; real contentment is not to be found in earthly pleasures. A life spent in these pursuits is certain to end in disappointment and vexation of spirit and, should sovereign mercy prevent not, in death and in everlasting destruction. Sin is the honey of worldly pleasure, and a holy and wise God has decreed that whoever follows that shall sooner or later feel that he has acted the part of the fool. And this I lived to prove.

About this time I had a dream, the impression of which I never wholly lost, although at that time I was unable either to understand it, or to profit by the warning. One night, as I slept, I dreamt that I was at

Shudehill, Manchester. I thought it was about two o'clock in the afternoon of the darkest and most gloomy day that I had ever seen. It was deeply impressed on my mind that my death was at hand; and I thought that I must first compose my own epitaph, and immediately commenced it as I walked along. When I had completed it, an apprehension seized me that the earth was about to open under my feet, receive me, and close upon me for ever. In momentary expectation of this event happening, I stepped slowly and cautiously, and full of anxiety and terror.

The darkness was continually increasing, until it exceeded all that I had ever seen – when in an instant, and as if by magic, that awfully black and gloomy day was exchanged for the fairest and brightest that my imagination had ever pictured: the sun shone in refulgent splendour, the sky was a brilliant blue and cloudless; on each side, and before me, lay beautiful green fields here and there studded with trees. The birds were singing in the branches, and the whole scene appeared to me enchanting. Before me, at some distance, stood what seemed like a church, and the sun was shining pleasantly upon it. In the front of this building I observed groups of persons who appeared to be foreigners; their skin was a little tanned by the sun, but their features and forms were exquisitely beautiful. Whether these persons were men or women I could not tell; each was dressed in the oriental costume, with flowing robes, and they all appeared united in love and harmony. Each held in either hand a large basket of ripe purple grapes, and the bunches hung in clusters over the sides of the baskets.

Suddenly, and with admirable softness and melody, they all burst into a song! Their words, their music and their manner struck me as rapturous and heavenly, and I was filled with admiring wonder and esteem. I could not understand the language in which they spoke, it being entirely new to me, but I thought, “Ah! you are the happy people; you carry your heaven along with you. O that I were one amongst you!” The feeling of admiration was so strong, and the desire to become one of them so powerful, that the agitation produced in my mind awoke me. For a long time during that night I lay and pined after that heavenly company. I could not attempt to unfold the dream.

The next day, when at my usual occupation, I could not help musing on its singularity, and wondering what it might portend. An aged saint, who perceived a change in my countenance, made enquiries which led me to relate to her my dream. She was greatly touched by it, and quitting her seat came up close to me, and looking earnestly in my face, said, “You are a Deist now, I think?” I replied that I was. “Mark my words, now,” said she, “you will never die a Deist.” I was more affected by her words than I was then willing to admit; but she lived to see them

fulfilled, and to hear me relate what the Lord had done for my soul. My account gave her great satisfaction and pleasure.

During my seven years' hard bondage, I had acquired, from the ill-treatment which has been already detailed, a dislike of my employer and his household (with one exception) amounting to absolute hatred; so that at the end of my apprenticeship, I determined for ever to renounce all intercourse with any of the family. But, strange to say, in the turns of God's providence, my acquaintance was renewed with the eldest daughter – the only person who had ever shown me kindness; and from mutual preference and affection, we were shortly afterwards married. She was in her nineteenth year, and a Deist like myself. Our awful infidel principles were deeply rooted, and we both resolved to live and die in them. Formalists, or hypocrites, there was no danger of our becoming, for such was the hatred of my heart to the religion of Jesus Christ and to His Person that nothing but the almighty power of God could ever have brought me to profess that holy name. But God's ways are not our ways; He leads the blind in a way they know not. My dear wife, by the converting grace of God, became eventually a highly-favoured Christian. She proved an excellent wife to me, my greatest earthly comfort, and a shining vessel of God's rich mercy.

At the period of our marriage (May 1814), "peace and plenty" was the universal expectation; and having no stock in hand for commencing life, we relied mainly on our mutual assiduity and industry. We considered that we held our fortunes in our own hands, and in this presumptuous confidence we had no anxious fears for the future, but rather looked forward to the success of our diligent efforts, and to a life of much happiness and enjoyment.

But God had a work to do in us that we knew not of, and therefore He began "to dig about" us. During the first year and a half of our union, His hand crossed us in so extraordinary and striking a manner, that to this day I can affirm I have never witnessed anything to be compared to it with any other persons. We were thwarted in our undertakings, disappointed in our expectations, and driven from place to place. We prospered in nothing. It is written, "The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them." The hand of the Lord was gone out against me, but I knew it not. In consequence of the depression of the branch of the trade in which I was employed, I was frequently without work, and we were often reduced to such straits and difficulties as even to suffer from cold and hunger. My first child had to endure many privations, which tried me exceedingly, and in those days of ignorance and unbelief often made me ready to curse my hard fate.

My dear wife had typhus fever for four months, during which time we appeared to be quite deserted by everyone. I was her only nurse, and

had to sit by her side and watch the progress of the malady, until I became so hopeless and wretched under the accumulated trials that my health failed, and I longed for death as affording the only prospect of relief. Yet, under all this severe chastisement, I remained firm and unmoved in my opinions. I greatly felt for and pitied my wife and child, but in all other respects my heart remained as hard as adamant. I can set my seal to those lines of Mr. Kent:

“Judgments nor mercies e’er can sway  
Their roving feet to wisdom’s way.”

It was shortly after my wife’s illness, viz. about the end of January 1816, that, on returning from my work one Saturday evening, I found that a sum of money which we were expecting had not been received; this disappointment, which I foresaw would inevitably involve us in difficulties and privations during the ensuing week, so vexed and exasperated me that I flew into a violent passion, rose from my seat and uttered a dreadful volley of blasphemous oaths and curses.

Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! In an instant – swift as the lightning’s flash, and more terrible than the loudest thunder – these words struck into my soul: “Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me” (Deut. 28. 16-20). Overwhelmed by the power of these words I staggered – reeled – sank back into my chair, and burst into a flood of tears. The Lord had opened my eyes to see, and my heart to feel, that there was above me a holy, righteous, sin-hating, sin-avenging God, and that if I lived and died as I was, I should be lost eternally. In one moment my fabric of Deism was demolished.

“The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars ... of Lebanon” (Psa. 29. 4, 5). For ever adored be the name of Almighty God. Amen, Hallelujah!

I needed no man to tell me whose voice this was. The testimony even of an angel from heaven would have been light, compared with the power which I then felt in my heart and conscience. I well knew that this was the voice of God, but I did not know that it was sent to bring about my conversion in due time. In the words of Hab. 3. 16, “When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself.” In an agony of terror, and without uttering a word to my wife, I hurried out of the house and went into those

very fields where lay the scene of my dream already related. My object was to escape from the dwellings of man, and to shun his society. I had the revelation of God's wrath in my conscience, and I apprehended it to be the beginning and foretaste of eternal damnation. I concluded that like Cain, I was doomed to be a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth during an appointed period; and then to reap, in an eternal hereafter, the bitter fruits and consequences of my wickedness. God made me drink that night of the wine of astonishment; my sighs and groans, and even my tears were abundant; for who can say, but such as have drunk of that cup, how bitter it is.

A soul must have passed under a sense of God's wrath to enter into my feelings. I believe that God upheld me with one hand, whilst He chastened me with the other. My horrible blasphemies stared me in the face, and I feared that I had rushed on the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for saving me through that night; it was one of anguish and agony to me, a night never to be erased from my memory. My friends, sin brings sorrow sooner or later; this we all shall find. How dreadful did sin appear to me now! I loathed and abhorred myself, and concluded that I was abhorred of God. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment." O solemn words! and in their experience how bitter!

Towards midnight I returned to my dwelling, slept a little, and awoke under the same terrors. I was full of the fury of the Lord. I rose, paced the room, sat down in astonishment, and wondered where all would end. About noon I took up a book and read a few pages of Mr. Newton's preface to Cowper's poems. I was surprised to find he described the state in which I had been; but when he adds these words, "Without God in the world," like an arrow from the bow they entered my heart, and I fell under the conviction of their truth. I saw that I had lived without God in the world, and to this cause I ascribed all my miseries. Again I sank in despair, and throwing down my book, I recommenced pacing the room.

As I hurried to and fro, the name of "*Jesus Christ*" seemed to pass through my mind. It was repeated – I heard no vocal sound, it was a loud, internal whisper through my soul. It came continuously for the space of about two hours – "Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ!" Arrested by the words, I marvelled why *that* name should so powerfully and incessantly vibrate through my soul! – that name which during five years I had so wickedly derided, so awfully blasphemed! Still, the name passed through my soul, and with such power and light as recalled the hidden malice of my heart against the Lord Jesus, and the evil thoughts

that I had indulged in towards Him. And yet I felt inspired by a secret drawing towards that holy name; and a glimmering hope arose, that if ever deliverance should be wrought for one so lost and vile as I, *that* deliverance would come from Jesus Christ. My hope was the faintest that can be imagined: but I believe all this was a divine impression; and I have since judged, that from this hour I was a *quickenèd soul*.

(*To be continued*)

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**The Troublemakers at Frankfurt**, by George M. Ella; 364 pages; price £15.95 plus £3 postage and packing; published by Go Publications, The Cairn, Hill Top, Eggleston, Co. Durham, DL12 0AU, and obtainable from the Publishers.

Dr. Ella is well known for a series of books which include biographies of John Gill, James Hervey and Augustus Toplady. Now he has written on the subject of the Marian Exiles at Frankfurt during the period 1553-1556. It is a sad fact that godly men, who fled their country for the sake of conscience during the reign of Bloody Mary, were unable to agree among themselves when in exile on the Continent, regarding church order.

The question that Dr. Ella examines in this book is, who were the troublemakers? Most historians up to the present time have placed the responsibility on the Anglican, Dr. Cox, a former Chancellor of Oxford University, and a Chaplain to King Edward VI. His protagonist at Frankfurt had been John Knox. Most of the present information regarding the conflict has come from a collection of documents called *A Brief Discourse of the Troubles at Frankfurt* published in the reign of Elizabeth by a source favourable to Knox. Using Local History documents from Duisburg University Library, Duisburg and Frankfurt City Archives, Dr. Ella shows that responsibility for the troubles cannot be shouldered alone by Dr. Cox and his Anglican associates but that John Knox also bore a major responsibility. In doing this he has called in question the account given of the troubles by Professor A.G. Dickens in chapter 12 of his book *The English Reformation* (1964) and criticised Dr. D.M. Lloyd-Jones in his book *The Puritans* (BOT). He has also criticised John Calvin who sided with Knox's party in the dispute, believing this was due to misinformation passed to him by Knox.

Much of the conflict centred on the Anglican 1552 Prayer Book with its use of lay responses in the services. Knox objected to such responses. He had sent an analysis of this Prayer Book in Latin to Calvin. Calvin had written back in Latin saying that in the Anglican Liturgy "*Multas video fuisse tolerabiles ineptias.*" The writers of the *Troubles in Frankfurt* translated this as "tolerable foolish things." Quoting Professor Hume Brown, Dr. Ella renders the translation "many trifles that can be put up with." The issue was, were the matters in dispute "trifles" or did Calvin regard them as "absurd"? In a later sentence Calvin says, "By these words '*tolerabiles ineptias*' I mean there was not that purity which was to be desired." But who could agree on what was "to be desired"? Many

historians have seen this conflict as a microcosm of the divide in England between Dissenters and Anglicans. Dr. Ella utterly rejects this as historical “back projecting.”

The book is a masterly, in-depth analysis of the sad conflict exhibiting a lack of toleration. It places the blame squarely on John Knox’s shoulders. But all sides in the Reformation would allow no toleration. The Second Edwardian Act of Uniformity 1552 stated that if any member of the realm was present at any other form of common prayer (than the 1552 Book) then the punishment was six months for the first offence, twelve months for the second, and life imprisonment for the third. Equally Presbyterians were most intolerant. The 1647 *Westminster Confession of Faith* chapter XX sec. IV states that “any who publish opinions contrary to known Christian principles ... may be lawfully called to account and proceeded against by the censures of the Church and *by the power of the civil magistrate*.”

Dr. Ella contends earnestly for a proper recognition of the part played in the Reformation and the rise of Puritanism by the moderate Anglicans at Frankfurt such as John Jewel (later Bishop of Salisbury), Edmund Grindal, and their companions. His book is well reasoned, highly academic, and he would do well to consider at what readership he is aiming, perhaps University level. It is a major step forward in research on this period of the Reformation and demonstrates how a study of local records (in the original languages) alters assumptions of past historians on a national level.

J.R.B.

**Is all Scripture Inspired?** by J.C. Ryle; paperback; 80 pages; price £3.50; **The Basis of Christian Unity**, by D.M. Lloyd-Jones; paperback; 96 pages; price £4.50; **The Day God Made**, by Glen C. Knecht; paperback; 112 pages; price £5.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

These three excellent books deal with subjects on which there is much confusion today – the authority of Scripture; church unity; and the Sabbath.

In his inimitable style J.C. Ryle boldly defends the infallibility of Scripture in *Is all Scripture Inspired?* Ryle has the great advantage of writing in extremely simple, easy-to-be-understood English. There is no compromise. Even the words of Scripture are inspired. *Is all Scripture Inspired?* originally appeared in 1878 as a paper on inspiration at the beginning of *Old Paths: Plain Statements on Some Weightier Matters of Christianity*.

Today there is a loud clamour for unity. In these addresses given forty years ago Dr. Lloyd-Jones makes it abundantly clear that there can be no unity with those who profess error. He lucidly opens up the passages normally used to advocate union between all professed Christians (John 17 and Ephesians 4) and shows that this is “the unity of the Spirit” that is to be known only among the Lord’s people. (The final volume of Dr. Lloyd-Jones’s series on the Epistle to the Romans has also now appeared – *Romans: Liberty and Conscience* on Romans 14.)

Sadly, there has been much lowering of standard concerning the Lord’s Day, even among professed Christians. Many evangelicals do not really keep the Sabbath. In *The Day God Made* Glen C. Knecht clearly contends for the Christian Sabbath, which he shows is a creation ordinance, given before the law

on Sinai. Though not an argumentative book, the author deals simply with all the objections that have been made. He points out that nations that have dishonoured the Sabbath have never prospered. God's Day (the author constantly uses the capital letter), under the blessing of the Lord, should be highly valued by the people of God.

All three books are most needful and are strongly recommended.

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**BUT**  
(*Matt. 21. 28*)

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BUT for the gospel's joyful sound,  
Nor hope, nor help had sinners found;  
BUT for the sovereign grace of God  
Our souls had perished by His rod.

BUT in His Word poor sinners view  
A Saviour faithful, just, and true;  
And all who know Him gladly own,  
They have no trust *but* Him alone.

BUT O let Christless sinners fear  
In wickedness to persevere;  
For if in sin their lives they spend,  
Nothing *but* wrath can be their end.

BUT hark! the Scriptures thunder loud  
Against the haughty and the proud;  
The proud, God never will endure,  
BUT pride will make their ruin sure.

BUT let not hypocrites presume,  
BUT know that dreadful day will come,  
When God no longer will forbear,  
BUT make their dark deceit appear.

BUT let the poor, awakened soul  
BUT look to Christ, He'll make him whole;  
BUT never of His love despair,  
BUT on Him wait, by faith and prayer.

BUT let believers gladly raise  
To Jesus songs of grateful praise;  
For, through His love, almighty King!  
They've many glorious *but*s to sing.

Samuel Medley (1738-1799)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
MARCH 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**ENCOURAGEMENT IN A COVENANT GOD**

*Sermon preached by John Gill (1697-1771)*

*Dr. Gill was a most learned theologian, author of many weighty treatises; but his sermons are very different from his writings. There is a beautiful simplicity in them.*

**Text:** “But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God” (1 Sam. 30. 6).

David was at this time in as great distress, if not greater, than ever he was in all his life. He had been persecuted from place to place by Saul, and his life often in imminent danger; but then he had friends along with him to comfort and encourage him, to protect and defend him to the utmost of their power. But now it was otherwise; yet he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Ziklag, the place where he and his men had dwelt for some time, the Amalekites taking the advantage of his absence came and burnt and destroyed it, carried captives the wives and concubines of his men, and his own wives also. This occasioned a general discontent, and even a mutiny among the people, so that David’s people, his own friends, spoke of stoning him. But notwithstanding all this, “David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.”

At this time of distress, he was at the eve of his outward grandeur and glory; for much about this time, very likely at the very time, that battle from whence he was very providentially withdrawn was fought between Saul and the Philistines, in which Saul and his sons were slain, which paved the way for David to ascend the throne of Israel. So sometimes it is, that when God is about to work salvation for His people, to bestow upon them great favours whether in a way of providence or grace, He suffers them to be brought into the greatest straits, that His power, wisdom and goodness may be the more visible.

But David knew nothing of this for the present; his state was very distressing, hopeless and helpless as to human appearance. Nevertheless he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He encouraged *himself*, for he had none to encourage him; they all spoke of stoning him. He encouraged himself, not by virtue of any power of his own, but through the influence of the divine Spirit; which impressed his mind, directed him to God, and enabled him to exercise faith upon Him. He encouraged himself in *the Lord his God*. In the Lord; not absolutely considered, for

God is a consuming fire; but he strengthened, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God, his covenant God and Father.

The observation I make upon this is that covenant interest in God, and a view of what is in God as a covenant God, are a sufficient encouragement to His people in their greatest distresses; and in enlarging on this observation, I shall consider.

I. That the people of God have their times of trouble and distress.

II. That God is their covenant God; and this is a source of support and comfort to them under their troubles. And,

III. That a view of what is in God is enough to encourage the saints in the worst of times. "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."

I. The people of God have their times of trouble and distress. The Apostle Paul seems to distinguish between *trouble* and *distress* when he says, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed." Troubled on every side, from every quarter, all around; look which way we will, there is nothing but trouble, and yet not distressed: that is, not so distressed as to be reduced to despair, as is afterwards explained, or to be brought to ruin and destruction; for it follows, "Perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

The people of God in all ages and periods of time have been poor, and afflicted with divers sorts of afflictions, temporal and spiritual; but this is the favour bestowed upon them, that they shall trust: they are enabled to trust, they do trust in the name of the Lord their God. Their afflictions and troubles are partly outward and partly inward. Some are outward afflictions, such as affect their bodies, their families, and estates, or arise from the world and the men of it, their reproaches and persecutions; and these come not by chance, but are by divine appointment. They are appointed to these afflictions, and these afflictions are appointed for them; these are a legacy their great Lord and Master hath bequeathed them: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." There are many tribulations through which the saints enter the kingdom; they attend them all the way, more or less, to the heavenly glory. They follow them to their entrance into the kingdom; then they leave them, and not till then. These troubles and afflictions are all in love, and are directed by the hand of a tender Father; yet, nevertheless, no affliction is joyous, but grievous to the flesh.

There are other troubles, trials and exercises which are internal, and more especially affect the soul, or the spiritual state of God's people; I mean, their comfortable spiritual state. Nothing can affect, so as to destroy, their state and standing in Christ; but there are many things which distress them with respect to their spiritual frames and comfortable spiritual state. Sometimes they are under the hidings of God's face, and,

as His presence gives them the greatest pleasure, so His absence, the greatest pain and uneasiness. When He hideth His face, their souls are troubled; and upon this follows darkness, and sometimes such darkness that they can see no light. This being the case of good men, that they walk in darkness, and have no light, no joy, comfort and peace in a sensible manner; hence follow many doubts and fears in them relative to their case. They are ready to fear that a work of grace was never begun in them, or that they shall never hold on and out unto the end, but fall short of heaven at last: without are fightings and within are fears.

Unbelief sometimes prevails to a very great degree, and their language is like that of the psalmist, "Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" Unbelief reads all this in the affirmative. You may well imagine God's people are in distress when this is their case.

Sometimes their distresses arise from the temptations of Satan, who is a very busy adversary, and goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, though he cannot do this with respect to the people of God; yet he can, and is, often suffered to distress them. Yea, he is said to desire to winnow one as wheat, as Peter; and he buffets another, as in the case of Paul, he throws his fiery darts thick and fast, and these give a great deal of pain and uneasiness. To all these may be added the corruptions of their nature, which are suffered sometimes to prevail very much in them. They find a law in their members warring against the law of their minds and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin and death; which makes them say, "O wretched men that we are!" These old Canaanites left in the land are as pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, that give them great distress.

II. God is the covenant God of His people, and that is a source of support and comfort to them under all their troubles and distresses. David says, "Fear was on every side ... but I trusted in Thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God" (Psa. 31. 13, 14). God is the God of His people, not only in a general sense, as He is the God of the spirits of all flesh; not in a national sense, as He is the God of the Jews: He avouched them to be His people, and they avouched Him to be their God. But He is the God, the covenant God of His people in a more special sense, in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things and sure; the tenor of which runs thus: "They shall be My people, and I will be their God." This covenant interest is made manifest in effectual vocation, when God calls His covenant ones effectually by His grace; which makes it clearly appear that they *are* His covenant ones. Then, they who are not a people, that is, who were not known to be a people of God, either by themselves or

others, openly appear to be His people; for the application of covenant blessings unto them is an undeniable proof of their interest, for to whomsoever covenant blessings are applied, such must be most certainly interested in the covenant of grace

Now this covenant interest always continues, it never can be dissolved; let the saint come into what condition he will, let him be in what trouble or distress he may, covenant interest always abides. Afflictions that are laid upon him of one kind or another are no arguments at all disproving his covenant interest; rather are proofs of the same. For in the covenant it is provided that when the Lord's children forsake His law, and walk not in His statutes, He will visit their transgression with a rod and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless His lovingkindness He will not utterly take from them, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. His covenant He will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of His lips. Even the sins and corruptions of God's people, the temptations of Satan, and the snares of this world, do not, cannot dissolve covenant interest. For Jehovah knew beforehand, when He took His people into this covenant, what they would be: that they would be called transgressors from the womb; that their neck would be as an iron sinew, and their brow as brass; and yet this did not hinder their admission into this covenant, and consequently cannot be a reason for dismissing them from it.

Besides, in this covenant of grace there is provision made for the forgiveness of the sins of God's people. One principal promise runs thus: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." That darkness and desertion, those doubts and fears and unbelief which attend God's people, cannot destroy their covenant interest. That still continues the same, whether they are in the light or in the dark, whether in comfortable or uncomfortable frames, covenant interest is always invariably the same.

As it was with the Head, so it is with the members; as it was with our Head, Christ Jesus, when suffering, and God withdrew His presence from Him and He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Forsaken He was; but God was His God still. So it is with the members, they may be forsaken, God may hide His face from them, they may be in darkness and in the deeps; yet they may say *my God* still. So says the church, "My God will hear me.... When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.... He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness." Covenant interest always abides; and is the source of comfort to the saints in all their distresses; for He, that is their covenant God, will be their God and their Guide unto death.

III. There are such things in God as are a sufficient encouragement to His people in the worst of times, and they may, through the strength

of divine grace, as David did, encourage themselves in the Lord their God. Thus, for instance,

1. There are *the mercy, grace and love* of our heavenly Father, of our covenant God. He has proclaimed His name, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious ... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Upon this declaration of grace David might well, and so every believer also, with the greatest assurance affirm, "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful."

Now this yields relief to the people of God, when first awakened to a sight and sense of their state and condition by nature. This relieves them in their first soul trouble: namely, the declarations of the grace, mercy and love of God. As Benhadad's servants argued with their master, "We have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life." So poor sinners, when they are first awakened to a sight and sense of their vileness, the just demerit of their sins and the consequences of them, having heard through the report of the gospel that the King of kings and Lord of lords is gracious and merciful, they are encouraged to go and throw themselves upon His grace and mercy and say, as the publican did, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Not that they cast themselves upon the absolute mercy of God; but upon the mercy of God as it streams through the blood and righteousness of Christ; which is the sense of that request of the publican, "God be merciful to me," through the propitiatory sacrifice of Thy Son.

It is a view of this that encourages sinners in their first distress of soul to go to God and venture their souls upon His mercy. "Let Israel" (and so let every sensible sinner) "hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him there is plenteous redemption." That is, there is mercy streaming through that plenteous redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a declaration of the grace and mercy of God that is a relief to poor, sensible souls, under the first workings of the Spirit of God upon their hearts, whereby they are encouraged to hope for pardoning grace, and to obtain it, as the apostle says he did: "I ... who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy." So likewise it is a relief unto them after having fallen into sin, and when brought again to repentance, when they stand in need of fresh discoveries of forgiving love.

In affliction the Lord is pleased to reveal Himself unto them in this manner, and apply His pardoning grace unto them: they find Him to be a kind, merciful and tender-hearted Father to them. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." He sympathises with them in all their troubles; in all their afflictions He is

afflicted; His bowels yearn towards them when they are in distress; and though He may seem sometimes to frown upon them in His providence, yet He changes His dispensations towards them in love, saying, "Is Ephraim My dear son? is he a pleasant child?" Verily he is, "for since I spake against him," in a providential way, "I do earnestly remember him still: therefore My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."

God, the covenant God of His people, is full of mercy, grace, love, kindness and tenderness unto them at all times; and this is an encouragement to them to trust in Him. In a view of this they may do as David did, encourage themselves in the Lord their God; and the rather, inasmuch as this mercy, grace and love always continue the same. The mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him. His love to His people is an everlasting love. His lovingkindness never departs from them, nor can anything separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.

Well then, let the saint be in what trouble and distress he will, if he can but be directed and is but enabled to look to the grace and mercy of God as a covenant God, always the same, it will yield him relief in the worst of times.

2. There is the *power* of God, which is great and unlimited. "Twice have I heard this," says the psalmist, "that power belongeth unto God." There are not only one, or two, but there are many instances of the almighty power of God. He who is almighty is able to save His people when in the greatest distress. His hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear. When they cry to Him in their distress, pray to Him for deliverance, they pray to a God that can save them to the uttermost, save them out of all their troubles. "This poor man cried," says David, and it may be he means himself particularly, "and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." So this poor man, and the other poor man, and thousands of poor saints in all ages, have cried unto the Lord in their distress, and He has saved them out of all their troubles.

He has power and ability to fulfil all the promises which He has made unto His people; and they are many, exceeding great and precious. Abraham had a special promise made to him, and the fulfilment of it was attended with many difficulties, insurmountable to carnal reason; yet he staggered not at the promise, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And what was it kept up his faith in the view of those difficulties that attended the accomplishment of the thing promised? Why, it was this: he was persuaded that God "was able also to perform." God, the covenant God of His people, is of such power that He is able to supply all their wants, let them be what they will; to supply all their need,

according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He is able to support them under their greatest trials, and He has promised to do it; He has said, "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." And when He puts underneath His everlasting arms, they are a sufficient support.

He is able to protect and defend them from all enemies. They that trust in Him, as their covenant God, are as mount Zion, that can never be removed. For, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever." He is a wall of fire round about them to preserve them and to annoy their enemies. He is the glory in the midst of them. They are kept, as in a garrison, by His power through faith unto salvation. He is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus. He is able to keep them from falling, from a total and final falling away, and present them faultless before the throne of His majesty; and He will exert His power in the preservation of them safe to His everlasting kingdom and glory.

Now a view of this power in God, of His ability to do these things and much more, is a sufficient encouragement to saints in the worst of times.

3. There is the *unchangeableness* of God; which also, when believers have a view of it, relieves them under the greatest distresses. He is the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning; not the least appearance of a change in Him. He is the Lord, that changeth not; and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. They cannot be consumed; they cannot be destroyed who are interested in an unchangeable God. He is unchangeable in His love to them. He never varies in that, let them be in what condition they will, or let His appearance to them be what it may in the external dispensation of things, His love is always the same. If He chides them, if He chastises them in a providential way on account of their sins, yet His lovingkindness He does not take from them, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. If He hide His face from them, to rebuke them, on one account or another, because of some misbehaviour of theirs; yet still He loves them; His lovingkindness does not depart from them. Having loved them, He loves them to the end. His love is everlasting; as it commenced in eternity, it will continue to all eternity, invariably and unchangeably the same. There may be different dispensations towards them, as I have suggested; they may be in different frames of soul, and not always have the like apprehensions of the love of God; yet that in itself is the same.

He is unchangeable in His *counsels and decrees*; particularly in that relative to the everlasting salvation of His people. This is a foundation

of solid comfort, even of everlasting consolation; so says the apostle, "Wherein God ... to shew ... the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things" – His counsel, that which is immutable; and His oath annexed to it, which is likewise so – "in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us."

God is unchangeable in His *promises*, which He hath made to His people. He is not a man, that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent, or change His mind. What He hath said, He will do; what He hath purposed, He will most certainly fulfil. Not one of the good things He hath promised, in covenant, has ever fallen to the ground, or ever shall. For all His promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us.

He is unchangeable in the *blessings of His grace*. These are the sure mercies of David; sure to David's Son, and sure to all His seed. They are irreversible ones. Upon whomsoever they are bestowed, they remain; they are never revoked; God never repents of them. His Son also is as unchangeable as Himself. The eternal Word. The Chaldee paraphrase upon the text respects this, and reads it thus: "And David strengthened himself in the Word of the Lord his God." In that eternal Logos, that Word which was in the beginning with God, and was God. *Strengthened himself* in Him; or, to use the apostolic language, he became strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today and for ever; unchangeable in His nature, Person, offices and grace. He hath, particularly, an unchangeable priesthood; an unchangeable virtue in His righteousness, to justify from all sin; in His blood to cleanse from it; and in His sacrifice, to make expiation for it. A view of this unchangeableness in God and Christ is a sufficient encouragement to the saints under all their distresses, be they what they may.

4. The *faithfulness of God*. This is a wonderful attribute. "Who is like unto Thee," says the psalmist, "or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?" God is faithful to Himself, faithful to His promises and counsels. His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. All true, and faithfully fulfilled. He is faithful to every promise of His. Hence the apostle describes Him as faithful who hath promised, who also will do it. He is faithful to His covenant. He will not break His covenant upon any account whatsoever, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. He is faithful to His Son. As Christ is faithful to Him that appointed Him, even His divine Father, so Jehovah the Father is faithful to His Son with respect to all the promises He made to Him, concerning His own glory as Mediator, and the good of His covenant people. And He is faithful to His covenant people, notwithstanding their unfaithfulness and unbelief; for though we believe not, says the apostle, He abides faithful.



Now a consideration of this perfection of our covenant God is sufficient to support and encourage us under the greatest distresses in life.

5. The same may be observed indeed of every perfection of His, as His omniscience, omnipresence and the like. He is *omniscient*. He knows all persons and things; and the knowledge He has of His people is special and particular. It is not merely a general knowledge, as He knows all His creatures, but is joined with the greatest affection to them. In this sense we are to understand it, when He is said to *know them that are His*. He knows all the world, and all the men in it; but not in the sense in which He knows His covenant ones. His knowledge, being connected with the greatest affection to them, His eyes are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cries, in a different manner from what they are upon, and to others. Indeed the eye of His providence is particular. He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. And the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, to show Himself strong in a remarkable manner on the behalf of those whose hearts are upright towards Him. He knows their persons and their wants. Their desires are before Him, and their groanings are not hid from Him. This is a great encouragement to them.

So the *omnipresence* of God. He is a God at hand, and not a God afar off. He is nigh to all them that call upon Him in truth. It was the peculiar privilege of Israel of old that they had God so nigh unto them in all things they called upon Him for. So have all the saints and people of God. He is the eternal God from everlasting to everlasting: He which was, and is, and is to come; and He has been and is the dwelling place of His people in all generations. He is the ever-living God to protect, preserve and bring them safe to the everlasting enjoyment of Himself. Thus a view of what God is, in Himself, and of what is in our covenant God and Father, are a sufficient encouragement in the worst of times. "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."

But I must draw to a conclusion. You may be directed from hence where to go, and to whom to apply in times of trouble: not to the creature, or an arm of flesh, but to the Lord as your covenant God. When refuge fails you, and no man cares for your soul, then say, as David did, "Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living."

This doctrine may serve to support the people of God under all the vicissitudes that attend them in this life, in body, soul or estate. This may be a relief to them, that they have to do with, and are interested in a covenant God, whose love and covenant are unchangeable, and therefore the sons of Jacob shall not be consumed. What may not such persons expect, who have Jehovah for their covenant God? They may say, as Jacob did, they have all things; they have enough. The Lord is their

Shepherd; He is their shield, and their exceeding great reward. They have nothing to fear from their enemies, spiritual or temporal. They may say, as David did, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" If God be for them, if He is on their side, if He is their covenant God and Father, who shall be against them? or what does it signify who are against them?

Happy that people whose God is the Lord! They may expect every blessing of grace here, and eternal glory hereafter. His grace will be sufficient to carry them through all the trials of life, and bring them safe to glory. He who is their God is a sun and shield; He gives grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

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### LOW VIEWS OF SELF

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Dear —, I am obliged to you for your last kind letter, and heartily wish I could answer it with the same humble, savoury and spiritual frame with which you seem to have written it; and this is what I want, and sometimes fear I shall never attain, to have my pen, my tongue, my life, all breathe, speak, nay, proclaim aloud, the Lord Jesus Christ, the wonders of His dying love and riches of His sovereign grace. I want more of that poverty of spirit whereby a Christian sees his own sin and misery, and yet hopes in God's mercy; performs duties and yet does not trust to them; ascribes all his failings to himself, and all his excellencies to Jesus Christ.

But why should I multiply particulars? In all the lives that I have read, and they are not a few, I never met with so wanting, and yet so undeserving, a creature as myself. The Lord lead me to the fulness of Jesus Christ — not to make use of Him as a man does of his deeds, bonds and other securities for money, which he looks upon perhaps in a long season to see whether they are safe, and then takes no further thought about them; but I would live upon Christ as a man lives upon his daily bread. I am satisfied religion will never flourish in my soul till I am enabled so to do, for all religion begins in the knowledge of Him, thrives by communion with Him, and will be completed in the enjoyment of Him.

Christ is the Christian's All. Sometime I think I can say as the Church (Isa. 26. 8): "Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee." But I want to say as she does (Song 3. 4): "It was but a little I passed from them, but I found Him." Yet will I wait God's time, for that is best; and the longer the mercy is delayed, the more welcome will it be when it comes. Besides, we are told, "The Lord is good unto

them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.” May you know but little of the distresses I sometimes feel, and much of the comforts for which I long and wait!

Yours, etc.,

Benjamin Beddome

Beddome (1717-1795), the author of several of our hymns, was for over fifty years pastor at the Particular Baptist chapel at Bourton-on-the-Water, where his labours were very much blessed.

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## THE ARK

*By F.W. Krummacher (1796-1868)*

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“Make thee an ark of gopher-wood, and enter thou into it with all thy house, that thou mayest live.” Thus spake the Lord to Noah His friend. And Noah conferred not with flesh and blood, but taking his reason captive under the word of the Lord, and paying no attention to the jeers of a scorning world, he began to build the wondrous vessel, and by this blind submission gave due glory to God.

A dreadful judgment awaited the world. A flood, which scorning the strongest barriers would foam even over the loftiest mountains, was selected as the instrument for destroying all flesh from off the earth. What a prospect for the children of Adam! But do not deceive yourselves! The same wrath, which once poured forth that destructive deluge, flames to this hour against all those who are not born of God, and still daily washes down its unhappy victims, by the wave of death, into destruction. Are you desirous of building a vessel to save you in the hour of distress? Do not form it out of works and virtues. The justice of the eternal God is a sharp rock. Your bark will dash into a thousand pieces upon it. To the ark, dear brethren, to the ark! whoever amongst you loves his own soul.

“To the ark”? Yes, for an Ark is also prepared for us. Look towards Bethlehem. There it lies, as it were, still upon dry ground. But soon it will be lifted up, and not have many more pleasant days. We shall perceive it struggling with the winds and the waves. It will cruise between rocks and whirlpools. Every storm will go over it; the waves of reproach and persecution will cover it. Nay, at length it will even sink in bloody floods of death, but only in order soon to rise again, for the purpose of unfurling the flag of victory, and of steering full sail into the haven of eternal rest. Do you ask, “For what purpose is this dreadful voyage?” Look at Noah’s ark. It likewise did not continue lying on the plain, but bent its course through the storm and the breakers. “For what purpose?” To carry Noah and his family through. For a similar object,

Christ the living Ark gives Himself up to the floods of divine wrath; for it is by this means that it becomes an ark of deliverance to all who take refuge in it.

When Noah's ark lay ready on the strand, it was a prophetic sign of evil to all who saw it. When the fire engines rattle along the streets, we are aware that fire has broken out. When the people run with spades and wheelbarrows to the embankments, no-one doubts that an inundation is threatened. When a king levies an army, marches out his troops, and causes fortifications to be erected, it is evident what has occurred in his kingdom. And when the Almighty Himself sends not merely a prophet or an angel, but his only-begotten Son for the rescue of sinners, what shall we then think? How great must be the existing danger, when such arrangements are necessary for its removal! Yes, the mere existence of Jesus in the world is the most powerful sermon on the lost condition of mortals that ever was preached. The cross, that wondrous sign of our exaltation, intimates to us, at the same time, in a more deeply affecting manner than anything else can, the abyss of destruction in which by nature we are plunged.

Noah's ark was completed. The fountains of the great deep were then broken up, and the windows of heaven thrown open; and Noah went into the ark, as the Lord his God had commanded him. The entrance into the true Ark takes place under similar circumstances. This is the case when the waters come upon us. No-one goes into it dry-shod and with dry eyes. We must first feel the wrath, and then be delivered from the curse. Through anguish on account of sin, to the heart of Jesus; such is the method.

If you now enquire what is implied by an entrance into the true Ark, know first of all that we enter into Christ by using our eyes; and this we do as often as we thoughtfully contemplate the fulness of the riches which are treasured up in Him. Secondly, by prayer; and we enter into Him by this means, when we ask some particular thing of Him, even as the lepers, mentioned in the gospel, who exclaimed, "Lord, heal us." But such-like entrances are not sufficient for our eternal deliverance. The entrance into Him, which is like that of Noah into the ark, is caused by our feeling the pressure of the wrath of the eternal Judge, and seeing no other refuge either in heaven or on earth but in His wounds; the entrance into His suretyship and into His bleeding sacrifice, with the entire hope of a heart which ardently thirsts after grace, is the true and proper entrance, and that which saves the soul.

When Noah had entered the ark, the Lord shut the door upon him. This act does not always immediately take place in the spiritual Antitype. The door continues open a long time with respect to many, who have cast themselves into the arms of Jesus, so that they still possess a free and

painful view of the desert of their past life. But before they are aware, the Lord closes the door upon them. The terrific retrospect is suddenly hidden from their view. The mountains of their sins are removed by a mighty hand. They know that they have obtained mercy and that everything is atoned for, forgotten and forgiven.

When the Lord had shut the door upon Noah, the latter was at once separated from a wicked world. And when the Lord liberates us from the world, we are really delivered from it. We may be able to separate the body from the world, but not the heart. But if Jesus shuts the door, it is really closed. We are then inwardly estranged from the world. And if we were even desirous of returning to the world and its ways, we should be unable to do so, and constantly find the gates barred and the barriers insurmountable.

The Lord shut the door upon Noah. When this was done, Noah was removed from the view of those who were left behind; and thus it is with all who enter into the true ark. The world knows them no more. They travel incognito. Their life is "hid with Christ in God." But what do they care whether the world is able to comprehend and value them or not; it is enough for them that "the Lord knoweth them that are His." They know that they are beloved by Him and regarded with acceptance. What more would they have?

The Lord shut the door. Noah was then safe. The waves could not break in upon him, and he was also secured from falling out into the waters. In a similar manner those are shut in who are in Christ. "My sheep," says the Lord, "shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

When the door was shut upon Noah, He was carried out into the watery waste. The flood increased, and lifted up the ark, and bore it aloft above the high places of the earth. How often did the ark in all probability cruise between rocks and whirlpools? How many times may the billows of destruction have menacingly broken over it! But what of that? Our mariner sat untouched by them, and even in the most horrifying depths, felt safe in his floating citadel.

Thus do God's people also steer through the ocean of life. If thou art in Christ the true Ark, let the tempest roar around thee as it pleases; thou art safe. However much the waves of temptation and tribulation may break over thee, be not afraid. If a shock even cast thee down from thy seat or thy couch, still thou art far from sinking into the flood; thou still remainest in the Ark, and wilt continue there until the day of landing, and until thou shalt cast anchor on the Ararat of an eternal and sabbatic repose. Happy mariner, sail away in peace and rejoice in the olive-leaf of promise in the mouth of the dove!

## THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST

*By Abraham Booth (1734-1806)*

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Happy, thrice happy are they, who are interested in the divine righteousness, who by faith have received the atonement! Such, all such, are pronounced righteous by the eternal Judge. There is nothing to be laid to their charge. They are acquitted with honour to all the perfections of Deity, and everlastingly free from all condemnation. Their sins, though ever so numerous or ever so hateful, being purged away by atoning blood, and their souls being vested with that best, that most excellent robe, the Redeemer's righteousness, they are without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." They are presented by their great Representative "in the body of His flesh through death ... holy and unblameable and unproveable" in the sight of the omniscient God. They are fair as the purest wool, whiter than the snow.

Yes – let believers exult in the thought! – the work and worthiness of the Lord Redeemer give them acceptance with infinite Majesty, and dignity before the angels of light. These afford consolation on earth and procure estimation in heaven. Through these they shall stand with courage at the bar of judgment, and make their appearance with honour among the inhabitants of glory.

Let the legalist boast of his good works, his pious services and strict holiness. The man that is taught of God esteems them all lighter than vanity and worse than nothing if set in competition with Christ, or presuming to stand in the place of His matchless obedience. Were he endowed with all the shining virtues that ever adorned the lives and characters of the most excellent saints, did he possess the exemplary meekness of Moses, and the amazing patience of Job, the ever-active zeal of Paul and that love which glowed in the bosom of John, he would not, he durst not advance the least claim to justification and eternal life on this footing. No, blessed Jesus! it is in Thy righteousness alone, that he dares to confide; it is in Thy obedience alone that he presumes to glory.

This obedience is the immovable basis for the anxious mind to rest upon by faith. This is a sure foundation to support the believer's hope of glory, even when he views the righteous law in all its strictness and unabated purity. This foundation of confidence will bear up the soul in the views of death and when on the confines of an eternal world. Nor will it fail, such is its high perfection and sovereign efficacy, in the near prospect of the awful judgment. Here, then, grace reigns: in providing and freely bestowing this righteousness and in our complete justification by it.

## LOOKING UNTO JESUS

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My dear friend – I see more and more what an afflicted people the Lord's people, or, at least, the best of them are. What sufferings in body, what trials in mind, what afflictions in family, what perplexity in circumstance, what trials in the church, what foes without, what fears within, are the most spiritual of the Lord's people exercised with. But how by these afflictions they are separated from the great mass of dead and worldly professors with which the visible church is filled; and how through these tribulations the work of grace is deepened and strengthened in their soul!

We can look back to ourselves, and we can see in others how many wares were taken into the ship, which, in the storm, had only to be thrown overboard. I can see even in those gracious friends to whom my heart is knit that many things were cleaved to, if not actually indulged in, from which the furnace of a later period in life has purged them. The Scripture well and wisely speaks of grace in our heart as gold; but this gold gets mixed with dross and tin, not that gold is dross and tin, but, as in the natural ore, the gold lies as if in streaks and in veins embedded, as it were, in worthless matter, so the grace of God in a Christian's heart lies, as it were, in thin veins, surrounded with the mass of nature's corruptions. This is why we so need the furnace, for its hot fires discover and separate everything in us which is opposed to the grace of God. Thus I have observed in those Christians who have passed through the deepest trials, and been most exercised in their own souls, more simplicity, sincerity, uprightness, godly fear, consistency and fruitfulness; and yet with all this we find them continually lamenting their barrenness, deadness and unprofitableness. Why so? Because the light which shines into their mind reveals, and because the life which is moving in their heart makes them feel those deep and abiding corruptions which are never purged away in their being though they may be in their power and prevalence.

I was much pleased with what you said about having your mind more fixed upon our blessed Lord, as having died and risen from the dead, and gone up on high. I have long seen and felt that our faith, if it is to work by love and purify our heart, must have an object – a divine and heavenly Object to whom it can look, on whom it can hang, and with whom it may have to do. There is a great tendency in the mind, and one, I must add, often encouraged by the ministry of the day, to look too much at our evidences instead of looking to Christ. It is a delicate subject to handle, and I should much like to talk it over with you in the fear of the Lord, and in that exercise of our enlightened judgment and spiritual experience which makes conversation profitable; and, I believe, as we see eye to eye in these matters, we should not differ nor dispute.

The great difficulty is to avoid getting on one wrong ground in our anxiety to get off another. We see, for instance, many preachers speaking in very bold language of always looking to Christ, and shooting arrows of contempt against the poor, tried children of God for being so much bowed down with doubt and fear, and against the ministers who, they say, encourage them in it. Now, how grievous it would be to join, even in appearance, with such men, for we feel confident that the faith of which they speak is for the most part presumption.

But then, on the other hand, there may be an error in leading the poor child of God to look too much to the work within instead of the work without, and make his feelings to be his Christ. Now we know that all our hope centres in the blood and righteousness of the Son of God, and we know that our faith, if it bring any peace or consolation with it, only does so as it receives the Son of God as of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. To take Christ out of our sight is like taking the sun out of the sky; and to look to one's self for light is like substituting a lucifer match for the light of day. What we want is for the blessed Lord to come into our soul in His dying love, in His risen power, in His free, rich, superabounding grace, in the manifestations of His glorious Person, and in the sweet assurance that He loved us and gave Himself for us.

This is the doctrine – the heavenly doctrine which Paul preached, and which he prayed that the saints might enjoy (Eph. 1. 12-23; 3. 8-21), and this was his own experience (Gal. 2. 19, 20). Though so deeply favoured and so richly blessed, he was not looking to, nor leaning upon, his own experience, even though he had been in the third heaven, but was looking to, and leaning upon, his blessed Lord. How this shines, as with a ray of light, through his blessed epistles, and O that we might be taught by the same Spirit, have in measure the same experience, and preach to others the same glorious gospel, holding forth the Word of life that we may rejoice in the day of Christ that we have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

You complain of your want of ability, etc.; but all our ability is of the Lord, and not of ourselves. One man may have greater natural ability, more clearness of thought and power of expression, or his spiritual gift may be larger, as one servant in the parable had five talents given to him and another two. But, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," was said to both. The great thing is to labour with a single eye to God's glory according to the ability which the Lord gives us. It is the Lord's Word, not our own, which we have to preach, and what the Lord blesses is not what we speak, but what the Lord speaks in and by us.

How mysterious are the Lord's dealings with His people, and often how inexplicable; but it almost seems as if the Lord had a controversy



with Zion in taking away or laying aside His servants, and raising up so few to fill up their place. It will soon be with us time no longer. O that we might be enabled to say when the time comes, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

Yours very affectionately in the truth,

J.C.P.

Stamford, February 19th, 1864

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### A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN TROUBLE

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My dear Madam,

The letter we received yesterday from Mr. — has given us some painful feelings for you both. He says you are lower in your spirits than usual. By this time, I hope the Lord hath raised your spirits again. I wonder not that they sometimes droop: your part is trying and solitary, affording many handles, which the enemy, if permitted, knows how to take hold of. The pressure of your troubles is farther aggravated by their long continuance. It is one thing to stand tolerably in a skirmish when it is but a brush and away; like a hasty shower in a summer's day, which presently leaves us in full possession of the sun again. It is quite a different thing to endure patiently, when a trial lasts not for days or months, but from year to year, when expectation seems to fail, and all our scouts return to tell us there is no perceptible abatement of the waters.

But is this the way to raise your spirits? Instead of giving you sal-volatile, as I designed, I had almost mistaken the vial. Let us try again. Ay, this is it. Read the inscription, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." No wonder that we are often sorrowing in such a world as this; but to be always rejoicing, though in the midst of tribulation, this may seem strange, but it is no more strange than true. When I want witness to this truth in open court, I may confidently subpoena you to confirm it.

They who would always rejoice must derive their joy from a source which is invariably the same; in other words, from Jesus. O that name! What a Person, what an office, what a love, what a life, what a death, does it recall to our minds! Come, madam, let us leave *our* troubles to themselves for a while, and let us walk to Golgotha and there take a view of *His*. We stop, as we are going, at Gethsemane, for it is not a step out of the road. There He lies, bleeding, though not wounded; or if wounded, it is by an invisible, an almighty hand. Now I begin to see what sin has done. Now let me bring my sorrows, and compare, measure and weigh them against the sorrows of my Saviour. Foolish attempt; to

weigh a mote against a mountain; against the universe! Thus far we have attained already and aim to say,

“Now let our pains be all forgot,  
Our hearts no more repine!  
Our sufferings are not worth a thought,  
When, Lord, compared with Thine.”

We are still more confirmed at our next station. Now we are at the foot of the cross. Behold the Man! attend to His groans; contemplate His wounds. Now let us sit down here a while and weep for our crosses, if we can. For our crosses? Nay, rather let us weep for our sins, which brought the Son of God into such distress. Agreed. I feel that we, not He, deserved to be crucified and to be utterly forsaken. But this is not all: His death not only shows our desert, but seals our pardon.

For a fuller proof, let us take another station. Now we are at His tomb. But the stone is rolled away. He is not here; He is risen. The debt is paid, and the Surety discharged. Not here! Where then is He? Look up! Methinks the clouds part, and glory breaks through. Behold a throne! What a transition! He who hung upon the cross is seated upon the throne. Hark, He speaks! May every word sink deep into your heart and mine. He says, “I know your sorrows, yea, I appoint them; they are tokens of My love; it is thus I call you to the honour of following Me. See a place prepared for you near to Myself. Fear none of these things: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” It is enough, Lord.

Now then let us compute, let us calculate again. These scales are the balances of the sanctuary. Let us put in our trials and griefs on one side. What an alteration! I thought them lately very heavy: now I find them light, the scale hardly turns with them. But how shall we manage to put in the weight on the other side? It is heavy indeed: an exceeding, an eternal weight of glory. It is beyond my grasp and power. No matter. Comparison is needless. I see, with the glance of an eye, there is no proportion. I am content. I am satisfied. I am ashamed. Have I been so long mourning, and is this all the cause? Well, if the flesh will grieve, it shall grieve by itself. The Spirit, the Lord enabling me, shall rejoice; yea, it does. From this moment I wipe away my tears, and forbid them to flow; or if I must weep, they shall be tears of gratitude, love and joy. The bitter is sweet; the medicine is food.

But the cloud closes: I can no longer see what I lately saw. However, *I have seen it*: I know it is there. He ever liveth, full of compassion and care, to plead for me above, to manage for me below. He is mine, and I am His: therefore all is well.

I hope this little walk will do us both good. We have seen wonderful things today. Wonderful in themselves, and wonderful in their

efficacy to compose our spirits, and to make us willing to suffer on. Blessed be God for His unspeakable gift!

Having written thus far, I made a digression to the Jews' synagogue. Though born and bred in London, I was never there before. On my return, I may say, Blessed be God, not only for the gift of His Son, but for the gift of His Spirit! What a gross darkness overwhelms that unhappy people! With the Holy Scriptures in their hands, how utterly are they ignorant of their true meaning! And what multitudes of professed Christians, who can pity or smile at their superstitions, are equally, though differently mistaken!

Hence we have another argument for thankful submission. Supposing our life could have passed without a single trial, yet if we had lived and died ignorant of God and of ourselves, our happiness, preferable to that of the most afflicted, would have been but like the poor marks of distinction paid to a state-criminal of rank, who is attended to the place of execution with a parade not allowed to the vulgar, but must undergo the same punishment when he comes thither. How trivial is such a pre-eminence! What do all past pleasures and advantages now avail the worldling who died this morning? What is the believer who died this morning the worse now for the trials which he met with in his path to glory? Quite the reverse: he now sees that they were directed and adjusted to promote and secure his progress, and to shield him from still greater evils to which he was otherwise exposed. Let us abide by the conclusion, which our judgment assures us he now makes. It will appear as plain and self-evident to us, likewise, when we shall be called to take possession of our lot in the inheritance of the saints in light.

If you have lately been in conflict with the enemy, I hope this will find you praising the Lord for a new victory. If under bodily indisposition, I hope His gracious hands have already brought you health and cure, accompanied with a farther discovery of the abundance of peace and truth.

I am, Madam,

Your affectionate

Omicron (the pen name of John Newton)

God by His decree transferred the fulfilling of the law to Christ, the God-Man, and willed that that obedience and righteousness which Christ performed in our flesh should become ours by imputation. The apostle most clearly teaches that Christ was made subject to the law, not for Himself, but for us; whence it will follow that the fruit of His obedience redounds to us; which is the same as that the righteousness of Christ, or His perfect fulfilling of the law, is imputed to us.

*John Davenant*

## THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

*By Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686)*

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### 1. *Christ's blood is a reconciling blood.*

"You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind ... yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death" (Col. 1. 21, 22). No sooner was the message brought to King David, "Uriah is dead" (2 Sam. 11. 21), than the anger of David was removed. No sooner was the blood of Christ poured out, than God's anger was pacified. Christ's blood is "the blood of atonement."

Nay, it is not only a sacrifice, but a "propitiation" (1 John 2. 2), which denotes bringing us into favour with God. It is one thing for a traitor to be pardoned, and another thing to be brought into favour. Sin cut us off from God, Christ's blood cements us to God. If we had had as much grace as the angels, it could not have wrought our reconciliation. If we offered up millions of sacrifices, if we had wept rivers of tears, this could never have appeased an angry Deity; only the blood of Christ can ingratiate us into God's favour, and make Him look upon us with a smiling aspect. When Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent; this was not without a mystery, to show that through Christ's blood the veil of our sins is rent, which interposed between God and us.

### 2. *Christ's blood is a quickening blood.*

"Whoso ... drinketh My blood, hath eternal life" (John 6. 54); it both begets life and prevents death, "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17. 11). Sure enough, the life of our soul is in the blood of Christ. When we contract deadness of heart, and are like wine that has lost its spirits, Christ's blood has an elevating power, it puts vivacity into us, making us quick and lively in our motions. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Isa. 40. 31).

### 3. *Christ's blood is a cleansing blood.*

"How much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience?" (Heb. 9. 14). As the merit of the blood of Christ pacifies God, so the virtue of it purifies us. It is the King of Heaven's bath. It is *lavacrum animae* (the washing place of the soul), a laver to wash in. It washes a crimson sinner milk white: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7). The Word of God is a looking glass, to show us our spots; and the blood of Christ is a fountain to wash them away (Zech. 13. 1).

But this blood will not wash if it be mingled with anything. Water will not wash clean except it is mingled with soap or camphor, but if we go to mingle anything with Christ's blood, either the merits of saints or the prayer of angels, it will not wash.

Let the blood of Christ be pure and unmixed, and there is no spot but it will wash it away. It purged out Noah's drunkenness and Lot's incest.

Indeed, there is one spot so black that Christ's blood does not wash it away, and that is the sin against the Holy Spirit; not that there is not enough virtue in Christ's blood to wash it away; but he who has sinned that sin will not be washed; he condemns Christ's blood and "tramples it underfoot" (Heb. 10. 29).

4. *Christ's blood is a softening blood.*

There is nothing so hard but it may be softened if it lie steeping in His blood; it will soften a stone. Water will soften the earth, though it will not soften a stone, but the blood of Christ mollifies a stone, it softens a heart of stone. It turns flint into a spring (Psa. 114. 8). The heart which before was like a piece hewn out of a rock, being steeped in Christ's blood becomes soft, and the waters of repentance flow from it.

How was the jailor's heart dissolved and made tender when "the blood of sprinkling" was upon it! "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16. 30). His heart was now like melting wax. God might set what seal and impression He would upon it.

5. *Christ's blood is a cooling blood:*

i. *It cools the heat of sin.*

The heart naturally is full of distempered heat; it must needs be hot, being "set on fire of hell." It burns in lust and passion; the blood of Christ allays this heat, it quenches the inflammation of sin.

ii. *It cools the heat of conscience.*

In time of desertion, conscience burns with the heat of God's displeasure; now the blood of Christ, sprinkled upon the conscience, cools and pacifies it. And in this sense, Christ is compared to "rivers of water" (Isa. 32. 2). When the heart burns and is in an agony, Christ's blood is like water to the fire: it has a cooling and quenching virtue in it.

6. *Christ's blood is a comforting blood.*

It is good against fainting fits. Christ's blood is better than wine; though wine cheers the heart of a man that is well, yet it will not cheer his heart when he has a fit of the stone, or when the pangs of death are upon him; but Christ's blood will cheer the heart at such a time. It is best in affliction. It cures the trembling of the heart. A conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ can, like the nightingale, sing with a thorn in its breast. The blood of Christ can make a prison become a palace. It turned the martyrs' flames into beds of roses: "The martyrs are beaten, they rejoice; they die and behold they triumph. Why? Because, steeped in the blood of the cross, they do not fear death but hope for it."

Christ's blood gives comfort at the hour of death. As a holy man

once said on his death-bed, when they brought him a cordial, “No cordial like the blood of Christ.”

*7. Christ’s blood is a heaven-procuring blood.*

“Through the side of Christ, He threw open to us the gateway to heaven” (Bernard). Israel passed through the Red Sea to Canaan. So, through the Red Sea of Christ’s blood, we enter into the heavenly Canaan. “Having therefore ... boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10. 19). Our sins did shut heaven. Christ’s blood is the key which opens the gate of paradise for us. “We die through the tree of knowledge; we rise through the tree of the cross.” Hence Theororet calls the cross the “Tree of Salvation,” because the blood which trickled down the cross distils salvation.

Well then, may we prize the blood of Christ, and with St. Paul, determine “not to know anything ... save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2. 2). Kings’ crowns are only crosses, but the cross of Christ is the only crown.

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### THE CONVERTED ATHEIST

*The experience of Edward Blackstock (1791-1852)*

*(Continued from page 62)*

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Were I in Manchester I could go to the very spot where God’s arrows first pierced my heart, and where this singular visitation was experienced by me. The slight relief which I had obtained was not lasting, for when the name [of Jesus Christ] was no longer repeated, my fears returned. I now eagerly wished to see a Bible. I had not possessed one of my own for years, and had scarcely read any part of the Scriptures, but I now ardently longed to possess them. That very afternoon (it was Sunday) we were visited by a friend who had been at school with my wife, and who had continued her friendship when we were deserted by almost all others; I therefore felt that I could address her on the subject of my solicitude, and the more readily as she was considered a highly moral character, and a constant attendant at St. Clement’s Church. [About this time, Gadsby’s friend, William Nunn, became minister there.] On my wife leaving the room, I went towards her, and with the terrors of hell in my conscience, and anguish in my countenance, “O my friend,” I said, “I feel that I am one of the greatest sinners in the town – but God has stopped me! Do you think there can be any mercy for such a sinner as I am? O how much I desire to see a Bible!” Our friend looked alarmed; she drew back her chair, and never uttered a word. I believe my haggard, agitated appearance terrified her.

My wife returned, and they conversed together a while, the young lady occasionally glancing towards me with a look expressive of surprise and pity; she soon took her leave.

That evening and all the next day I was in deep mire, where there is no standing. On the next evening, when I returned from my employment, my wife met me with a contemptuous smile, saying, "What is going to be done now? Miss F—— has been here, and brought you a new Bible." I took it, with no comment beyond, "O has she?" But if ever gratitude arose in any heart, it was excited in mine by the kindness of that present. Many a prayer did I put up to God for the salvation of her soul. I wrote to her occasionally after I left Manchester, and her memory (for she is now deceased) will be ever dear to me; but whether she reaped any benefit from my prayers I never had any means of ascertaining. The taunting of my dear wife on delivering the Bible did not surprise me; I was aware of her state of mind, although she was ignorant of mine. I therefore made no reply, but with my candle and my Book retired to an upper room. There, alone, and in a most solemn manner, I kissed the Bible, and with tears and with inexpressibly-deep feelings, I endeavoured, for the first time in my life, to pour out my soul unto God, as far as I can remember, in these words:

"O God, I am a great sinner; I have no religion, and know not what religion is, or what is truth. I am quite blind to the knowledge of the things written in this Book which I now hold in my hand, and which I believe to be Thy Book. O God, open my blind eyes; and if Thou canst show mercy to such a sinful wretch as I am, O God, show mercy unto me!"

I then sat down and read the first chapter of Matthew, with the intention of proceeding through the Evangelists. I read in a most careful and solemn manner, believing every word I read to be the truth of God as firmly as though I had heard an angel proclaim it from heaven. I found the Word of God to be "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow ... a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," and that all things were "naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4. 12, 13). I felt I had a soul, and that my heart was laid open before the all-searching eye of God. The sword of the Spirit cut me up effectually; and as I knew not my interest in the promises, every chapter I read seemed more or less to condemn me.

When I came to the 11th chapter of Matthew, 25th verse: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," the words immediately arrested my attention. I laid down my Book,

exclaiming aloud, “Why, *Election is true!* the doctrine of election is a *Bible truth!*” Human powers had all failed to convince me of this; and now the first truth that was shown me from reading the Word of God was election. I clearly saw that there was a *chosen* people, and that this people would be eternally saved; but then followed the agonizing thought, that they would be in heaven, and I might be in hell. Yet this apprehension only increased the vehemence of my supplications; for as I read that few would be saved, I became the more urgent that peradventure I might find myself among that number. The truth of election was thus no hindrance to me; it cut down my pride, and made me tremble, but it never had any tendency to stop my cry or produce despair. I believe that election, when it is received in the *power* of God, operates to humble the sinner, and cause him to cry aloud for mercy; to stimulate him to diligence in supplication – not to induce apathy and sloth; to raise to hope rather than sink to despondency.

From this time until my deliverance (a period of three or four months), I believe I was not suffered to lose five minutes of my leisure. The grace of God engaged me in self-examination, reading, hearing or prayer – the last particularly. I often prayed mentally while my hands were occupied. This was the Lord’s doing, and He shall have the glory. These words often sounded in my ears: “Flee from the wrath to come” (Matt. 3. 7); and, “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed” (Gen. 19. 17). I can truly say the world was little to me then; for, to use the language of John Bunyan, “All my concern was about saving or damning.”

I was strongly impelled to kneel down and try to pray. Formerly, in the days of my ignorance, I had uttered many a fine orison [prayer] to the moon, but now I could scarcely find words to pour out the feelings of my heart; yet assuredly the Holy Ghost interceded for me with groanings that could not be uttered. In these consist the life of prayer, for they are those spiritual throes or pangs which, according to the promise, must needs bring deliverance.

Shortly after this I read in John 3. 3: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Through the divine power, these words laid fast hold of me, and I received them into my heart; and although unable clearly to comprehend what it was to be “born again,” yet I believed that work to be a mysterious, spiritual change which must be wrought in a man before he could see or enter into the kingdom, of God. This conviction produced a strong desire that the Lord would effect this work in me; and in a very simple but urgent manner I often prayed that I might be born again.



“Daily we groan and mourn  
Beneath the weight of sin;  
We pray to be new born,  
Yet know not what we mean:  
We think it something very great,  
Something that’s undiscovered yet.”

These were my feelings.

A few days after, on reading that passage in John 14. 6, a divine power applied them to my mind: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Light came with this scripture, showing that there was but one door leading to the Father, and that door was Christ. I felt sure that no sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, could approach God the Father in any other way; that a sinner might as easily scale the walls of heaven; that all must bend and stoop to Christ, entering into life by Him alone, or be damned without remedy: I saw there was no middle path. What God taught me in that hour was decisive, nor has He ever suffered me to swerve from it. I still look upon that passage as a most remarkable text in Scripture. It was followed by, “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

Previously to my receiving these Scriptures I had not dared to mention the name of Christ in my prayers. Now, not only was Christ prominently set before me as the door by which I might find access to the Father; but I was distinctly enabled to see that had I but faith in His name, I should yet succeed: nay, that weak as was my little faith, and many as were my fears, yet if I carried Jesus Christ with me in all my approaches to the Father, I should prevail.

The blind popish priest carries his silver cross before him; the Spirit of God now taught me to present Jesus Christ. The name of Jesus Christ from this period was first and last, and often pleaded in all my attempts at prayer, and will I trust through the mercy of God for ever be, while I am an inhabitant of earth. But how to plead by faith in the name of Jesus is a *holy art* for which we continually need the fresh teachings and leadings of the Holy Spirit.

Thus the Lord the Spirit led me steadily onward. I had conflicts, bondage and fears; a holy vehemence and wrestling in prayer was given to me, such as I would that I had at this day! But underneath this work of supplication, the work of conviction was at the same time being carried on daily and hourly. My heart sins seemed to come upon me like an armed troop, my outward sins appeared too many and too great for forgiveness, and the terrors of God set themselves in array against me. The arrows of the Almighty were in me, the poison whereof drank up my spirit. I doubted, desponded, and often almost despaired of mercy, and

I thought the day would come when God would cut me off, and doom me to eternal death; the fear of this drove me to cry and even roar for deliverance; with David I ejaculated, Attend to “the words of my roaring.”

After about five weeks passed in this state of mind, I went for the first time to a place of worship. It was Cannon Street Chapel. As I arrived at the door, they were singing, “Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove.” My heart joined, but my courage failed me; as I stood thus hesitating, a gentleman came up. The pew-opener invited us to enter; my companion complied and, ashamed to refuse, I followed him; but as I put my foot on the threshold, these words fell upon my spirit: “Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” This almost made my hair stand erect, for I felt as if the hand of God was leading me in. I hung down my head from fear and sorrow at the remembrance of my horrid sins and blasphemies, and was so confused that I heard nothing of the service until the preacher rose to read his text: “Will ye also be His disciples?” (John 9. 27.) The words entered my mind with great power; they so dissolved my heart that I wept like Mary at the Master’s feet. “O blessed Lord,” I ejaculated, “how gladly would I be *Thy disciple* if Thou wouldst receive me!” Of the sermon I could understand not one sentence; but after I knew the Lord, I was at no loss to account for this circumstance, for it was then evident to me that the preacher himself was out of the secret.

*Here follows a long account of the death of his little boy.*

We disposed of nearly all we possessed in order to lay the dear child’s body in the grave.

It was on March 5th, 1816, that he died, after eight days’ illness. This dispensation was greatly sanctified to me. It deepened my convictions, detached me from the world, and enlarged my spiritual desires. “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” These were the words which now followed me continually, and turned me away from all objects but one – the salvation of my soul.

On March 10th, 1816, I began to attend Dr. Jack’s chapel for the first time since the days of my apprenticeship. My father still went there. Dr. Jack was a good man, but it was not the will of God to make his preaching useful to me.

About the same time I likewise attended the evening service at the chapel of Mr. William Roby. I was at once arrested by his plainness of speech, and by his honest, persevering and fervent zeal for the souls of men. Mr. Roby was an alarming and, according to the light he possessed, a most faithful preacher. I listened eagerly to every word, for up to this

period my fears were stronger than my hopes. But, for my own part, I gained from his preaching nothing but condemnation, and some little instruction. Yet his honest dealing suited me well; flattery and temporising I abhorred. By the grace of God I was ardently longing for salvation, and the enlightening, comforting and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost. These were the mercies for which day and night I besought the Lord, and begged that the Spirit would intercede for me with "groanings which cannot be uttered." My soul was set in the right way, but I did not know it. Occasionally these words struck me, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." I certainly then had a broken heart and a contrite spirit; I dared not take to myself the comfort of that passage, but I continued to watch and wait.

At chapel I was tempted with wandering thoughts, but the Lord enabled me to pray against them, and made His strength perfect in my weakness, so that I rarely lost one word, for I watched the testimony as a man between life and death. Yet, during several weeks, I seemed to learn nothing beyond what God had Himself taught me; and I considered this as an unfavourable symptom of my case. The first sermon that was ever much blessed to me was from a stranger.

On going as usual to Lloyd Street Chapel one Sunday morning, I was disappointed to see the pulpit occupied by a person of small stature and insignificant appearance. From so weak an instrument I expected to derive little benefit, but the Lord says, "Look not on the height of his stature," and again, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth"; and so it proved. The subject of the discourse was the parable of the publican and pharisee. The preacher first described the religion of the pharisee, a religion which my soul abhorred; he then entered into the state and feelings of the publican, and thus came into mine. As he detailed and traced out the character, he deeply interested me; but when he uttered, "God be merciful to me a sinner," who can tell with what almighty power those words entered my soul! Such was the divine light, that I was conscious I had an immortal soul; I saw the glorious majesty of God displayed, and I felt the mighty rays of the Sun of righteousness penetrating me. I seemed prostrate and humbled in the very dust, and feelingly shrank beneath the *power* that was in operation. It showed me that I was a very great sinner, and yet it greatly raised my hope of being saved. It made mercy sweet, Christ precious, and heaven desirable. It loosened my soul from earth and elevated it to God.

The visitation was so solemn, so blessed and so ecstatic that I can never hope to describe it. Hiding my face with my hands I leant forward, and with all the powers of my soul I silently adored the God of heaven for the mercy so wonderfully displayed towards me. From that hour to this I have firmly believed that the *power* of a gracious God, as put forth

in the soul of man, is mightier than in aught else under heaven! The rest of the service passed unheeded; and at its close, seeking a secluded spot I there in private poured out my praises and thanksgivings.

“To Him the poor lift up their eyes,  
Their faces feel the heavenly shine;  
A beam of mercy from the skies,  
Fills them with light and joy divine.”

My reflection as I walked homewards was, “Men and brethren, there is a *solemn reality* in the religion of Christ Jesus! O for more of its vital power, that I may bring forth fruits meet for repentance!”

I had both comfortings and castings down. Dr. Jack, I heard, was attacked with sudden illness, and having a strong regard for him as a man of God, I felt my heart much drawn out, and I was led to pray for his recovery, and for spiritual blessings on his soul. The Lord in answer to my prayer sent this text: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”

(To be concluded)

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Suffering Saviour**, by F.W. Krummacker; hardback; 464 pages; price £15.95; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

John Newton once said that, if asked who was the *second* greatest preacher he had ever heard, he would not know how to answer; but if asked the greatest, there would be no hesitation – George Whitefield. Our feelings are just the same concerning *The Suffering Saviour*. No book has ever impressed us more, nor had more effect.

We were only young when lent *The Suffering Saviour* by two old Yorkshire ladies. “Read it,” they said. “But it will make you tremble.” It did.

We cannot always follow Krummacker in his flights of imagination, and he is certainly in error concerning Judas Iscariot; but where can you find a book which so sweetly and solemnly sets forth the preciousness of Christ in His sin-atoning sufferings and death?

Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacker (1796-1868) had the reputation of being the greatest preacher in Europe. His *Elijah the Tishbite* was written when a young preacher in Elberfeld, and has been well-known and loved in our congregations. In later life he became court chaplain to the King of Prussia. *The Suffering Saviour* was first published (in German, of course) in 1854, and almost immediately translated into English. It consists of fifty-three sacred meditations on the last days of the Lord Jesus, divided into three parts: The Outer Court; The Holy Place; The Most Holy Place. The book is well produced, with good, clear print.

Pilate, whether in scorn or pity, cried, “Behold the Man!” and this is what every sinner saved by grace does, as led by the Spirit of God.

“On Him shall Zion place  
Her only hope of heaven,  
And see, in His dear sacred face,  
Ten thousand sins forgiven.”

We are delighted that *The Suffering Saviour* has been reprinted, and pray that, as in our own case, it will be made a blessing to many. We cannot recommend it too highly.

**Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ**, by John Bunyan; paperback; 240 pages; price £4.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Over the years Bunyan's *Come and Welcome* has been highly valued in our congregations. To many it has been a real help spiritually, so we are very pleased that it has been published in such a lovely paperback edition. Many have been the testimonies to blessing received from its pages. We just mention one such testimony: (*Life, Letters and Sermons of Caleb Sawyer*):

“Soon after a man lent me Bunyan's sermon, *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*. This was to be the means of my deliverance. One memorable night going to my bedroom and feeling my case to be almost hopeless and ready to despair I opened and started to read a part of this discourse, when the Lord shone with the beams of His love in my heart, that in a moment my bonds were loosed, my guilt gone, as a measure of faith was given whereby I apprehended the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. There was a closing in with Him for salvation. Such was the power I simply fell on my knees and wept to the praise of the mercy I found. My peace flowed like a river; there seemed nothing between my soul and God. Next day in looking out of the window heavenward I felt, *God loves me*. If He loves me now, being the eternal God, there was never a time He did not love me and there never would be a time when He would not.”

We were, therefore, saddened to read some of the harsh comments in the publisher's introduction and on the back cover – as if this is the perfect answer to what *we* believe. We do not agree with the “free offer” in the Puritans, but no one has loved and valued their works more than we do. Mr. J.H. Gosden wrote: “We are perplexed – but not offended – by the ‘free offer’ in Bunyan.”

As to the claims concerning Andrew Fuller (which we do not think were called for), we are sure John Bunyan would not have been happy with the theology of Andrew Fuller! Who clearer on imputed righteousness and the work of redemption than Bunyan?

*Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ* was first published in 1681, and consists of a series of discourses on John 6. 37: “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” It is this point of the loving welcome for the venturing sinner, so beautifully expounded by Bunyan, which has been so attractive to God's people down the ages.

“*And him.*” There was many a strange HIM came to Jesus Christ, in the days of His flesh; but He received them all, without turning any away; speaking to them ‘of the kingdom of God, and healing them that had need of healing.’ These words, ‘*And him,*’ are therefore words to be wondered at. That not one of them who, by virtue of the Father's gifts and drawing are coming to Jesus Christ,

I say, not one of them, wherever they have been, whatever they have done, should be rejected or set by, but admitted to a share in His saving grace" (page 83).

Written in typical John Bunyan style, this is one of his most attractive works.

**The Acceptable Sacrifice**, by John Bunyan; paperback; 128 pages; price £3.75; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

*The Acceptable Sacrifice* was the last work John Bunyan prepared for the press; in fact, he died whilst it was being printed.

It is over forty years ago since our late dear friend, Mr. Oliver Pearce, had this work re-published privately. We are glad that now once more it can be obtained.

Perhaps a word of explanation is needed. "The acceptable sacrifice" Bunyan deals with is not the one sacrifice of Christ at Calvary when He for ever put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Rather, this is a treatise on Psalm 51. 17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise," and in it John Bunyan deals with true godly repentance, springing from a truly broken heart.

When *The Acceptable Sacrifice* was published in 1959, Mr. J.H. Gosden was emphatic in its praise, recommending it to all, young and old. "To adequately appreciate the excellencies of this Treatise," he wrote, "it must be carefully and prayerfully studied.... We earnestly recommend this book."

**The Lord's Supper**, by Thomas Watson; paperback; 96 pages; price £3.75; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Anything by Thomas Watson is well-worth reading – profitable and edifying. He is one of the most readable of the Puritans. He does not tell a lot of anecdotes, but his writing is enriched by his comparisons. (Remember how the Saviour constantly said, "It is like unto ....") Not least, his works are full of beautiful, pithy statements. For example, from the present work:

"The Word of God is a looking glass, to show us our spots; and the blood of Christ is a fountain to wash them away."

"The more bitterness we taste in sin, the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ."

"All that faith does is to bring home Christ's merits to the soul, and so it justifies; the virtue is not in faith, but in Christ."

"Faith fetches in all provisions. This is the golden bucket that draws water out of the well of life."

"Duty is the golden path to walk in, but not a silver crutch to lean on."

"If our holiest services be not sprinkled with Christ's blood, they are no better than shining sins."

*The Lord's Supper* is a rare work, first published in 1665. The present edition has been carefully transcribed from a copy in the Bodleian Library. The footnotes that have been added are most useful, and each Latin quotation (in which the Puritans abounded) has been translated.

The Puritans had a very high view of the Lord's Supper, rather different from our own. Whilst the Mass was an abomination to them, they would not

accept that the Lord's Supper was nothing more than a remembrance. They contended that there was a special blessing in it to believers *as received in faith*. To them, absence from the Lord's Table by those who feared the Lord was a great sin. Solemn warnings are given against neglect of the Lord's Supper.

Though this is a beautiful and profitable book, we felt the great emphasis on preparation for the Lord's Supper approaches legalism, and we wonder if there is an over-emphasis on the blessing the Lord's Supper is to the people of God. The Lord Jesus commanded it as an open profession of His name – "Ye do shew forth the Lord's death till He come." Baptism is a once for all profession of the Lord's name; the Lord's Supper is a constant profession. "I am a sinner, and my only hope is in what is signified at the Lord's table – the death of Jesus as an atonement for sin."

Three sections are specially profitable, we felt. One on the blood of Christ; one on the difference between true and false faith; one dealing with objections to coming to the Lord's Table. On page 84 we include part of the first.

A valuable book!

**The Life of John Brown, with select writings;** hardback; 208 pages; price £6.95; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Perhaps, somewhat disappointingly, *The Life of John Brown* cannot really be described as an *interesting* biography. A poor orphan, a bare-footed shepherd boy, teaching himself Hebrew and Greek, and becoming an eminent minister and teacher – one would have thought that here was the substance for an almost exciting life-story. In fact, the one well-known, fascinating story in John Brown's life is discounted.

Yet this is a *good* book, and a *profitable* book. There seem to be two reasons for its lack of interesting detail:

1. In later life John Brown spent much of his time alone in his study.
2. He had such self-abasing views of himself that it was abhorrent to him that much should be said about him personally.

In fact, we have never come across anyone who, in their souls' feelings, so deplored their wretchedness and their vileness, and only wanted to exalt the Lord Jesus. It is this that makes the book attractive. Of the 138 pages which comprise the biography, 43 comprise the sayings of the last weeks and days of his life; and these are very beautiful.

There are various John Browns. This is John Brown of Haddington (1722-1787), a Scottish divine belonging to the Secession Church (of the Erskines), who became a Professor of Theology.

The book was written and prepared by John Brown's youngest son, William. (An extremely long aside deals with the method of administering the Lord's Supper in Scotland, and the conflict concerning how many times a year the ordinance should be held. This is not of special interest to English readers.)

The latter part of the book consists of letters, meditations and an account of his dying advice to his younger children.

In former days John Brown was known in this country because many pulpit or family Bibles contained notes written by him. He himself thought of himself as a Covenantanter, believing that the Solemn League and Covenant was still binding in Scotland, even in his lifetime.

## HEART BREATHINGS

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*“Do Thou for me, O God the Lord” (Psa. 109. 21)*

Do Thou for me, O God the Lord;  
For Thou alone canst see,  
What in this ever-changing world  
Will be the best for me.

My heart, O Lord, is in Thy hands;  
Do Thou my will control,  
Nor suffer aught but what will be  
Of profit to my soul.

Grant not my heart's desire, O Lord,  
If with it Thou shouldst send  
Leanness into my soul; but draw  
Me nearer to my Friend.

Thou art that Friend. To Thee alone  
For comfort can I flee;  
In every time of care and woe  
Do Thou my Refuge be.

Yes, this is all that I would ask,  
That Thou my lot wouldst choose;  
Mark out my path, and grant that I  
My will in Thine may lose.

I am so prone to err that I  
Have hourly need to pray,  
Keep Thou my feet firm on the Rock,  
Nor ever let me stray.

Affliction with Thy people, Lord,  
I'd choose to suffer here,  
Rather than spend my life with those  
Possessing not Thy fear.

Do Thou for me, O God the Lord,  
In providence and grace;  
Then, when on earth my course is run,  
I'll rest in Thy embrace.

E. D., *Gospel Standard* 1873



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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING**

*Part of a sermon preached by Joseph Jarvis (1865-1928)*

**Text:** "So shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (Isa. 52. 15).

Our dear Redeemer is set forth, both in the text and context, in His peerless character as "the Man of Sorrows." Here Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified among us. Here we behold Him as our great High Priest sprinkling the nations with His own most precious blood, and regenerating them with the "washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5. 26). We sometimes sing, when gathered around our Lord's table,

"So fair a face bedewed with tears;  
What beauty e'en in grief appears!  
He wept, He bled, He died for you;  
What more, ye saints, could Jesus do?"

It is just in this touching character that our glorious Lord is in our present subject presented to us, for the language of the verse preceding our text is: "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." O my brethren, never did man behold before such majesty in misery, never was such a scene of suffering loveliness, or such a prodigy of injured innocence. How stupendous the spectacle! a weeping Saviour! a sorrowing Redeemer! an agonizing Lord! I have sometimes thought that it might have been this lovely face of the Man of Sorrows that the patriarch Jacob saw at Peniel, for we read, "There wrestled a *Man* with him until the breaking of the day," and this Man was most certainly "the Man Christ Jesus," who appeared to the patriarch in the character of a Saviour; and since this was the case, we have the greatest reason to believe that Jacob beheld Him as a suffering Saviour, that he saw God "in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," and that like his most venerable grandfather Abraham, he saw the day of Christ with holy gladness. You will remember that Jacob, reflecting upon his wonderful deliverance through the abounding grace of the divine Visitor, called the name of that place Peniel, which signifies the face of God, for said he, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." May the blessed Spirit of

God give us a heart-melting sight of the “Man of Sorrows” as we meditate upon this glorious and solemn subject....

We will consider the metaphor of the text: “So shall He *sprinkle* many nations.” Rest assured, brethren, that no allusion is here made to man’s unwarrantable practice of sprinkling infants with water; the great work here referred to is the work of Him whose prerogative it is to “baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” and who declared, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” The metaphor of the text, therefore, sets forth both the washing of regeneration by the Word, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ upon the heart and conscience.

But how could the Lord sprinkle many nations with this precious mystical water and blood? The house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem could not be cleansed from sin and from uncleanness in the promised fountain until that fountain should be opened, for “SO shall He sprinkle many nations.” Do not forget, dear brethren, that in my opening remarks I called your attention to the solemn context, in which we beheld Christ set forth crucified among us, and that we saw also His dear form and face scarred and marred with unutterable sorrow and anguish. Yea, we saw Him as our great High Priest, not with blood of others, but with His own most precious blood, making the atonement for His sinful and guilty bride, for He “loved the church and gave Himself for it”; we saw the Man of Sorrows weeping and sweating blood at every pore to procure our pardon; and O my brethren, our worthless names were engraved upon His bleeding breast, our accursed sins were charged to His account as our loving Sponsor, and His holy heart became the sheath for the flaming sword of justice, which must have smitten us had it not been quenched in His most precious blood.

“O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head,  
What loads were laid on Thee!  
Thou stoodest in the sinner’s stead,  
Didst bear all ill for me!  
A victim led, Thy blood was shed;  
Now there’s no ill for me.

“Jehovah bade His sword awake,  
O Christ it woke ’gainst Thee!  
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake,  
Thy heart its sheath must be;  
All for my sake, my peace to make,  
Thy bruising healeth me.”

O wondrous salvation! Glorious substitution! Infinite grace! which constrained the Just to suffer and die for the unjust, that He might bring us to God! O ye sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, “ye who have

felt His blood sealing your peace with God,” make your boast in “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” glory ye in His holy name, and cry with the apostle, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” How shall those deluded men escape “the terrors of the Lord” who blaspheme the Christ of the covenant by trampling under their swinish feet the blood of the covenant? And how shall those poor sinners escape damnation who neglect this only and great salvation? For “so” shall Christ even with His precious blood “sprinkle many nations,” and that soul which receives not this sprinkling shall eternally perish.

Having now shown that the cleansing fountain was opened through the blood of the new covenant which flowed from the veins of our great Emmanuel, for,

“Unlocked by the spear, it gushed from His heart;  
With blood and with water; the first to atone,  
To cleanse us the latter; the fountain’s but one”;

having shown you also that this is He which came by water and by blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and by blood, I will now by the help of the blessed Spirit speak of the “sprinkling” promised in our text, which is a sprinkling both of water and blood.

I will first treat of the sprinkling of the water. We have a very remarkable promise concerning this mystical water in the prophecy of Ezekiel. It is addressed primarily to the Jews, but we share with them the blessing of its spiritual signification. These are the words: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” Is not this a most blessed promise of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Ghost? Did you not observe that a new heart, yea, a soft heart, is promised as the result of this divine sprinkling with clean water? Then it is most certainly a regeneration promise, for nothing can soften and impart spiritual sensibilities to the stony heart of man but the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. To receive this is to be sanctified through the truth, for it is “the washing of water by the Word” (Eph. 5. 26), and we are therefore washed from our iniquities, “not by works of righteousness which we have done” – or can do – “but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

But do you enquire, “What is the source of this wonderful water of regeneration?” Come with me to the 19th chapter of John’s Gospel, and

I will show you the fountain from whence it flows. We are here told of the crucifixion of our Lord, and of the two malefactors who suffered at the same time. Now as it was the preparation of the Sabbath (and that Sabbath, we read, was an high day), the Jews besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, that so death might be hastened and that the bodies might not remain on the crosses during the Sabbath. Pilate granted the Jews their request; and we read, "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." And now take special notice that this wanton action of the soldier, and the flowing forth of the blood and water, are particularly stated, although the Holy Ghost never records details when they are not of the greatest importance. Must we not therefore conclude that this detailed record has a most important spiritual significance? I am sure we may, especially when we consider that the same beloved disciple enlarges upon it in his Epistle. In his Gospel John says, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." The water and the blood, therefore, must evidently symbolize certain vital doctrines which must be received by faith, for this minute record is given "that ye might believe."

The reference to this important incident in John's Epistle, to which I have referred, is also given in connection with faith, for the apostle enquires, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" And then in order to show in what character Christ is to be apprehended by our faith, he adds, "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

I have now traced the streams of this cleansing water to the riven side of our adorable Redeemer, and we have seen this precious water of life gush from His holy heart; we will now, in concluding this point, speak a word concerning it as known by experience. The beloved John has infallibly pointed out that, as there are Three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, so likewise there are three that bear witness in earth: the Spirit, the *water*, and the blood. We have just now only to consider the water, and that with reference to its witness in a way of living experience; and since, as we have already noticed that this is the mystical water of regeneration, I feel justified in

asserting that this witness of the water through the Spirit is infallible, and therefore a most comforting witness. You know that our Lord told Nicodemus that, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"; hence a man who has the witness that he has been born again from heaven through this regenerating water or influence of the Spirit may justly conclude himself to be in the kingdom of God.

But this water is not only an inward witness, but by its purifying effect upon the character and life, it becomes an outward and manifest witness that he who knows its sacred influence is truly a child of God. It is doubtless in this sense that we are to understand that remarkable exhortation of the apostle which we find in the tenth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." O that the blessed Spirit may sprinkle each of us with more of this sacred water! Let us beseech Him of His great mercy thus to favour us. O Thou eternal Spirit, our only Sanctifier, lead us to this sacred source of purification!

"From this pure fountain, if Thou draw  
Water to quench the fiery law,  
And blood to purge our sin;  
We'll tell the Father in that day,  
And Thou shalt witness what we say  
'We're clean, just God, we're clean!'"

It is even thus that our great High Priest sprinkles with clean water many nations.

But I have now to speak of the sprinkling of blood: for "so shall He sprinkle many nations," not with water only, but with water and blood. A lively type of man's need of Christ's sprinkled blood may be seen through the solemnities and ceremonies connected with the Passover instituted in Egypt, especially the sprinkling of the blood upon the lintel and upon the door-post of the Israelites' houses. This blood was to them a sheltering blood; and we must have, likewise

"A shelter from heaven which frowns on our stains,  
And a shelter from hell with its sorrows and pains."

O my friends, is this paschal blood sprinkled upon the "houses where ye are"? Have ye known it as a shelter from the storm of divine wrath? If so, give unceasing glory to God.

The sprinkling of the nations with Christ's most precious blood was most strikingly set forth in certain parts of the ceremonial law, and to this Paul alludes, for he observes that "neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to

all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people." Observe, "*all the people*" were sprinkled; and even thus it is with the new covenant people, every one of them is sprinkled with the precious blood of Christ, for nothing else can possibly cleanse the heart from an evil conscience; and beside this, every living believer is predestinated to receive it.

The Apostle Peter opens his first Epistle with a wonderful allusion to this blood of sprinkling, for addressing himself as the apostle of Christ to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, he speaks of them as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and *sprinkling* of the blood of Jesus Christ." Here we have the Father's election, linked with the converting grace of the Holy Ghost, which grace of the Spirit produces, and is therefore linked with the obedience of faith, and then the sanctifying grace of the Spirit and the obedience of faith are linked with the precious blood of sprinkling.

This declaration, first of all, entirely shuts out from the promise all those deluded professors who do not build their hopes of pardon on the atonement of our glorious Redeemer; for all the children of God are such only by election, by sanctification, by obedience, and by faith's hearty reception of the blood of sprinkling. And secondly, this declaration is full of encouragement to those dear children of God who are sanctified by the Spirit from an ungodly world to a genuine belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, and yet have not been favoured to rejoice in a personal application of the precious blood of sprinkling. The people of God may be divided into two companies, the first company being comprised of those who have received by faith in joyful experience the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; and the second company being comprised of those who long and cry that they may realise its cleansing and peace-speaking power. I have often admired the spiritual wisdom of Joseph Hart which led him to include the longing ones with the chosen ones. He writes, "Come all ye chosen saints of God who *long to feel the cleansing blood.*" Blessed longing! for God shall satisfy the longing soul and replenish every sorrowful soul.

I will ask you next to observe in the text already quoted that not only did Moses sprinkle with blood and water "all the people," but that he sprinkled both the book and all the people. The book was sprinkled with blood and water, not only as a seal of God's holy covenant, but to set forth the sacrificial nature of its teaching. The book which Moses sprinkled comprised only the Pentateuch, but now that the canon of Holy Scripture is complete, we behold the whole of it as sprinkled with blood; every verse and every word – nay, every letter directly or indirectly

points to the great atonement made by Jesus; and the voice of the Lord God Almighty peals forth like thunder from every page with the gracious and solemn declaration, “WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION,” and woe be to those blind guides who blasphemously attack this vital and cardinal truth of Holy Scripture. But again, Moses “sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.” Was not this to teach the imperfection of all our holy services? Does it not plainly set forth the necessity for Christ’s precious blood to purify and make acceptable all our devotions? and does it not reveal the sad fact that we, in a certain sense, defile the very sanctuary where we meet by our sins of inattention, hardness of heart, wanderings of thought, and general lack of the true spirit of devotion? Precious blood of sprinkling, how hopeless should we be without it!

And now, in concluding this part of the subject, let us consider “the blood of sprinkling” as it even more closely affects personal experience. We read in the 11th chapter of Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews that “by faith they” – the Israelites – “kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.” Have you, my dear friends, kept this passover? Has your faith ever apprehended the blood of sprinkling? Do you know the joy of living under its shelter? Have you, as pilgrims with your loins girt and your staffs in your hands, kept this holy feast of the Lord? Do you know what it is to feed on Christ by faith? If this has not yet been your privilege, are you longing for it? Have you come to the blood of sprinkling as all law-condemned sinners do? (See Heb. 12. 24.) Are you standing at the foot of Calvary’s cross, exclaiming with good John Berridge:

“Dear dying Friend, we look on Thee,  
And own our foul offences here;  
We built Thy cross on Calvary,  
And nailed and pierced Thy body there.

“Yet let the blood our hands have spilt  
*Be sprinkled on our guilty heart,*  
To ease our consciences from guilt  
And everlasting peace impart”?

If so, you shall yet rejoice in salvation by the sprinkled blood, and He who destroyed the firstborn shall not touch you.

May our great High Priest, who has promised to sprinkle the nations, sprinkle every one of you who have not already received it with the water of regeneration, thus cleansing you from all your filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and making you meet to be partakers with the saints in light; and may those of us who are regenerate realise with ever-increasing distinctness the threefold witness in earth of “the Spirit, the water, and the blood”....

## REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED

*By James Durham (1622-1658)*

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This transaction and design concerning the redemption of sinners is now not only undertaken, but fully performed; as is clear (Acts 2. 23), “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” The eternal purpose concerning this is now executed. As to the efficacy of His sufferings, He is indeed the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; because neither the Son’s undertaking was questioned by the Father, nor the Father’s promise questioned by the Son.

To speak so with reverence of such a mystery, the Father, before His coming, trusts Him upon His engagement with the salvation of so many elect souls as He had given Him; and the Son, considered as Mediator, trusts the Father with the justifying of them, according to the promise made to Him (Isa. 53. 11); but the actual performance of the undertaking was not till Christ suffered. This actual performance of the covenant comprehends these things shortly: 1. That as this plot and design of redemption was laid down, so it has the performance by all the parties covenanting. It is actually performed according to the terms of it. 2. That it has the real effects covenanted for, actually and really brought about. It has with it a most real and effectual following, to speak so, whereof Christ’s actual suffering was a part and a main part.

I say, it is performed by all parties according to the terms, and has its real effect, in these respects:

1. Christ Jesus has, according to this covenant, presented Himself before the bar of justice, and undertaken our debt.

2. Justice has pursued Christ for our debt, and has exacted payment of it from Him. The cup that belonged to us was put in His hand, and He was made to drink it. In which respect, it is said, He was “made a curse for us” (Gal. 3. 13). The sword of divine justice awaked against Him, and did smite Him.

3. Jesus Christ, according to His undertaking, accepts of the claim, undergoes the debt, and satisfies justice; therefore, when He stands in our room as if He had been the guilty person, He opens not His mouth to justify Himself. He says not, “These are not My sins,” but is as dumb as the sheep is before the shearer, because He was our Cautioner [Surety]. The everlasting covenant, to say so, stood registered over His head, and He is made to count for all that was due by, and to us.

4. It is performed in this respect, that the Father pursues not the elect on this account to be satisfied of them, who, as soon as they accept of the covenant, are actually justified and absolved. Indeed, while they are in nature, the sentence still stands, “Cursed is he that sinneth and



believeth not"; yet, by virtue of His performance of the transaction, they have a legal right to justification, and the promise to Him stands good, that the elect by His knowledge shall be justified. And it has an actual performance in all them that believe; really made free as He was made the sinner.

5. In respect of the manner, (1) It is performed exactly according to the covenant, even as it was agreed upon, that for so many He should suffer and procure eternal life, and so it is. Eternal life is given to so many, according to the condition of this covenant and bargain. (2) As it was a bargain wherein justice was to be satisfied, so it was exactly satisfied. Christ Jesus gets nothing down, not one farthing is remitted, but satisfies all, pays down the full price; He drinks out all the wrath contained in the cup, till it come to that sweet word, uttered by Him amongst His last words on the cross, "It is finished."

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### SAVED BY BLOOD ALONE

*By F.W. Krummacher*

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You know the words of John in his first Epistle (1. 7): "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Observe, these are the words of John, which so many of you suppose you are better able to understand than those of the writer of the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. But probably they may this day open a private protest against you!

The world refuses to know anything of the blood of Christ. It only requires to be mentioned, and many a one makes a face as if he had heard something intolerable. Even the hateful epithet, which is wont to be applied to our evangelical doctrine, testifies of deeply-rooted repugnance to the blood of the Lamb. Discourses and hymns which treat of that blood are rejected with irritated feeling as the productions of mysticism. Thus Christ crucified is still counted as the offscouring of all things, and will continue to be so, till the last despiser of His blood walks the path of destruction. For assuredly, he who cannot endure His blood is accursed. "The preaching of the cross," says the apostle, "is to them that perish foolishness."

Thousands again, in the present day, profess a certain kind of religion, but the blood is wanting in it. This deficiency is a sufficient testimony that theirs is a false religion and that, minutely inspected, it is only enmity against Christ. "But," say you, "I believe in the divine dignity of Christ; I believe in His supernatural mission; I believe in the reality of His miracles." And yet all this does not constitute you Christians. The delight in and the love for His blood is one of the

primary and most essential features in the physiognomy [characteristics] of a true disciple of Jesus, and where this feature is wanting, it matters not what may be there. We may have an individual before us in Christian attire; but the man himself is no Christian.

The blood of the Lamb is the central point of the whole of the Christian religion. It is in this blood that the temple of the New Testament is founded. Take away the blood, and such a temple no longer exists. Deny its power, and you deny the whole of salvation by Christ. Say, what colour is it which shines the brightest through the whole of Scripture? In what colour did the first promise glitter with which God rejoiced the first sinners in paradise? In what colour did Abel wait upon the Lord when he brought Him the acceptable sacrifice? What colour is the predominating one in which God brings forth significant types to view, and institutes sublime ordinances? What colour rescued the children of Israel in Egypt from the murderous sword of the destroying angel? In what colour did the Lord clothe the emblematical figures and ceremonies of the tabernacle? In what colour glittered, in sacred days, the ark it contained and the altars? In what colour did the people, bending in the dust, listen to the absolution of the high priest? What colour was borne by almost all the predictions of the holy seers concerning Him who was to come? In what colour swims the gospel of the Old Testament – the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah? And tell me with what colour is the New Testament imbued? What colour did the apostles choose for their uniform and their favourite badge? What colour gleamed upon the standards which they carried amongst the heathen? And even those with the palm branches before the throne of the Lamb, in what colour did they wash their robes? Do you know? O how can you be ignorant of it! It is the colour which is still the most beneficial to the eye of the humbled sinner, the most consolatory and the dearest to his heart. Not white, nor blue, nor green – although even these possess a pleasing signification – but *red* is the colour. It is the colour of blood.

O what a song of praise pervades the world to the blood of the Lamb! What a song of praise from the beginning to this hour! For the space of four thousand years it rushed along in the tone of *desire*. During the last two thousand years it resounds in notes of joy. At one time it is the exulting hymn of rescued sinners, who at the sight of the blood were divested of all their troubles. At another, it is the sorely-pressed warrior's song of hope, who looking up from the surrounding darkness to the blood, no longer doubts of a successful result. It is again the song of peace of the bitterly assaulted, who under the buffetings of a messenger of Satan at their side, suddenly find in the blood the most complete alleviation for their hearts. It is also the triumphant song of the departing righteous, who behold death, sin, hell

and Satan lying vanquished at their feet, because they know that the threshold of their hearts is reddened with that blood. At another time it is the festive hymn of wearied and sorely-tormented souls, who after long fatigue find a resting place in this blood. Many things in the world may be praised more loudly and pompously than this blood, but nothing was ever yet praised more ardently, profoundly or with more blissful hearts than the blood of the Lamb.

I have no need to tell you what the Scriptures understand by the blood of Christ. They understand by it His blood-shedding; Christ's sufferings and death, so far as they were mediatorial; His enduring the punishment in our stead; His bleeding sacrifice, by which He satisfied for us the righteousness of the divine Judge. And certainly salvation is contained in it, and the life of the poor sinner flows out of it. Let him dye his banner red; for the document of his nobility and his passport are red, and whatever he is that is great, he is so in the blood.

But how is it with the efficacy of this blood? Our relation with reference to it decides our eternal fate. Having an interest in this blood, or having none, implies being either eternally saved or eternally lost. What does John say? "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Does he say, "*helps* to make us clean"? No, it cleanses us. "Encourages us to cleanse ourselves"? No, the blood itself cleanses us. "Cleanses us from delighting in sin"? Not so, but the blood cleanses us from sin itself. "Yes, from the sin of spiritual drowsiness and slothfulness"! No, only use your eyes: "from all sin." "The blood"? Yes, the blood. You would gladly think that Christ's example makes us clean. Look, the Apostle John is of a different opinion. You preach that Christ's doctrine accomplishes it. It is His blood which does it, says John. You say, "The imitation of Christ"? No, His blood, His blood. "The zeal for amendment," say you, "according to the precept and example of Christ." O how little savour have you yet of the true nature of the Christian religion! But John himself also says that the Spirit purifies from sin! Yes, but that is quite another affair. That is not the question here; here the question is concerning the blood; and it is to this blood, you all must confess, whether believers or unbelievers, whether you are sprinkled with this blood, or trample it under foot – it is to the blood that the power is here unequivocally ascribed to cleanse, and that entirely and from all sin.

Cleanses from all sin! It is impossible to express how this sounds in the ears of him who has recognised in the true light what sin is, and that he is a sinner. With what a craving appetite does he fall upon such a passage, like a panting hart rushes to a bubbling spring, and like a famished sheep, which finds in the sandy desert a verdant pasture; no-one can imagine it who has not been himself in the situation of the panting

hart and the famished sheep when finding water and pasture. Many amongst you, probably, read the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanseth us from all sin"; but what have they from them but the mere dead letter? Such passages shine first in the dark; but then they are stars, festival-tapers, lamps which point out the home of peace.

But how is it to be understood that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin? Simply according to the obvious sense, and as a child would understand the passage. He for whom the blood of the Lord flowed is accounted sinless before God. His sins are no longer imputed to him, because they have received in Christ their just recompense. See, my friends, here is the point, in reference to which many of our hearers are not satisfied with us. According to their wish, we ought not to say so much concerning the power of the blood of Christ. Here, say they, we ought to walk softly, that is, detract from the gospel; here we ought not to use such strong expressions as we are wont to do; that is, obscure the brightness of the Christian religion where it shines the most brilliantly. Here it is desired that we replace the consolations of the gospel with a variety of conditions and objections; but this would be to degrade and curtail the merits of the Surety. Here, for instance, we ought to preach that the blood of the Lamb absolves us from those sins of which the individual has previously obtained the mastery, so that they no longer live in him – that is, we ought to turn our backs upon Christ and His mediatorial work.

What strange ideas are these! No, my friends, though we might never become true friends with each other during the whole of our lives, and though you were to continue to go about as long as a breath is left in you, with the Pharisaic complaint, "The man goes too far"; and though your displeasure against us were in the end to vent itself in burning rage; nay, even if the children of the devil, who make this great and sacred matter a covering for their wickedness, were to spring up amongst us like mushrooms, since some such characters are already to be met with, yet in this affair we cannot accede to your wishes. We *cannot*. No, never. We shall continue to trumpet forth in the most powerful manner the efficacy of the blood of Christ; and even though we might occasionally duly succeed in doing so, yet we should always bear about the feeling with us that we had spoken much too poorly and faintly on the subject.

It remains true that there is no condemnation to those for whom the blood of the Lamb was shed, as Paul says. Such a one, as the Lord himself testifies, is clean throughout. His life lies in the sight of God, in the lustre of the most perfect blamelessness and beauty, in whatever disguise, covering, and even leprous scales, it may still appear in the eyes of men. And has the blood of Christ such efficacy? Most assuredly. The dying thief ascends from the elevation of his well-deserved gibbet

immediately into the triumphal car of the King of kings, because he experiences the efficacy of that blood. Mary Magdalene (whose company was shunned by decent people, and that justly), because that blood was shed on the cross for her, stands more unblameable before God than those moral people who condemned her, and that with reason.

“But this is horrible!” Horrible? No, it is sweet and precious above everything. “But then everyone may say, ‘O the blood of Christ has atoned for everything!’” Everyone? No, you are under a mistake. He that is still in alliance with sin cannot say so, and if he does, the devil has blinded him. He who does not find within him the law of the Spirit warring against the law in his members has no claim to the consolation; and if he improperly applies it to himself, he makes himself worthy of two-fold damnation. Those for whom Christ shed His blood receive Christ’s Spirit also, in order that they may separate themselves, by a sacred protest, from the sin that is within them, and that they may acquire a relish for God and the things of God, and may anathematise and execrate from the bottom of their souls everything that appertains to the kingdom of darkness. The dominion of sin over them is at an end, and whenever it may seem to reign over them, it only reigns like a hated robber, who takes them by surprise, and not like a legitimate and voluntarily chosen prince, to whom they willingly and lovingly devote themselves. Their prince is Christ; Him they are resolved to serve. Sin is a marauder, a foreign oppressor, against whom they would gladly elevate walls and barriers. Such are the people for whom the consolation of the blood of Christ is intended. They are no saints in themselves, but continue sinners in their own esteem; they are, however, real lovers of the saints, and protestants in thought and deed against the devil and all his filthiness.

Now these people trust that they are clean in the sight of God, and that justly. But must not, from such a consciousness, a carnal carelessness necessarily arise? On the contrary, my friends. This blood likewise cleanses the heart and purifies the conscience. If anything that is sinful again presents itself, either in their hearts or lives, do you imagine that they only quickly say to themselves, “O the blood has atoned also for this!”? Such is not the case. Sin does not suffer itself to be expunged from the conscience by such a mere thought. The Spirit of Truth, which is in the people, does not admit of it. It can only be accomplished by the blood of Christ, not by means of an operation of the memory, but by being apprehended in living faith. This faith, however, is not always at our command, and thus, even in the case of a converted person, a renewed act of unfaithfulness may be succeeded by conflicts of which the world has no idea. He to whom great faith is given also possesses much peace. He who is able to lay hold on the blood of the

Lamb goes on his way in uninterrupted tranquillity, and is fully justified in doing so; for whether we believe it or forget it, the blood of Christ has once for all blotted out our sins.

I thought it advisable to express myself, for once, more fully upon this important subject, and rejoice in having found the opportunity.

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## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

*By J.C. Philpot*

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The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are the two grand gospel facts, and as such they are held up by the Holy Spirit in the Word of His grace as the objects of faith. The resurrection, especially, of our gracious Lord is that standing miracle which will ever be a pillar of truth to the church of God, effectually resisting every attempt to remove it from its base. But as we propose to examine the nature and circumstances of the resurrection of our gracious Lord, we may now ask what instruction and consolation does it hold forth to believing hearts.

1. First, then, the resurrection of our blessed Lord from the grave is the grand standing *attestation to the truth of His mission*. I speak it with all reverence, for I would not drop a word to speak with the slightest shade of disparagement to that most blessed name; but I would say this, if our gracious Lord had not risen from the dead, He would have been plainly manifested as an impostor, and the Jews would have been fully justified in crucifying Him as a blasphemer in declaring He was the Son of God. But the resurrection of our gracious Lord from the dead put God's own attesting stamp upon the truth of His mission.

But you may say, "What evidence have we that He did rise again? Might there not have been some mistake or some deception?" How could this be? How could the disciples, to whom He repeatedly showed Himself after the resurrection, have been deceived in that solemn fact? Could eleven men, who had walked with Him in the closest intimacy for three years, be deceived in His features, in His voice, in His general appearance, in that meek dignity and holy majesty, in that heavenly grace and divine glory, which were so familiar to them? Even upon lower ground, could you, could I, associate day after day with an individual, and not know after three days whether it was the same person or not with whom we had so intimately lived?

Now our gracious Lord showed Himself on several occasions to the eleven disciples after the resurrection, ate and drank with them, showed them His hands and feet and side, and thus convinced them, "by many infallible proofs," that it was He, even He Himself. Nay, did they not visibly see Him ascend on high when He was taken up, and "a cloud

received Him out of their sight"? They could, therefore, not have been deceived, and we may feel equally confident that they would not have deceived us.

By His resurrection, therefore, He was declared to be the Son of God with power. He said He was the Son of God; He was crucified because He said it. When, then, He was raised from the dead, it was God's own attestation that He was His dear Son.

2. But connected with the resurrection and ascension of our gracious Lord, there are certain *benefits* and *blessings* which we must not pass by. If He had not risen from the dead and gone up on high, where would have been the Head of the church? The church would have been without its Head – a dead and lifeless corpse. Where, too, would have been the completion of the work of the High Priest who, on the day of atonement, took the blood within the veil? How could our gracious Lord be interceding for us unless He had gone within the veil into the immediate presence of God? Again, if our gracious Lord had not risen, where would have been His universal government? How could He have been the enthroned King of Zion? How, too, could He have received gifts for the rebellious, or sent the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His people? How could He stand as the Mediator between God and men, or have been our Advocate with the Father, or been able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him?

Thus we see that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is as blessed, as important, as influential a doctrine to the Christian as His death upon the cross.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

*By J.C. Philpot*

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The apostle speaks of the working of the mighty power of God in the *resurrection* of Christ. Let me quote the exact words, for there is wonderful force as well as depth in them: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." According to our translation, the words run, "according to the working of His mighty power," but in the original the language is stronger still; and of this we have some intimation in the margin, where we read "the might of His power." The words might be literally rendered, "according to the active energy of the strength of His might." It seems as if this man of God, in the depth of his enlarged heart, in the full sway of his mental and spiritual faculties, laboured as it were to bring before us, in the strongest and clearest manner, the mighty power of God which He puts forth when He works faith in our souls to believe in His

dear Son. And that we might have a clearer conception of the exceeding greatness of this power, He brings before us, as its measure and standard, another stupendous act of gracious power – that, namely, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

But you will say, perhaps, “I don’t see that there was such a wondrous display of the power of God in raising Christ from the dead. Did not Christ Himself raise Lazarus? Did He not raise also the son of the widow at Nain? Did not even Peter raise Dorcas from the dead? Did not Elijah and Elisha do the same miracle? Where was, then, the mighty miracle in raising Christ from the dead? Was He not the Son of God? and was there more difficulty in raising Himself than in raising Lazarus?” Yes; for if there were not, where is all the argument of the apostle gone? What is the meaning of those strong expressions to which I have called your attention? Depend upon it, therefore, that there is something deeper in this subject than you have yet learned to understand if you think that the resurrection of Christ from the dead was an act of no greater power than the raising of Lazarus from the tomb.

Let me, then, endeavour to explain this point; and in order to get a clear conception of it, we must not only see under what circumstances Christ died, but we must take a view of who Christ was, of the work He had to do, how He did it, and the honour and glory that God put upon Him as having finished the work He had given Him to do.

Now in viewing the resurrection of Christ from the dead, we must look at our blessed Lord expiring on the cross, and thence borne to His grave. How did He die, and how was He buried? Apparently, under the curse of the Almighty, for by dying upon the tree He was made a curse for us; and by thus being made sin, or a sin-offering for us, He died with all the weight of our sins upon His head. The prophet, therefore, speaks: “He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken” (Isa. 53. 8); and Peter tell us, “Who His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2. 24).

These mountains, therefore, of imputed sin rested, so to speak, upon His sacred head, and had to be removed before He could be raised from the dead by the mighty power of God. Not but what sin was put away by the blood-shedding of the Lamb before He gave up the ghost, for He cried out before He committed His departing spirit into the hands of God, “It is finished.” But death was necessary to complete His offering; for not only without shedding of blood is no remission of sins, but without the death of the victim there is no sacrifice. Our Lord therefore said, “I lay down My life for the sheep”; and the apostle declares, “Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” The law demanded death, for its words are, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” Christ, therefore, “died for our sins according to the



Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3); "was delivered" – that is, to death – "for our offences"; when "we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"; and thus "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." All these passages clearly show that there was a necessity that Christ should not only shed His precious blood that we might "be justified by His blood" (Rom. 5. 9), but also die, that we might be "reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5. 10), blood-shedding and death constituting the two necessary and effectual elements of sacrifice.

But though our blessed Lord was made a curse for us, and thus by dying on the tree seemed to die under the wrath of the Almighty, we must ever bear most carefully in mind that He did not die as the ungodly die, under the wrath of God, for He was always His beloved Son. He never lost Sonship, nor did the Father lose Fatherhood. It was a voluntary sacrifice, both on His and on the part of His heavenly Father, for He came to do the will of God. "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 7). But when we view the loads of sin that were put upon His head, for the prophet testifies, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," or to adopt the marginal reading "made the iniquities of us all to meet on Him" (Isa. 53. 6); when we view the curses of a fiery law which consumed His heart, making it like wax (Psa. 22. 14), and the anger of the Almighty due to imputed sin which He had to sustain as the sin-bearer of His people, then we see how the Lord *to the eye of sense* sank, as it were, into the grave as if borne down by the sins of millions. It was not really so, for sin was effectually put away, atoned for and expiated before the Lord closed His eyes in death. We must not think for a single moment that sin and the wrath due to sin followed Jesus to the tomb, or that as some have unadvisedly said our sins sank Him into the grave, and that He left them all there when He rose from the dead. But *to the eye of sense*, in the sight and opinion of the Jewish people, according to the malice of His implacable foes, He died a malefactor.

I wish to lay down this point with great care, for some through ignorance or inadvertence have spoken as if imputed sin followed Christ even to the grave. No; He had put away sin fully, wholly and finally by His blood-shedding before He gave up the ghost. The wrath of God which had rested on Him for six hours, like a dark and gloomy cloud, was over and gone; and He died under the approving smile of His Father and His God. For He was a voluntary sacrifice. No man took His life from Him. He did not die from the sufferings of the cross; His heart was not literally broken, as would-be wise physicians have said and written; for to show that He died in the fulness of His strength, He cried with a loud voice just before He gave up the ghost. But He laid down His life

that He might take it again, as the highest act of obedience to God and the deepest act of love to man. He was, therefore, not interred as a malefactor, but was buried honourably in the garden in a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid, to show that though He was numbered with the transgressors and died a malefactor's death, He had not a malefactor's grave.

These thoughts may help us to see in what way the resurrection of Christ from the dead was a display of the power of God's grace. You will observe my words, "a display of the power of God's grace." It was not a display of God's creative power, or of any such operation of His hands as His visible works furnish; but it was a manifestation of the mighty power of His grace towards His dear Son and the church in Him. By raising Christ from the dead, God made it openly manifest that His offering was accepted, that sin was put away, the law justified, divine justice honoured, the character of God fully cleared, every perfection harmonised, and every seemingly jarring attribute reconciled and magnified. It was also a proof that through death our gracious Lord had destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2. 14). By it also Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1. 4). It was the fullest testimony that could be afforded that the same Jesus, whom His enemies had taken and by wicked hands had crucified and slain, was what He had declared Himself to be, the Son of God, and that as a proof of it God had raised Him up from the dead, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it (Acts 2. 23, 24). But it was also a pledge of the future resurrection of all His saints; "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15. 21, 22).

But take another view of the subject. View Christ as the covenant Head of His church and people. See how heaven is one day to be filled with countless myriads of saints, all conformed to His glorious image, all saved, eternally saved, all sanctified, eternally sanctified, all interested in His great undertaking, all washed in the fountain of His precious blood, and all clothed in the robe of His imputed righteousness. See what a work there was here to do. It was not raising Christ as one Man; merely raising His sacred body from the dead. It was raising Him as the Head of millions, the Head of the church; and in fact was a raising of all His elect people together at the same moment with Him. The apostle, therefore, says, God "hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together"; and again, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2. 13). He therefore calls upon us (Col. 3. 1) as "risen with Christ, to

seek those things which are above.”

If we put all these things together we shall see what a display of the power and grace of God it was to raise Christ from the dead. The resurrection of Christ, then, is the greatest miracle earth ever saw, because it was a miracle of grace as well as a miracle of power; a miracle of mercy as well as a display of omnipotent strength; a miracle in which all salvation was laid up; a miracle the depths of which can never be plumbed, the joys of which can never be fathomed, and the glory of which can never be fully exhausted or enjoyed.

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### “THE PASSION OF CHRIST”

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There is so much evil in the world that we do not normally turn aside to comment on most of the dreadful happenings that take place. However, we feel we must make an exception in the case of the film, “The Passion of Christ,” released in the United Kingdom on March 26th. This is a film about the last twelve hours of the life of the Lord Jesus, and we understand His agonizing bodily sufferings are shown in detail. We feel we must write, at least for three reasons:

1. Incredible interest has been shown in the U.S.A., amounting almost to fanaticism, and people have spoken of wonderful spiritual experiences in viewing the film.

2. In this country the film is being used as “a tool for evangelism.” It is one thing for the Pope to recommend, but another for Baptist churches, professedly evangelical, to promote it.

3. But details have even been sent to us personally by the promoters, addressed to the Editor of the *Gospel Standard*, naively expecting our support and recommendation.

In the Word of God the Holy Ghost has reverently drawn a veil over the deep sufferings of the Son of God. It is most solemn to seek to portray them in a film, and blasphemy for a sinful man to impersonate the Lord Jesus. Moreover, no picture, image or representation of the Lord Jesus, however reverently intended, can ever set forth His glorious Person as God as well as Man.

We understand the portrayal of the Saviour’s sufferings is gruesome and horrifying. But how can anything be shown of the deeper sufferings of His holy soul under the weight of imputed sin and the wrath of the Father?

But what especially appears to be dreadfully lacking in the whole of the carnal performance is *the purpose of the Saviour’s death* – the great theme of the New Testament. No wonder that a leading atheist (completely unaware of the plan of salvation) should comment, “If there

is a God, and this is His Son, why did He allow it?"

May it be our blessed portion reverently by faith to approach the cross of Christ, as Joseph Swain did, who having sung of the death and resurrection of Jesus, concludes:

"No nearer we venture than this,  
To gaze on a deep so profound,  
But tread, whilst we taste of the bliss,  
With reverence the hallowed ground."

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## BELIEVERS' BAPTISM

*By J.H. Gosden*

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Believers' baptism has for its authority the positive command and example of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is defined and inculcated in the New Testament. Were it not so, we dare not practise it. It is an honour to be permitted to observe the sacred ordinance. We are not left at haphazard concerning its significance, its mode, or its proper subjects. Were there no other scripture, that of Christ in Matthew 28. 18-20 were ample warrant for our custom. Uprising from the sacred tomb, graciously asserting His divine investiture with universal authority, as God-man, our all-powerful Conqueror thus solemnly commissioned His disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach" – make disciples of – "all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

This commission is simple, direct, explicit; prevarication is inexcusable. Here is, first, teaching. Secondly, the result of teaching as made effectual by the operation of the Holy Ghost – discipleship; being taught of God, they learn to come to Christ for all their salvation: "They shall be all taught of God," and great shall be their peace (Isa. 54. 13; John 6. 45). Thirdly, baptism, as a sign of discipleship, a profession of faith. Fourthly, further instruction in the truth and ways of the Lord.

But we have, further, the divinely-inspired account of how the apostles interpreted and discharged their Lord's commission. After His resurrection Christ made Himself known to His people "by many infallible proofs," and having been seen of them forty days and spoken to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, He gathered them at Olivet, promised them the Holy Spirit, lifted up His holy hands and tenderly blessed them, and was then taken up in a cloud out of their sight (Luke 24. 50, 51; Acts 1. 1-9).

According to their divine Master's direction, the disciples returned from Olivet to Jerusalem, where they continued with one accord in prayer

and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brethren. On the first Pentecost after the ascension, there descended the promised Spirit, filling the apostles with His power so that they spake of the things of God to the cosmopolitan multitude assembled, in their several tongues.

Peter's testimony bore wondrous fruit that day, three thousand persons being added to that little band of a hundred-and-twenty original disciples. In what manner were they "added"? By teaching, conviction, repentance, faith, profession, baptism, communion. We read: "Now when they heard this" – Peter's preaching the gospel of Christ's atoning death and resurrection – "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2. 37-39). That it should be written: "Then they that *gladly received his word* were baptized," plainly declares that there were no infants included in that holy rite. "And your children," said Peter, obviously meaning such of them as had been or should on reaching maturity be effectually called by grace – "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Thus were there three thousand baptized believers added that day to the church at Jerusalem, and thereafter "daily such as should be saved" (v. 47).

The next divinely-recorded instance of baptism is that of Philip, the deacon and evangelist (Acts 8). In consequence of the persecution of the church at Jerusalem, the disciples were scattered abroad throughout Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ to the people, performing miracles among them, casting out unclean spirits and healing the sick. "And *when they believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." *Believers' baptism!*

It is solemn to reflect that even in apostolic times when miraculous powers were conferred on some ministers, imposture was not unknown. Among those who heard Philip preach, and professed faith and was baptized, was one Simon the sorcerer. This man, seeing the apostles' success, soon betrayed his pride and hypocrisy, thinking to purchase similar gifts for himself. Peter, who with John had come from Jerusalem on hearing of the reception the gospel had in Samaria, ministered a terrible rebuke: "Thy money perish with thee ... thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." This case affords serious proof that the outward rite of baptism possesses no inherent virtue, and overthrows the

sacramentarian view that it automatically conveys grace, although it is certainly a sacred ordinance commanded by Christ Himself.

The Lord tenderly sympathised with Philip's distress in having baptized an impostor, and He ameliorated it by giving him the privilege of ministerially instructing the Ethiopian eunuch, whereby the latter was brought to the obedience of faith. Reading in Isaiah 53, the Ethiopian sought Philip's exposition of the place. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." A suffering Saviour presented to the eunuch's faith drew out his fervent love, and he sought to manifest his affiance by baptism at the hands of his instructor. "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Doubtless remembering vividly his recent impostor, Philip applied to his pupil a very serious test: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." An unhesitating, unequivocal and evidently affectionate response, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,*" satisfied Philip, and "they *went down* both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were *come up out of* the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." By this repetition: "*down into, up out of,*" did God the Holy Ghost anticipate and forestall the subsequent error of sprinkling in place of baptism?

The third instance on record of baptism is that of Saul of Tarsus, who had "made havock of the church, entering into every house and haling men and women committed them to prison." The circumstances of his conversion were remarkable, if not unique; he was destined for an apostle. But the same Jesus, the Son of God, who was revealed to Saul, every poor Spirit-taught sinner is brought to know and love. Saul was initiated into the ministry at Damascus by the laying on of the hands of Ananias, who thereupon baptized him, being thus directed by the Lord (Acts 9; 22; Gal. 1. 16). The great apostle who declares that he received not the gospel from man (Gal. 1. 12), nevertheless received his introduction to baptism and to the ministry through the instrumentality of a humble disciple (Acts 9. 10).

We have, next, the relation of the baptism in Cæsarea of Cornelius and his company, to whom by divine appointment Peter preached. In his rehearsal of the matter to those of Jerusalem who questioned the propriety of his conduct, Peter said, "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." So evident was it to the apostle that the Gentiles had been gifted with grace to receive the Word of life by Peter's mouth, that he sounded forth that notable challenge: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" And explaining the case to the enquiring Jews, he asks: "What was I, that I could withstand God?" plainly implying that refusal to grant them baptism would be equivalent to no less than opposing God Himself who had blessed those Gentiles with

repentance and faith: "And when the apostles and brethren heard these things, they glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 10 and 11). So highly important is this despised ordinance of Christ.

In Acts 16 there is recorded the conversion of Lydia and her household, and of the jailor and all his house, and their baptism. It would appear that these two favoured households formed the nucleus of the Philippian church which in ten years was to grow to considerable proportions (Phil. 1. 1). It is significant to notice in passing that the apostles were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach at that time in Asia, Mysia and Bithynia, though they "assayed" to do so; indicating the supreme sovereignty of God in the disposal of His servants' ministry, and in calling His elect by that instrumentality. Attention ought also to be given to the fact that the apostles spoke the Word of God to the jailor and "*all that were in his house*"; and he "was baptized, he and all his, straightway ... and rejoiced, believing in God *with all his house*." Now, believing in God, and rejoicing in Him on receiving the Word of His grace, are not acts of unconscious infants; though some have attempted to infer from the words, *and all his house*, that there is here a warrant for infant baptism, an inference we cannot accept.

The same point applies to the eighth instance of baptism mentioned in Acts 18. "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Believers' baptism again!

At Ephesus certain disciples – "all the men were about twelve" – receiving further instruction from Paul, were thereupon baptized in the name of Jesus, to regularise, as it would seem, their professed discipleship (for they appear to have been baptized by the disciples of John, the forerunner of the Lord, while comparatively ignorant of the doctrine of Christ), and in order to their instatement into the ministry (Acts 19. 7). The method was the same as in all the other instances: hearing, believing, repentance, baptism. During the two years Paul preached at Ephesus, many were brought to repentance and to the obedience of faith: "Many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.... So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19. 18-20). In his farewell appeal to the Ephesian elders, Paul declared to them that he had kept back nothing that was profitable, testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20. 21). Baptism was one thing which he had not kept back from them. Again, ten years later, in writing his epistle to the church at Ephesus, he reminded them that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one *baptism*, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4. 4-6).

Throughout the divine record of the Acts of the Apostles, the baptism of believers is a prominent institution attended to in agreement with Christ's commission (Matt. 28. 19, 20). Is it not very significant that there is not one instance of infant baptism, and that in each case receiving the Word of truth, repentance and profession of faith *precede* baptism?

*(To be concluded)*

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## SUCH A TIME AS THIS!

*Esther chapter 4*

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What could the poor Jews do? And what can we do when we are in trouble? Humanly speaking there was no escape. They had the whole power of the mighty Persian empire against them. But one truth every exile knew (and so do we): "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

God was still in control. Haman was mighty, but God was almighty.

Humanly speaking, the Jews had one gleam of hope. Esther the queen was a Jewess, though no one knew this at the palace. But this was the point which rested so heavily with Mordecai: he believed that God had exalted Esther to the throne "for such a time as this" ....

Now the key word of the whole chapter (verse 14): "for such a time as this." Mordecai knew it and believed it, and he wanted Esther to know it and believe it too. Really a miracle had taken place, an impossibility. Just at the time when evil plans were abroad to exterminate God's people, one of them (though unknown) was actually the queen! Mordecai could see something wonderful here, God's providential hand. We think of the beautiful verse:

"Our lives through various scenes are drawn,  
And vexed with trifling cares,  
While Thy eternal thought moves on  
Thy undisturbed affairs."

But something else lay heavily with Mordecai. Esther must go in to the king, and plead for the deliverance of her people. And he told her so (verse 8).

Poor, dear Esther was terrified. Eastern kings were despots. She knew what had happened to Vashti. No-one was permitted to go into the king's presence without being invited, not even the queen, not even the king's own wife. The penalty was death. And she had not been invited for a month. Was she out of favour? *No wonder Esther was afraid.* So she told Mordecai so.



I can do no better than quote Mordecai's solemn reply. Consider it: "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom *for such a time as this*?"

We now see Esther as one of the most godly women in Scripture. People often speak about Ruth or Mary of Bethany or Hannah or Priscilla, but how often Esther is forgotten! What a noble girl she was, and what a beautiful character! She was willing to risk *everything*, even life itself, for the Lord's sake and for the good of His people. In this she must be numbered among the noble army of martyrs (though she did not actually have to seal her testimony with her blood).

Esther was timid, faint-hearted, fearful, but love to God and His people prevailed. She was not ashamed of Mordecai, not ashamed of the people of God; she wanted to be identified with them in their sorrows. She was willing to choose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

What a blessed example she sets! God's people cannot live to themselves. Their lives must be "surrendered to the Crucified." What a word is that: that we "should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him which died for us, and rose again"!

It would be a wonderful thing if this spirit prevailed among our young people in this lukewarm day when so many seek their own ease and comfort, and God is dishonoured.

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ, my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood."

So Esther's noble resolve (verse 16): "I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

\* \* \*

Many have seen a beautiful gospel application in Esther's resolve: "I will go in unto the king, and if I perish, I perish."

Here is a sinner feeling unworthy, sinful, guilty. Pardon, forgiveness, salvation can only be obtained from "the King" – He who is King of kings and Lord of lords. But how can I go? I do not deserve an answer. If the Lord rejects me, it is only what I deserve. But if I do not venture, then staying away I must perish. Therefore the venture of faith, faith's last resolve: "I will go in unto the King, and if I perish, I perish." But no sinner ever perished there.

Edmund Jones, a young 18th century Baptist minister, has most beautifully summarised all this:

“I’ll to the gracious King approach,  
Whose sceptre pardon gives;  
Perhaps He may command my touch,  
And then the suppliant lives.

“Perhaps He will admit my plea,  
Perhaps will hear my prayer,  
But if I perish, I will pray,  
And perish only there.

“I can but perish if I go;  
I am resolved to try;  
For, if I stay away, I know  
I must for ever die.

“But if I die, with mercy sought,  
When I the King have tried,  
That were to die (delightful thought!)  
As sinner never died.”

*A short extract from the new book recently published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications (price £2), The Book of Esther: God in Control.*

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### THE CONVERTED ATHEIST

*The experience of Edward Blackstock (1791-1852)*  
(Concluded from page 92)

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But a new temptation again spread darkness over my skies. The adversary of my soul charged me with having committed the unpardonable sin. What this meant I knew not, but concluded that it pointed to some of my awful blasphemies against the name of Jesus and His Word, which might well be unpardonable. Only those who have passed through this temptation will understand the suffering of it. The hope which I had received now fled, and doubts and fears overwhelmed me. Again I was a wretched vessel tossed on the sea of divine wrath. The impending curse of it seemed to extend even to my food, and I dreaded to eat lest there should be a curse there; when one day at dinner, the tears falling on my plate, this passage was sent with a comforting power to my soul: “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” I did not then receive a sense of pardon of sin, but I felt satisfied that the unpardonable sin, whatever it might be, I had not committed. Still, this great relief was not effectual to restrain those doubts and fears which arose, as many of my dreadful sins presented themselves in array before me.

Mr. Roby's ministry was, as I have already said, a very searching one: and as I preferred this kind of faithful dealing, I quitted Dr. Jack; but I was much cut up and condemned, and continually followed by these and other similar Scriptures: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9. 17). "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psa 11. 6). "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ... in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1. 7, 8). Such words as the above were like a twoedged sword; they appeared to cleave the soul and spirit asunder. But the following passage came in a different way: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55. 7). The Lord, however, kept me sighing and groaning, and crying for mercy; and I gave Him no rest, for the *avenger of blood* was close behind me.

In the state of mind which I have just narrated, I continued for about four months from the eventful night of my awakening. I had now come to the conclusion that I had stood as long as I was able under the floods of revealed wrath. That evening, as usual, I went to hear Mr. Roby. Strange and mingled feelings filled my mind, and I had a strong presentiment that I should that night know the worst! that I should either hear the voice of mercy and forgiveness, or receive my dreadful doom! I expected, or rather feared, that God would give the preacher a testimony by which my damnation would be for ever sealed. Under these impressions, and trembling in every limb, I took a seat away from the people, and against the wall, and there awaited my final sentence.

As the service proceeded, I anxiously watched for the text, which I had persuaded myself would be full of the wrath of God, and all levelled at me. It was in Acts 4. 12: "Neither is there salvation in any other." These words brought me some relief. Mr. Roby commenced his discourse in a very serious manner, and then proceeded to the inward evidences of being in a state of grace. I was all breathless attention; and as he brought forward many evidences, and dwelt upon them in succession, my conscience bore me witness, and I solemnly said (within myself), "I know that – and I have felt that – and that." And as I could respond to what he described, my fears began to subside, and hope gradually to rise higher and higher.

But now, on a sudden, a terrible blast from the powers of hell poured in upon me, and swept away my hope, and all the ministerial comfort which I had received. It was suggested, "All *that* is only what Mr. Roby says"; and knowing I durst not build upon a human, or even

upon an angelic testimony, I immediately sank fathoms deep into what Jonah calls the belly of hell, ejaculating, "It is all over with me now! I am lost! lost for ever! I shall rise no more!" But, blessed be God for His unspeakable mercy, with the rapidity of the lightning's flash, and before my astonished mind could realise the transition, the dear Lord Jesus Christ entered my very heart and soul, revealing to me His Person as the Son of God in human flesh, His presence, His atoning blood, His righteousness, His salvation, and His everlasting love to my soul. The power and energy of this manifestation, legions of devils could never have withstood! I saw Satan fall from the expectation of his prey like lightning, and this passage came with a mighty, saving efficacy: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4). It was instantly followed by this: "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib."

My heart was so filled with the glories of Christ, that He seemed for an instant to withdraw Himself, as though the revelation would overcome me; but feeling His absence, I cried out, "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that I may look upon Thee" (Song 6. 13). He again entered my soul with His train of graces; He took His seat upon the throne of my heart, and swaying His sceptre over me, He drew my soul a willing and delighted captive, in holy triumph at His chariot wheels. Pardon for all the black scroll of my offences was now sealed upon my conscience, under the power of the blood of sprinkling; I saw by faith His righteousness, and He covered my soul with it. His salvation was stamped upon my heart, and the love of God was powerfully shed abroad. Magnificent *grace* opened her treasures, and I sensibly felt its overflowing tide pouring into my bosom. The chief of sinners was dazzled by its glories, and vanquished by its all-conquering power. Doubts and fears were swept away by the rich streams of covenant mercy; and the mighty love of God came in these words, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

I saw nothing with my bodily eyes, but with the eye of faith I beheld and gazed upon my glorious Redeemer. The blessed Spirit then enabled me, for the first time in my life, to cry "Abba, Father." Yes, and I felt that God was *my Father*! Who can describe the solace, the joy of this assurance? I seemed another being! The Sun of righteousness shone blessedly upon my soul; the guilt, and condemnation of all my dreadful sins were removed – of this I had not the shadow of a doubt. Silently, but fervently, I now adored the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. My soul broke out in strains before unknown to me: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name." Contrition, brokenness of spirit, repentance, humility, faith, hope, love and the fear of the Lord were all awakened. My sackcloth was taken off, the veil was

removed. I sat as in a heavenly place, possessing joy unspeakable and full of glory. This was the Lord's doing, and without any instrument. I had heard nothing of the sermon beyond what I have stated.

My cup was now full, and I longed for the moment of dismissal, that I might pour out before the Lord the overflowing of my ecstatic soul. The preacher gave out that beautiful hymn of Dr. Watts:

“Not all the blood of beasts,  
On Jewish altars slain.”

This called up my attention; and, unknown to myself, I sang so loud that the people turned to look; but no-one there knew anything of me or of my joys.

As soon as possible I escaped from the crowd, eager to find some retired spot, where, far from the abodes of men, I might feel alone with God. My year of jubilee was come. The Son had made me free, and I was free indeed! He had released me from the bonds of sin, the world, Satan, conscience, wrath and law. I thought of the lame man healed by Peter at the Beautiful gate of the temple, who, “leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God” (Acts 3. 8). I thought of David, and felt as he did, when he danced before the ark of God with all his might. My soul praised the Lord in adoring gratitude, and I called upon all His works to assist me in glorifying His holy name: “Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens” (Psa. 148. 1-4).

I thought that God had never shown so much mercy to anyone before; I judged myself to be the chief sinner of the human race, and His mercy appeared to me then so wonderful, and so astonishingly great, that I concluded there must be much joy in heaven over me as a repenting sinner. The Lord had not to say then, “My son, give Me thine heart”; it was His, He had taken it (I had almost said) by storm. Christ had made me willing in the day of His power, and how He rode in triumph through my soul! The universe, as the handywork of God, claimed my admiration; but I clearly saw that man's sin had tainted everything earthly. I could now view the world in its true light, and despise its vain and delusive pleasures, which no longer possessed attractions for me; *that* dream was ended, God had revealed Himself as *my Father*, I felt His love in my heart; He was my All in all; and I looked up to Him as being mine, with exceeding joy. No more wrath, no clouds, no storms, no frowns now; but all was peace between God and my soul. Jesus was sensibly present with me; His power and love were great, His smiles

gracious, and His sensible embraces of a poor, prodigal son were to me a heaven of heavens. O how precious was Jesus then to me!

The Comforter was come, and, dove-like, He sat brooding upon my spirit, and all was communion, love and peace. I seemed to be brought to another world, where all things were new and delectable. I felt certain of going to heaven, for heaven was opened unto me, and there seemed but a step between my soul and ultimate glory. I loved God's servants and His children, but was raised above the fear of men or devils. The work of God wrought upon my soul was between Him and me; I never submitted it to any man's judgment; human opinion is of no weight whatever after the *inward powerful testimony* of the *Holy Ghost*: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?" (Job 19. 25-28.)

And once for all, I would solemnly protest before all men that I highly prize the saving power of the Holy Ghost. A soul indulged with these divine and heaven-sent influences (the effects of which, as a witness for God, I have endeavoured to describe) is raised above everything terrestrial, and while *under that influence* he cannot envy the great their greatness, the rich their riches, kings their crowns, or the children of this world their vanities: he bids this dull earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl; for,

"Believing, we rejoice  
To see the curse remove;  
We bless the Lord with cheerful voice,  
And sing His bleeding love!"

That was a night long to be remembered by me, never, I hope, to be quite forgotten, though, alas, I am prone to overlook the mercies of the Lord in days that are past. I returned home late, but felt it prudent to say nothing to my wife, who was then a Deist, and rendered much circumspection necessary on my part. I could have told her what great things God had done for me, that I was no longer a distressed sinner, quaking under fears of deserved wrath, but a pardoned, justified soul, walking and talking with God, and in perfect peace with Him. But the Lord gave me discretion.

This was the time of my espousals; it lasted about six months. I was then twenty-five years of age. During all that period I never communicated to a human being what the Lord had done for me; and before I had exchanged one word with any Christian on the subject of experience, I had written an account of the Lord's gracious dealings with

my soul; so that no man could say, "It was borrowed." That manuscript I have by me now. I desire to be thankful to my heavenly Father for thus keeping me from opening my case to any individual until the time of love was over; had it been otherwise I might have "fallen among thieves."

Shortly after what I have related on the night when my soul was delivered, I had two promises given me above all the rest. I received them when in secret communion with God, and with such power and abundant light, savour and unction that I felt as happy as I could desire to be on earth: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31. 3). "The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33. 27). O how precious these promises seemed to my soul! That was to me as the hill Mizar.

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## THE CROSS

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*"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross" (Gal. 6. 14).*

The cross! how blessed is the sight,  
To those who feel their guilt like me!  
It shines with heaven's peculiar light;  
No object half so bright I see:  
And yet, how little do I know  
Of what the cross is meant to show!

The spring of life I know is there;  
The stream of blood that issues thence,  
Has power, I know, and virtue rare;  
It can the foulest conscience cleanse.  
The sense of guilt it can remove,  
And fill the soul with holy love.

That justice there, and mercy can,  
And do together meet, I know:  
I wonder at the gracious plan;  
I gaze, and love to have it so.  
Less terror, 'twould not awful be;  
Less grace, it would not do for me.

Whatever I can want, it yields;  
A sense of pardon thence I have:  
My soul from Satan's power it shields;  
'Tis God's appointed way to save:  
To save in every trying hour;  
To save from every hostile power.

Then teach me, Lord, to comprehend  
 The meaning of that wondrous sight:  
 Its source, its object, and its end.  
 O shed upon Thy work a light,  
 A light from heaven, that I may know  
 Whatever may be known below.

To some, I know, this grace is given,  
 To search the mystery of love:  
 That love that higher is than heaven,  
 And deeper than the abyss below:  
 Like them, O Lord, I fain would be;  
 Like them would search, like them would see.

Then do Thou clear my inward sight,  
 From clouds and mists that darkness cause;  
 And fill my soul with holy light,  
 That I may know the love that was,  
 That is, and cannot cease to be:  
 The love that reached and vanquished me.

Thomas Kelly (1769-1854)

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## OBITUARY

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With sorrow we hear that **Henry Bouma**, pastor at The Old Paths chapel, Choteau, Montana, U.S.A., died in hospital on February 19th, 2004, aged 75. We hope that further particulars will follow. We deeply sympathise with our friends in the U.S.A. in their loss.

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## STATEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETIES ON SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

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There is a certain amount of misunderstanding among some of our churches over the difference between suspension and withdrawal of church membership. A number of different expressions are used in our rules. When a member has been walking disorderly and is suspended by their church, that person is not in good standing and is disqualified from the privileges of church membership. Some churches, in exercising discipline, use withdrawal, and others use suspension in the first instance followed by withdrawal.

Under New Testament church order sister churches should respect the decision of another church, and a disorderly member, whether suspended or withdrawn from, should be encouraged to manifest repentance and seek restoration.



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**MAY 2004**

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**GODLY COUNSEL TO THE CHURCHES**

*These three weighty and profitable addresses were given at the Annual Gospel Standard Meetings nearly fifty years ago. The godly counsel which was given is much needed today.*

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**Mr. J.H. Gosden of Maidstone**

*Philippians 1. 27 to 2. 15*

I shall only keep you a few minutes, as we hope to hear two friends address us. It is pleasant to see a goodly company gathered here today, and how wonderful it would be if all of us were the subjects of that kingdom which has been sung of (hymn 683), the kingdom of divine, invincible grace!

In the passage just now read in the Philippians, there are three important points to which I would briefly call your attention. First of all, Paul enjoins on those believers in whom had been begun the work of grace, that their conversation, that is their life, should answer to their profession: "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ ... that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." O the need there is today of this union in a profession of the Lord's name, and a walking answerably before the world.

The next thing is a fearlessness with respect to adversaries: "In nothing terrified by your adversaries." We are so easily put out of countenance by opposition, because of our weakness and our ignorance, but the gospel provides a gracious confidence, which is not at all inconsistent with humility; indeed, inseparable from it. True humility is one of the fruits of the knowledge of Christ; and the knowledge of Christ in the soul, and a love to Him and His truth, will beget a humble boldness in face of adversaries to the truth. There is a distinction to be drawn between personal attacks and the infringement of the truth. We may very well suffer and ignore personal attacks, but when the truth is attacked, then it behoves us to cleave together in its defence, not at all terrified by the adversaries. It is a sacred thing when in the heart there is an assurance, in the conscience there is a blessed witness, that we do stand on the holy truth of the gospel. And though this brings trouble, persecution, coldness, still we are to consider that that kind of tribulation

and conflict is rather an honour than otherwise. It is sad for some of us to have to think that we avoid a good deal of conflict because we evince so little of conformity to Christ and so little therefore of separation from the world and the religious profession of the day. If we had more grace, we should probably have more conflict and more opposition. Christ said, "I have given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them."

Then he speaks of the consolations of Christ: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy." The joy was, in this reference, the harmony, the walking together in mutual esteem and love, of these Philippians. Evidently there had been some discord, for in the 4th chapter he says, "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." It was the apostle's desire to see these Philippians walking in accord, in love, likeminded, in harmony in the gospel, and to avoid vainglory and strife. We read in one place in the Scriptures that the people did what they did for no other purpose than to be seen of men. Now that is entirely contrary to the gospel, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

This does not mean – for the apostle later on in the chapter brings each of them to their own case – it does not mean we are not to look to our own cases, for our own case is the chief concern before God for eternity; but this means regard for others in helping them, ministering to them, considering their afflictions, bearing each other's burdens. And see the example. O the great, deep, foundation example the apostle brings forward to set this injunction upon! "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What an example! But more than an example, this was the work of redemption. It was a substitutionary sacrifice Christ offered of Himself, and this is our only ground for hope of heaven, of salvation, of escaping the wrath to come. But it *is* an example, the greatest example of humility ever seen; and I am persuaded of this, that if we are acquainted with the Lord Jesus in any measure, and if there is in our hearts at any time a warm assurance by the Spirit's witness that the Son of God Himself humbled Himself in that way, assumed our nature and became obedient unto death, making Himself of no reputation *for us*, to atone for *our* sins, then we shall not object to any humiliation, we shall feel it an honour to serve

the people of God, to do anything in their interest within the compass of our powers.

And I thought just now this might underline what our Secretary for the Bethesda Fund mentioned – the desirability for some of our younger people to *devote* themselves to the work of the Bethesda Homes. If that motive were underlying the service, what a blessed thing it would be! And I do believe in some instances it is so; but more such helpers are sorely needed. I only throw that out as a kindly hint, but we all need this injunction: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” The meekness of wisdom: “made Himself of no reputation.” How sweet humility is, when wrought in the soul by a deep sense of obligation to the Lord Jesus, in stooping so low to atone for our sins, and save us to the uttermost! Love is the spring of all real evangelical obedience.

And then he comes back to this: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” We can never contribute in the slightest degree to our own salvation, but if the Lord Jesus is our salvation, our Saviour, our Lord, our Redeemer, there will be fruit from that salvation in our hearts and lives, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord lead us in this sacred, threefold experience: our conversation among men, and in respect of the maintenance of the truth against adversaries; our union of purpose and humility as walking together as before God; and our seeking personally to work out our own salvation, to give diligence to make our calling and election sure.

### **Mr. F. Foster of Nottingham**

*“He who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks”*  
(Rev. 2. 1).

These annual meetings are of an exceptional character, inasmuch as they constitute the most representative gathering of our churches in the whole year. It certainly is a pleasure to meet so many in our denomination gathered together upon this annual occasion, and it is an added pleasure to have so many young friends with us. Grey hairs evince that many here may not be able to be at annual meetings many more years. Personally that gives much solemn thought and heart-searching, and squeezes out the cry:

“Prepare me, gracious God,  
To stand before Thy face.”

We do hope our dear young friends will be blessed with gracious teaching and establishing, so that in coming years, when many of the hoary heads here today will, through mercy, have been gathered to worship purer, sweeter, they will in love carry on, hold in loving devotion the banner of truth which God has given, not to be compromised nor apologized for, nor kept in silence, but to be “displayed because of the truth.” And surely God’s truth is the most precious thing with which He has favoured poor, fallen man.

In view of the wider character of this meeting, one feels that something should be said which might have a denominational application. With that in mind, I would base my remarks, if the Lord will help, upon a few words in the second chapter of the Revelation, verse one: “He who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” – He who walks in the midst of professing gospel churches.

The first thing I would notice here is the *Person* who walks in the midst; none other, none less than the eternal Son of the eternal Father, and that in wondrous union with human nature. God the eternal Son having become by condescending grace the Son of man, incarnate in human nature. And in this rich, condescending act, what dignity He has bestowed upon human nature! He passed by the nature of angels and He took the nature of man, always excepting the sin of that nature. In this we see His awesome and sweet sovereignty. He has an undoubted right to pass by angels and alight on men, and also to reverse the process; but blessed be His name, in His sovereign goodness He chose not to pass by men and light upon angels. It would have been woefully solemn for us had He done that! If we bring that closer, is there any reason, outside Himself, why He should not have passed by each one of us, in the exercise of His holy sovereignty, and leave us where He left those fallen angels, plunged into the abyss of hopeless, helpless, sin-procured, everlasting woe? Blessed be God’s Son for condescending to become the Son of man! The Son of God became the Son of man, that sons of men might become the sons of God; and I hope we are each exercised to know if we are by grace put among those sons and daughters.

And this glorious, blessed Person who walks in the midst of the churches is brought before us in that wonderful vision given to John for the churches in succeeding ages, clothed in priestly habit. Incarnate in human nature, exercising His mediatorial grace in the midst of the churches, is the great and merciful High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, able to have compassion on the ignorant and on those who are out of the way, those who are gone astray, being allured, or driven astray it may be. What a mercy that Emmanuel is in the midst of poor, fallen men and women called out of nature’s darkness, gathered around His glorious Person, and reposing with absolute confidence in

His glorious work – what a mercy He is in their midst in His priestly ministry!

And then the position He has been pleased to take up in rich condescension; He is resident *in the midst* of His churches by His Spirit and Word, through the ministry. That takes our mind to the glorious song of confidence, hope and assured victory in that choice Psalm: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Not necessarily always visible help, but none the less a present help. He is in the midst of those churches where He has really planted the banner of His truth as Protector, as Provider, and as we have already seen, their great and merciful High Priest, whose perpetual intercession in glory secures the communication of that which they constantly need: cleansing, purging, refreshing and reviving grace.

But He is in the midst of the churches in another very solemn connection. He is in the midst of the churches as their glorious covenant Head, their sovereign Ruler, and their saving Lord. Denominationally we cherish what we call the independence of the churches. We believe we have scriptural warrant for that order of things, and we realise any departure from it ultimately leads to earthly, carnal dictatorship, and that is alien to the genius of the gospel. Still, while churches are thus independent, they are not a law unto themselves. It is a great mistake to think churches are little companies of people who are a law to themselves, and can just order things according to their own minds, as though they were sovereign in such matters.

This Lordship of Christ in the churches lays upon the churches an *accountability* to Him as their Head, and makes them answerable to Him for their doings, their acts and all their proceedings. That is a very solemn thought. Of the seven churches in Asia, there is one characteristic stands out with woeful clarity – imperfection. Among the whole seven, there were but two against which Christ found no serious fault. “I know thy works.” There are no perfect churches or officers, pastors, deacons or members; and some of us are painfully aware of that. But let us not make that an excuse for carelessness. Imperfect as the church militant on earth is, and as her church state reveals, she has a gloriously perfect Lord and Ruler, and for her guidance the sacred Scriptures of truth. Let us not then make any excuses because we are imperfect, but rather let that stir us up to come to the Scriptures more diligently and reverently, and make us more receptive of its teachings, and willing to have things tested by it as the touchstone of doctrine, experience and practice, and to seek grace to conform thereto.

This also carries another solemn aspect. Misdemeanours, carnal doings in church life – from which we shall never be entirely exempt on earth; where these things prevail and are unrepented of, they wound the

body of Christ, and grieve the Holy Spirit. O how tender we ought to be in all our church deliberations, and put away anything contrary to Scripture, even though it might cost us friendship or spoil some connections! Our ruling motive ought to be, "What does the Lord say about this in His Word, what line does He mark out for us to take in connection with it?" If it appears to be obscure as to what line might be taken, then a word to plead and hope in is: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

Everything relative to the life of the church of God and her salvation is divinely ordered, down to the last detail. God left nothing for man to devise by way of supplementing His work. All that is necessary for His church's health, wealth, and well-being has been planned out with a divine purpose. This glorious Son of God incarnate in the midst of the churches commends things that are consistent with His mind and will, things that accord with His Scripture of truth, things which come from the work of His Spirit in the consciences of those in whom He dwells. All else comes from the flesh. Inconsistencies, discovered in the light of God's Word, are to be repented of, and not ignored or passed by; much less excused. Questionable things are to be honestly, soberly and anxiously looked into and brought to the Word of God, so that what is not consistent therewith might be *put away*. Remember how repeatedly the Lord spake to His ancient Israel: "Put away the evils that are among you."

But He will commend what is consistent with His Word; and the smile of His approbation is worth the frown of a frowning world. To have the smiles of the world and the solemn displeasure of the Most High is a most miserable plight to be in. So He commends the fruit of His own Spirit and His own grace: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

But another part of His loving purpose is to *correct*, and this correction is loving correction, not tyrannical censure. Remember He is the loving Lord of His church, and He rules as such in her midst. In passing we might consider how this sovereign Lordship prevails. And for illustration, might I remind you of the sweet relationship betwixt Sarah and her husband Abraham: "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." That was not a tyrannical lordship. He was enthroned in her affections, and she willingly and lovingly obeyed him because he had conquered her by his love and won her heart. Then it was her pleasure to do his will. And this made her jealous for his honour, for his glory, for those things which were his rightful possession.

This Lordship the Lord Jesus exercises in the midst of the churches, and the obedience which He constrains is not legal obligation, but loving

service. As the Apostle Paul laid it upon Philemon: "Yet for love's sake I entreat thee; I beseech thee," he says. So the loving Head of His church in condescension constrains her by His Spirit and says, "I beseech you by the mercies of God." The animating principle is His love and the mercies He has shown to her. "I beseech you by the mercies of God, present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God"; and: "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." Be your behaviour becoming His bride; walk worthy of your high calling. Christ's corrections, His rectifications – putting things right that are wrong – are not the inflicting of punishment in an angry, malicious, vengeful spirit. I think John Kent puts it better than I can:

"To His church, His joy, and treasure,  
Every trial works for good;  
They are dealt in weight and measure,  
Yet how little understood;  
Not in anger" – legal anger –  
"But from His dear covenant love."

And this correction is measured. He says, "In measure I correct thee, but will not make a full end as with other nations round about."

The standard whereby He exercises this healthful and necessary correction is His covenant love, concerning which He says, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you" – notwithstanding your often erroneous thoughts concerning Me; you often mistake My thoughts because you misread My actions; but, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end," and a good end. When we are helped to realise that, we shall join the psalmist's grateful tribute and say, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O Lord!" And what a great favour it is to find our unworthy selves among those who can say, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." And what a gracious prayer it is, when it comes up in the heart from a humble sense of unworthiness and need, as gracious Nehemiah prayed, "Think upon me, O Lord, for good!"

So Christ is in the midst of the churches to correct. O how needful correction is! We are prone to go wrong, through folly and carelessness, and need bringing back to right ways. Well, He reproves evils and errors, evil doctrines, evil conduct. In the churches in Asia these two things prevailed, and the Lord reproveth them. Erroneous doctrines which led to evil practices; in one instance the Balaamites, in another the Nicolaitans. Ancient writers tell us that the Nicolaitans were a sect who taught the hateful error that the liberty of the gospel allowed them to live loosely and carelessly, and that they were the people referred to in the Epistle of Jude, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. "Thou

hast those who teach that hateful doctrine”; some of them practising the same, and He reproves them.

But in correcting His people, He gives them counsel: “Repent, and do the first works.” O the situation is not hopeless when a poor sinner or a gospel church is brought to the consciousness of having gone astray, led astray in a way contrary to the Word of God. It is a good mark of health, and a sure prelude to godly repentance and gracious remission, when a church is brought to say, “Lord, where are we wrong?” Or an individual likewise: “Search me, O God! and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

But there is comfort as well as correction. Repent, and cast thy burden upon the Lord. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” Our time is gone. What few things I have said, might the Lord be pleased to bless, and pardon all amiss.

### **Mr. J. Harwood of Godmanchester**

*“Let us therefore follow the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14. 19).*

I want if enabled to ask your attention to the Epistle to the Romans, the 14th chapter, and the 19th verse: “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

It is always important to view the connection in which a passage of Scripture is found, but as my time is very limited, I cannot give that consideration to its context that would be desirable. I must content myself with the remark that in the church of Rome, and some other New Testament churches, there was a great deal of agitation as to what was required of them in the gospel concerning the keeping holy of certain days, and also of abstaining or otherwise from meat that had been bought in the open market. The points about which they differed were not fundamental to salvation, but they were sadly the cause of anxiety and distress.

Perhaps we should remember that the members of most New Testament churches were drawn either from Judaism or from heathen idolatry. It would appear that some that were drawn from Judaism to embrace the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, though basing their hopes for acceptance and salvation upon His Person and work, still retained, in their judgment at least, some of the observances of the Old Testament dispensation. While others, who received the liberty of the gospel rightly, esteemed no day holy but the Lord’s day, and no provision of His providence unclean in itself. Those that had been brought up in the Jewish religion, but had embraced the gospel, were stumbled by their



stronger brethren esteeming no day holy but the Lord's day, and disregarding distinctions in meats. The apostle's direction to them was this: the strong were not deliberately or unkindly to trample upon the scruples of their weaker brethren, neither to give up their liberty, but to bear in mind what he says in the 16th and 17th verses: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Present circumstances in the church of Christ are different, but there is a condition of things prevailing which makes this word of great importance to us: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." To give an illustration of this, if we emphasise one aspect of divine faith or practice to the neglect of the harmony and completeness of gospel truth, in which every doctrine, experience and practice has its proper place, it makes for confusion, for stumbling, and not for peace; neither does it minister edification. Gospel peace and edification are important blessings. There can be no edification where there is no peace, for true peace will promote mutual edification.

Of course, the apostle is not speaking of peace with error. That cannot be real peace which is bought at the price of suppressing truth and compromising with error. The only peace which is worthy the name is that which has its basis in the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is through the gospel all true peace flows; yet we have to remember the Saviour's words: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three" (Luke 12. 51, 52). Contention for the truth, to regard and embrace and defend the truth as dearer to us than everything else beside, is sure to create contention and trouble; but it is according to God's Word.

The great thing is gospel peace in the conscience, peace through faith in the blood and righteousness of God's dear Son, as revealed and applied to the soul. Peace, of course, is very desirable when we have the answer of a good conscience, whether in respect to the obedience of faith and of love in the ordinances, or whether regarding our conduct under persecution or misrepresentation. Doubtless the apostle is speaking in this passage of peace in the church among brethren – a very important part of peace indeed. There can be no edification where this peace is wanting. Of course, the trials which are connected with the defence of truth, and the contentions created thereby, will be overruled eventually for the good of the church; but although gospel peace in the churches may often seem remote, it is important to seek it, for the want of peace has created many difficulties. We can never calculate the injury the cause of Christ suffers from the worldliness, the pride, and neglect of

privileges and member's responsibilities, the professing people of God are often guilty of.

If peace and edification are to be followed after, we shall be led not only to see the desirability of it, but to perceive the things which are unfavourable and even adverse to the possession of these blessings. If it were not for confidence in the efficiency of the Holy Spirit's teaching, we should despair of this wholesome instruction being imparted to some professing people. But the Spirit of God does teach. He will convince, He will show us the folly of our ways. He will give us such a wound in our conscience, such a shaking in our carnal confidences, as to cause us to pray, with confession of sin, that every obstacle in us to the enjoyment of peace and mutual edification may be removed. It would be a mercy if the godly were given to follow after peace and its attendant blessings; though it may seem to flee from us, still to pursue it, because that is true as the Word has it: "My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me."

May it be given to my brethren, and to myself in particular, to give attention to these things, not by following speculation or notion, but by seeking grace to preach all the counsel of God; to preach the law of God in a scriptural way for the purpose of conviction; for by the law is the knowledge of guilt, defilement, and consequences of sin, by the law the holiness of God is seen, and the sinner shut up to the mercy of God in Christ. To insist in our ministry upon the importance of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; to preach Christ and Him crucified, the sum and substance of every gospel blessing; and to honour the Holy Spirit in our ministry in dependence upon Him, in imploring His blessing to prosper the gospel in the thing to which He has sent it; to honour it by reverently and believingly giving to it its place; to trace out the path of vital godliness, delineating the character of a true believer, and so take forth the precious from the vile. This is necessary lest we should mislead our people into resting short of Christ manifested in the soul.

It will certainly be necessary to present in our ministry the ordinances of the New Testament – baptism by immersion and communion at the Lord's table, as He has commanded. Although the ordinances are not essential to salvation, yet subjection to the command of Christ is a very important and desirable thing. Thereby Christ is honoured in His command, worship is paid to Him, and there is a mutual edification in the ordinances, and in Him especially who is the substance of them.

I must confess that my remarks must of necessity, because of time, have been very condensed, but if God should add His blessing, He shall have the praise. Amen.

## TIME FOR SECRET PRAYER

*By Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

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The times wherein we live call aloud for secret prayer. Hell seems to be broken loose, and men turned into devils incarnate; land-destroying and soul-damning wickedness walk up and down the streets with a whore's forehead, without the least check or control. "Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush" (Jer. 6. 15). They have sinned away shame, instead of being ashamed of sin. Custom in sin had quite banished all sense of sin and all shame for sin, so that they would not suffer nature to draw her veil of blushing before their abominations. The same words are repeated in chapter 8, verse 12. How applicable these scriptures are to the present time I will leave the prudent one to judge!

But what does the prophet do, now that they were as bold in sin and as shameless as so many harlots? That you may see in Jeremiah 13. 17: "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore and run down with tears." Now they were grown up to that height of sin and wickedness, that they were above all shame and blushing; now they were grown so proud, so hardened, so obstinate, so rebellious, so mad upon mischief, that no mercies could melt them or allure them, nor could threatenings or judgments in any way terrify or stop them; the prophet goes into a corner, he retires himself into the most secret places, and there he weeps bitterly, there he weeps as if he were resolved to drown himself in his own tears. When the springs of sorrow rise high, a Christian turns his back upon company, and retires himself into places of greatest privacy, that so he may more freely and more fully vent his sorrow and grief before the Lord.

Ah, land, land, what pride, luxury, lasciviousness, licentiousness, wantonness, drunkenness, cruelties, injustice, oppressions, fornications, adulteries, falsehoods, hypocrisy, bribery, atheism, horrid blasphemies, and hellish impieties, are now to be found rampant in the midst of you! How are the Lord's Sabbaths profaned, pure ordinances despised, Scripture rejected, the Spirit resisted and derided, the righteous reviled, wickedness countenanced ... and Christ, many thousand times in a day, crucified afresh by these cursed practices!

Land, land, were our forefathers alive, how sadly would they blush to see such a horrid, degenerate posterity as is to be found in the midst of you! How is our forefathers' hospitality converted into riot and luxury, their carefulness into pride and wastefulness, their simplicity into subtlety, their sincerity into hypocrisy, their chastity into chambering and wantonness, their charity into cruelty, their sobriety into drunkenness, their plain-dealing into dissembling, their works of compassion into

works of oppression, and their love toward the people of God into utter enmity *against* the people of God! And what is the voice in all these crying abominations? It is every Christian to his closet, and there to weep, with weeping Jeremiah, bitterly, for all these great abominations whereby God is dishonoured openly.

O weep in secret for their sins who openly glory in their sins, which should be their greatest shame. Who knows but that the whole land may fare the better for the sakes of a few that are mourners in secret? But however it goes with the nation, such as mourn in secret for the abominations of the times may be confident that, when sweeping judgments shall come upon the land, the Lord will hide them in the secret chamber of His providence; He will set a secret mark of deliverance upon their foreheads that mourn for the crying sins of the present day, as He did upon theirs in Ezekiel 9. 4-6:

“And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.”

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## THE BELIEVER'S STANDING

*By F.W. Krummacher*

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Our Lord, in uttering the words recorded in Luke 21. 28, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh,” recommends to us a state of mind which certainly bears very little similarity to that which the majority of Christians manifest in the present day. We must not act at such times like those who have suffered a defeat, nor go about, trembling and sighing, with tottering knees. We must honour God by our faith, and walk worthy of the gospel which we possess, the promises which are given to us, and the adoption to which we are privileged.

The Christian, although he is nothing in himself, possesses in Christ a nobility, a dignity and an elevation, which he must also maintain. For the sake of Jesus and His honour, he must conduct himself according to his rank, and not demean himself. He that is free must not become a servant; and he on whom God has bestowed an inheritance amongst the heads of His people, must not, from a principle of false humility, be

desirous of placing himself amongst the Gibeonites, those hewers of wood and drawers of water. Continue to speak as strongly as thou pleasest of thy personal infirmity and weakness, for thou canst not speak too strongly of it, but be at the same time conscious of the glory and beauty with which God has adorned thee in Christ; and in the same breath with which thou accusest and judgest thyself, boast of thy splendour and regal attire. David did not forsake his throne when he kept the door in the temple. Continue to speak with emotion of the awfulness of these fatal times, and confess that inasmuch thou regardest thyself, thou art seriously apprehensive of that which is approaching; but show thyself at the same time as a man, who because Jehovah is his refuge and his strength, is able to present a bold face to every tempest, and suffer not thyself to appear as one who is without hope.

It is true we live in a period which seems critical in more respects than one. It appears as if the time of the great purification which awaits the church drew near with the rapidity of the storm. But be it so! We stand upon a rock amid the breakers; and this rock is the grace, love, truth, might and power of our great King. Let us therefore lift up our heads. He will not suffer us to be put to confusion. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" May we be strengthened in this belief by our present meditation!

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF MORTIFYING SIN

*By Dr. John Owen*

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Notwithstanding the meritorious mortification, if I may so speak, of all and every sin in the cross of Christ; notwithstanding the real foundation of universal mortification laid in our first conversion, by conviction of sin, humiliation for sin, and the implantation of a new principle opposite to it and destructive of it; yet sin doth so remain, so act and work in the best of believers whilst they live in this world, that the constant daily mortification of it is all their days incumbent on them.

I cannot but by the way complain of many professors of these days, who, instead of bringing forth such great and evident fruits of mortification as are expected, scarce bear any leaves of it. There is indeed a broad light fallen upon the men of this generation and together therewith many spiritual gifts communicated, which with some other considerations have wonderfully enlarged the bounds of professors and profession; both they and it are exceedingly multiplied and increased. Hence there is a noise of religion and religious duties in every corner, preaching in abundance, and that not in an empty, light, trivial and vain

manner as formerly, but to a good proportion of a spiritual gift; so that if you will measure the number of believers by light, gifts and profession, the church may have cause to say, Who hath borne me all these? But now if you will take the measure of them by this great discriminating grace of Christians, perhaps you will find their number not so multiplied.

Where almost is that professor who owes his conversion to these days of light, and so talks and professes at such a rate of spirituality, as few in former days were in any measure acquainted with (I will not judge them, but perhaps boasting what the Lord hath done in them), that doth not give evidence of a miserably unmortified heart? If vain spending of time, idleness, unprofitableness in men's places, envy, strife, variance, emulations, wrath, pride, worldliness, selfishness (1 Cor. 1) be badges of Christians, we have them on us, and amongst us, in abundance. And if it be so with them who have much light, and which we hope is saving, what shall we say of some who would be accounted religious, and yet despise gospel light, and for the duty we have in hand, know no more of it, but what consists in men's denying themselves sometimes in outward enjoyments, which is one of the outmost branches of it, which yet they will seldom practise? The good Lord send out a spirit of mortification to cure our distempers, or we are in a sad condition.

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## THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN MORTIFYING SIN

*By Dr. John Owen*

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I answer [the question, "How does the Spirit mortify sin?"] in general, three ways.

1. By causing our hearts to abound in grace and the fruits that are contrary to the flesh, and the fruits thereof, and principles of them. So the apostle opposes the fruits of the flesh, and of the Spirit: the fruits of the flesh, says he, are so and so (Gal. 5. 19, 20). But, says he, the fruits of the Spirit are quite contrary, quite of another sort (ver. 22, 23). Yea, but what if these are in us, and do abound, may not the other abound also? No, says he (ver. 24): "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." But how? Why (ver. 25), by living in the Spirit, and walking after the Spirit; that is, by the abounding of these graces of the Spirit in us and walking according to them. For, saith the apostle, these are "contrary the one to the other" (ver. 17), so that they cannot both be in the same subject in any intense or high degree. This "renewing of us by the Holy Ghost," as it is called (Tit. 3. 5), is one great way of mortification; He causes us to grow, thrive, flourish and abound in those graces which are contrary, opposite and destructive to all

the fruits of the flesh, and to the quiet or thriving of indwelling sin itself.

2. By a real, physical efficiency on the root and habit of sin, for the weakening, destroying and taking it away. Hence He is called a Spirit of judgment and burning (Isa. 4. 4), really consuming and destroying our lusts. He takes away the stony heart by an almighty efficiency; for as He begins the work as to its kind, so He carries it on as to its degrees. He is the fire which burns up the very root of lust.

3. He brings the cross of Christ into the heart of a sinner by faith, and gives us communion with Christ in His death, and fellowship in His sufferings.

If this be the work of the Spirit alone, how is it that we are exhorted to it? Seeing the Spirit of God only can do it, let the work be left wholly to Him.

1. It is no otherwise the work of the Spirit but as all graces and good works, which are in us, are His; He works in us to "will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2. 13). He works all "our works in us" (Isa. 26. 12), "the work of faith with power" (2 Thess. 1. 11; Col. 2. 12). He causes us to pray and is a Spirit of supplication (Rom. 8. 26; Zech. 12. 10), and yet we are exhorted, and are to be exhorted, to all these.

2. He doth not so work our mortification in us as not to keep it still an act of our obedience. The Holy Ghost works in us and upon us, as we are fit to be wrought in and upon; that is, so as to preserve our own liberty and free obedience. He works upon our understandings, wills, consciences, and affections, agreeably to their own natures; He works in us, and with us, not against us, or without us; so that His assistance is an encouragement as to the facilitation of the work, and no occasion of neglect, as to the work itself.

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## A FEW WARNINGS

*By Dr. John Owen*

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1. When upon thoughts, perplexing thoughts about sin, instead of applying himself to the destruction of it, a man searches his heart to see what evidences he can find of a good condition, notwithstanding that sin and lust, so that it may go well with him.

For a man to gather up his experiences of God, to call them to mind, to collect them, consider, try, improve them, is an excellent thing, a duty practised by all the saints, commended in the Old Testament and the New. This was David's work when he "communed with his own heart" and called to remembrance the former lovingkindness of the Lord (Psa. 77. 6-9). This is the duty that Paul sets us to practise (2 Cor. 13. 5). And

as it is in itself excellent, so it hath beauty added to it, by a proper season, a time of trial, or temptation, or disquietness of the heart about sin, is a picture of silver to set off this golden apple, as Solomon speaks.

But now to do it for this end, to satisfy conscience, which cries and calls for another purpose, is a desperate device of a heart in love with sin. When a man's conscience shall deal with him, when God shall rebuke him for the sinful distempler of his heart, if he, instead, of applying himself to get that sin pardoned in the blood of Christ and mortified by His Spirit, shall relieve himself by any such other evidences as he hath, or thinks himself to have, and so disentangle himself from under the yoke that God was putting on his neck, his condition is very dangerous, his wound hardly curable.

Thus the Jews, under the gallings of their own consciences, and the convincing preachings of our Saviour, supported themselves with this, that they were Abraham's children, and on that account accepted with God, and so countenanced themselves in all abominable wickedness, to their utter ruin.

2. By applying grace and mercy to an unmortified sin, or one not sincerely endeavoured to be mortified, is this deceit carried on. This is a sign of a heart greatly entangled with the love of sin. When a man hath secret thoughts in his heart, not unlike those of Naaman about his worshipping in the house of Rimmon (2 Kings 5. 18), ("In all other things I will walk with God, but in this thing, God be merciful unto me") his condition is sad. It is true, indeed, a resolution to this purpose, to indulge a man's self in any sin on the account of mercy, seems to be, and doubtless in any course, is altogether inconsistent with Christian sincerity, and is a badge of a hypocrite, and is the "turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4); yet I doubt not, but through the craft of Satan and their own remaining unbelief, the children of God may themselves sometimes be ensnared with this deceit of sin; or else Paul would never have so cautioned them against it as he doth (Rom. 6. 1, 2).

Yea indeed, there is nothing more natural than for fleshly reasonings to grow high and strong upon this account. The flesh would feign be indulged unto upon the account of grace; and every word that is spoken of mercy, it stands ready to catch at and to pervert it, to its own corrupt aims and purposes. To apply mercy then to a sin not vigorously mortified is to fulfil the end of the flesh upon the gospel.

3. Frequency of success in sin's seduction, in obtaining the prevailing consent of the will unto it, is another dangerous symptom. This is that, I mean, when the sin spoken of gets the consent of the will, with some delight, though it be not actually outwardly perpetrated, yet it hath success. A man may not be able upon outward considerations to go along with sin, to that which James calls the finishing of it (Jas. 1. 14,



15), as to the outward acts of sin, when yet the will of sinning may be actually obtained; then hath it, I say, success.

4. When a man fighteth against his sin only with arguments from the issue, or the punishment due unto it, this is a sign that sin hath taken great possession of the will, and that in the heart there is a superfluity of naughtiness. Such a man as opposes nothing to the seduction of sin and lust in his heart but fear of shame among men, or hell from God, is sufficiently resolved to do the sin, if there were no punishment attending it – which, what it differs from living in the practice of sin, I know not.

Those who are Christ's, and are acted in their obedience upon gospel principles, have the death of Christ, the love of God, the detestable nature of sin, the preciousness of communion with God, a deep-grounded abhorrency of sin as sin, to oppose to any seduction of sin; to all the workings, strivings, fightings of lust in their hearts. So did Joseph: "How then can I do this great evil," saith he, "and sin against God?" my good and gracious God (Gen. 39. 9). And Paul, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5. 14); and having received these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7. 1).

But now if a man be so under the power of his lust that he hath nothing but law to oppose it withal, if he cannot fight against it with gospel weapons, but deals with it altogether with hell and judgment, which are the proper arms of the law, it is most evident that sin hath possessed itself of his will and affections, to a very great prevalency and conquest. Such a person hath cast off, as to the particular spoken of, the conduct of renewing grace, and is kept from ruin only by restraining grace; and so far is he fallen from grace, and returned under the power of the law. And can it be thought that this is not a great provocation to Christ, that men should cast off His easy, gentle yoke and rule, and cast themselves under the iron yoke of the law, merely out of indulgence unto their lusts?

Try thyself by this also, when thou art by sin driven to make a stand so that thou must either serve it, and rush at the command of it into folly, like the horse into the battle, or make head against it to suppress it, what dost thou say to thy soul? What dost thou expostulate with thyself? Is this all, hell will be the end of this course, vengeance will meet with me, and find me out? It is time for thee to look about thee; evil lies at the door. Paul's main argument to evince that sin shall not have dominion over believers is that they "are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6. 14). If thy contendings against sin be all on legal accounts, from legal principles and motives, what assurance canst thou attain unto that sin shall not have dominion over thee, which will be thy ruin?

Yea, know that this reserve will not long hold out: if thy lust hath

driven thee from stronger gospel forts, it will speedily prevail against this also. Do not suppose that such considerations will deliver thee when thou hast voluntarily given up to thine enemy those helps and means of preservation which have a thousand times their strength. Rest assuredly in this, that unless thou recover thyself with speed from this condition, the thing that thou fearest will come upon thee. What gospel principles do not, legal motives cannot do.

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### GLORIFYING GOD

*From George Newton (1602-1681) on John 17. George Newton, not to be confused with John Newton, was Puritan Pastor at Taunton*

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You then, my brethren, that have thoughts aspiring to the glory of the world to come, and that desire to be partakers of it there, you see the course you are to take; you must make this your work and business, how you may glorify the Lord here, how you may set Him up, and show Him in His beauty and His lustre to the world. And though you can make no addition to Him in Himself, yet let this be your endeavour all your days, to bring in some accruements to His honour among men, that they may honour Him the more by your means: that so when you come to die you may bespeak Him, as our Saviour doth, when He was ready to be offered up, “We have glorified Thee on earth, and now, O Father, glorify us with Thyself.”

Now there are two ways especially in which you may bring glory to the Lord; either in a way of vocal declaration, or in a way of real representation: and both these ways you must endeavour to bring glory to Him here.

1. First, glorify Him in a way of vocal declaration; let your tongues be the trumpeters of His glory, while you are speaking upon all occasions of things that tend to the advancement of the honour and the praise of God. Anything that you conceive will set Him up and raise Him in the thoughts of those whom you discourse withal, be sure that you insist upon it, and enlarge it to the utmost; let the name, and let the attributes, and let the works of God lose nothing by your means. Glorify Him, as Christ did, by manifesting and by making known His name to men, by telling what He is and what He doth, by setting forth His power and mercy, and the like, that such as hear may magnify Him and admire Him. Study God’s exalting speeches and expressions and discourses, and inure your tongues to them, that you may have them ready upon all occasions, when there is any opportunity, for God’s honour.

2. Secondly, glorify Him also in a way of real representation; and here let Him be glorified in what you are and what you do.

(1) Let God be glorified in what you are; let His glory shine upon you by reflection, according to the prophet's exhortation (Isa. 60. 1), "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Be you the monuments of His praise, the emblems of His love and of His mercy, the standing pillars on which His goodness is engraven, to be read and seen of men. Do you show forth the praises, or as we find it rendered in the margin, the virtues of Him that hath called you (1 Pet. 2. 9). That every one that looks upon you and observes you, may see the goodness and the grace and holiness of God in you. That they may say, If there be so much in the stream, what is there in the spring and in the fountain? If there be so much in the beam, what is there in the Sun of righteousness Himself? If there be so much virtue in them that are called, what is there then in Him that hath called them? This makes much for God's praise, and so indeed in showing forth the virtue we show forth the praise and the glory of Him that hath called us. "He hath ... made me," saith the church, "a polished shaft," a choice, a special, and a polished piece of work, "and said unto me, Thou art My servant ... in whom I will be glorified." When God makes such curious pieces and hangs them forth in the view of all the world, He is glorified in them.

(2) Let God be glorified, as in what you are, so in the second place, in what you do, yea, in everything you do. Let this be the utmost aim of all your actions. Your acts of nature, as eating or drinking, or the like, let these be done with reference to God's glory; as the Apostle Paul exhorts to eat and drink "to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10. 31). Your civil actions, your trading, dealing and commercing in the world, your buying, selling, giving, lending, your care and labour in your calling, let these have the same end; you see the rule is universal in the fore-alleged text, "whatsoever you do." Your holy and religious duties, let those have this aspect and aim, that you may glorify the Lord and not yourselves in them. That when men "see your good works," your frequent hearing, praying, fasting, bounty to the poor saints, "they may ... glorify," not you the doers of them, but "your Father which is in heaven." And in a word, my brethren, no action is exempt from this direction. And hence saith the apostle (1 Pet. 4. 11), "If any speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."



It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud. It is better to sigh and mourn over a heart full of unbelief and corruption than to take to ourselves one promise which the Lord does not apply.

*J.C. Philpot*

## BELIEVERS' BAPTISM

By J.H. Gosden

(Concluded from page 120)

*We commend to our readers the following beautiful article on the sacred meaning and significance of baptism. We can never forget the profound impression it made on us in our early days spiritually.*

Having briefly considered Scripture teaching and instances which prove believers' baptism to be a divinely-prescribed ordinance to be observed to the end of time, let us enquire a little into its import. For although Christ's mere command and gracious example afford sufficient warrant for its observance, we are not left in the dark as to the meaning of baptism; we are not called upon blindly to submit to a meaningless rite. Though obedience is a question of faith and love, it is not inconsistent with spiritual intelligence. Should the Holy Ghost give us a gracious understanding of the divine mystery couched within the ordinances of Christ's church, it would tend to enhance in our esteem the privilege and increase the obligations entailed in their observance.

It is indeed the sacred significance and the divine authority upon which believers' baptism rests, which render it so important and to the believer so attractive; although at the same time it possesses no inherent virtue – not in the slightest degree does it contribute to salvation or influence regeneration. The weighty signification of the ordinance is reflected in its mode of administration – *by immersion*. If *that* is infringed, the vital spiritual truths underlying the ceremony are violated and the true meaning of the ordinance nullified. Baptism is an overwhelming; therein the ceremony symbolises the believer's union to the incarnate Son of God in His precious death and burial, and – in coming up out of the water – His rising from the dead: "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead" (Col. 2. 12). With this definitely scriptural truth in view, the word *baptize* in this connection can have no other meaning than *total submergence*. Sprinkling would invalidate the representation. In every day usage the term *immerse* is met with to convey the meaning of *overwhelm*, which, if not universally, is most generally the intention of the Greek word *baptizien*. We are familiar with such expressions as "being immersed in debt, overwhelmed in trouble or in cares," etc.

Subsequent to His exemplary water baptism by John in the Jordan, Christ referred to His forthcoming sufferings as a baptism; "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12. 50). Was not the holy Sufferer completely overwhelmed with the seas of divine wrath penally due to Zion's sins?

It were blasphemy to suggest that He merely received a few drops of that awful and just fiery wrath on His sacred, devoted head. Sprinkling would seem by implication to enervate such wondrous declarations as: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"; "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"; "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (2 Cor. 5. 21; Rom. 8. 32; Isa. 53. 10). Of an agonizing Saviour, David in prophecy spoke: "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me." Could this be strictly wholly true of any but the blessed Messiah? In Psalms 22, 40, 69 and others, His overwhelming sufferings are portrayed. Isaiah shows Him deeply involved in grief and sorrow. In the Garden-scene He is agonizing unto death from the wrath of that bitter cup whose penal dregs He was to drain for the redemption of His dear but sinful and unworthy people. On the cross He was overwhelmed, yet He did not fail, for in His distress He cried in perfect faith to His hidden God: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

If there is any connection between believers' baptism and these sacred mysteries, it surely behoves us most cautiously to examine ourselves as to our attitude to the despised rite. Definitely, Holy Scripture declares the connection: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6. 3-5). Such a scripture could scarcely bear to us the meaning it does except for the fact that baptism by immersion was the apostolic doctrine and practice.

Baptism therefore is a solemn profession of faith in Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and of vital union with Him therein. It is also an acknowledgment of the believer's obligation to manifest in his conduct a being dead indeed unto sin and to the world, and a being alive unto God through Jesus Christ. "In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6. 10, 11).

Writing to the Ephesian church, Paul says, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all." This one baptism is evidently believers' baptism, not the baptism of the Spirit (which *is* essential for salvation), for he had already spoken of the "one Spirit" (Eph. 4. 4-6). This immersion-baptism Paul himself personally administered. By saying, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the

gospel,” he did not in the slightest belittle that sacred ordinance or excuse its neglect; but subordinated it to the doctrine of the gospel which he was sent to preach and which, he said, should be the power of God unto salvation to all who believe (1 Cor. 1). He magnified not himself but his office as a preacher of the cross, being “determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2. 2). That he personally baptized only Crispus and Gaius, and the believing household of Stephanas, was not that the ordinance was unimportant, but lest some might say that he ostentatiously baptized in his own name.

Baptism also symbolises regeneration which, though more strictly a new creation, may be likened to a resurrection. For a regenerated soul, through the action of the law in his experience, dies to the law and to all hope of justification through the works thereof; and when the Saviour is revealed, dies also to the law by the body of Christ, that he might be united to Him who is raised from the dead. This union is by the faith of the operation of the Spirit of God, and is the exertion of Christ’s resurrection power in the soul. Submission to baptism is an open declaration or profession of this experimental death and resurrection by virtue of union with Him who was dead but is alive for evermore (Rom. 7. 4; Gal. 2. 19; Eph. 1. 20; Rev. 1. 18). However, the symbol is not accessory to the spiritual substance. The heresy of *baptismal regeneration* virtually repudiates the work of God the Holy Ghost, whose sovereign prerogative it is to quicken the dead (Eph. 2. 1; Col. 2. 13; Titus 3. 5, 6; John 3. 3). How many thousands who were sprinkled in infancy and “confirmed” in youth, have nevertheless lived and died unregenerate, impenitent, and in their sins!

But though we emphatically repudiate the tenet that baptism is necessary for salvation, and declare regeneration to be an imperative pre-requisite for baptism, yet due regard should be given to Christ’s word: “He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16. 16). Peter, too, connects baptism and salvation: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3. 21). A “good conscience” – that is, one purged by the precious blood of Christ, qualifies for baptism, which may be considered as an emblem of that fountain of purgation which is opened for sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13. 1). And the *answer* of a good conscience is the approving testimony of the Holy Spirit upon the act of believing obedience. The *knowledge* of salvation comes through an experience of the remission of sins (Luke 1. 77), which flows from the blood of Christ: “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. 1. 7). As Noah’s eight were “saved by water” when the ark

rode upon the flood and rested again on the earth when the waters assuaged, so believers are saved from the deluge of divine wrath due to their sins, through faith in Christ (the Ark of grace) and His atonement. Noah by faith prepared the ark to the saving of his house, being shut therein by God Himself. Believers are saved in Christ the antitypical Ark of grace who outrode the storm of divine vengeance, though His sacred humanity was for a while submerged beneath the awful flood. By His obedience and death the Prince of Life fulfilled the law, exhausted its penalty, satisfied justice, vindicated the divine attributes in the exercise of free mercy toward sinful men, and rising, conquered the grave, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Death could not hold Him! He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection (Rom. 1. 4). Says Peter: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Water is the figure. In baptism it sets forth the death and burial of the Lord Jesus, and "coming up out of" the watery grave symbolises His resurrection. The baptized believer thus openly professes his faith in and union to his once-crucified and now risen and glorified Head and Saviour, makes submissive acknowledgment of His Lordship and surrenders to His all-wise disposal. The honoured disciple, who is constrained by redeeming love to follow his Master's condescending example and to obey His gracious command in being baptized in the name of the Trinity, thereby acknowledges his obligation and avers his intention, by the help of grace, to live henceforth not unto himself but unto Him who died for him, and rose again (2 Cor. 5. 15).

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### A PRESENT-DAY CONCERN

A small booklet has recently been published by Christian Watch entitled *Sex Education, Sexual Morality and the Bible*.<sup>\*</sup> This is completely different from the usual type of book mentioned in our pages, but the organiser of Christian Watch, who is deacon of one of our churches, has specially requested this "for the sake of our children and young people," and to "make your readers aware of the immoral and degrading information that is being imparted to our offspring." It is not right that we should turn a blind eye to "the abominations done in the midst."

*Sex Education* is not pleasant reading; it gives a sickening account of what is being placed before our children and young people, even at

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<sup>\*</sup> Obtainable from Christian Watch, P.O. Box 3268, Leamington Spa, CV32 6YA, £1 each including postage or £4 for five copies.

primary school level, with the support of the government and health educators. There are full references to authenticate the facts. Not only does the teaching ignore biblical morality, but is itself immoral and encourages sin.

The purpose of the booklet is to warn parents of what is taking place. At the end the clear warnings of the Word of God are set forth. (The Authorised Version is used.)

*Sex Education* is written in a quiet, sober way. The author, Dr. E.S. Williams, is a man of some standing, having been Director of Public Health for nine years for the Croydon Health Authority.

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## SABBATH-BREAKING OVERTURNED

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*This remarkable account of what took place in the life of the famous Welsh preacher John Elias (1774-1841) is from the biography just published by The Banner of Truth Trust. How solemn that today many professed evangelicals deride keeping the Lord's day as legal!*

There were in his days, especially in North Wales, the very strongholds of Satan, who seemed to domineer over some towns and districts as the prince of those parts, and as if he had the exclusive right to them. The inhabitants were under his full sway, revelling and rioting in all manner of sin and ungodliness. Even the Sabbath was trampled upon, and made subservient to their sinful propensities. No day in the week was so devoted to the service of sin and Satan. This was not only in Anglesey, but also in all parts of North Wales in some degree; and it was dangerous for preachers to interfere with them in some places.

Rhuddlan, in Flintshire, was one of these strongholds. It seems that sin here was at the full height of its strength, and no doubt the cry of their abominations ascended to heaven for vengeance: but God, instead of smiting them with the sword of His justice, sent to them the sceptre of peace and reconciliation. Elias, being moved with compassion, having the same spirit as his Master, was induced to go to this wicked place, and to preach the gospel of Christ to the people. His friends would fain dissuade him from such a dangerous undertaking, knowing what characters were congregated there on a Sunday: and what made it still more hazardous, there was also a fair there at that season for some Sundays, to dispose of scythes and hooks, and other implements for the harvest. It was apprehended that if Elias went there to preach to the people, it would so excite their evil passions that they would attack him, and endanger his life. However, he would go in the name of the Lord.



Farmers also hired labourers at the same time. All this had been done every year from time immemorial.

When Elias arrived on the ground, they were on the point of engaging in their abominable transactions. A great number had their hooks and scythes on their arms and shoulders; there was the sound and noise of harps and fiddles; the players were in liquor. There was the noise of a fair and of making bargains. There was a great concourse of all sorts of persons. Some thousands of people attended the meeting from the surrounding neighbourhood and towns, to hear him preach and to see the result; he was expected there according to the announcement.

Elias commenced the service in the open air, even in the camp of the enemy, and in the midst of men with sickles and scythes. He stood on the steps of the New Inn, belonging then to a Mrs. Hughes. He manifested amazing boldness and intrepidity, his spirit being moved within him. He appeared also very grave and compassionate. He gave out a stanza of the 24th Psalm to be sung. "I never," says an eye-witness, "heard more serious and impressive singing." He adds, "The sobriety and awe in Elias' voice and manner were very impressive." Such effect was produced shortly on the people that not a hook nor scythe was to be seen. Nothing but opposition and persecution were expected; but scarcely anything of the kind was experienced; for they all put their different implements of husbandry out of sight very soon. Elias read a chapter in the most solemn and impressive manner; then engaged in a very earnest prayer. He was most importunate with the Lord in prayer and supplication: it might remind one of Jacob's wrestling with Him until he was blessed. His heart was in a very melting frame, from which his words flowed, and the tears ran profusely down his grave and serious countenance.

The people by this time were seized with awe and great sobriety. He repeatedly thanked the Lord that He did not suffer the earth to open and swallow them up alive into hell. He most earnestly entreated the Almighty several times to incline the hearts of the respectable and influential men in the neighbourhood to regard the Sabbath and to prevent the evil practices that desecrated it so awfully. He prayed and entreated the Lord, with the greatest feelings of compassion, for the farmers, labourers, servants, publicans, and all the men of evil practices. Amazing effects followed his words in prayer.

Elias took for his text, Exodus 34. 21: "Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest time thou shalt rest." His spirit was soon stirred up within him, and the words of the Lord came with amazing force out of his lips, carrying light and conviction home to the consciences and hearts of the wicked. He made some very pertinent and homely observations in a powerful manner,

suitable to his audience. "Should we," it was asked, "rest on the Sabbath day if it were a fine day, the harvest being very wet and bad, and the corn much injured?" "Yes," he answered in a most powerful tone of voice; "yes, you should obey the Word of God at *all* times. It is said, 'in earing and in harvest thou shalt rest.' The Lord had rather send a legion of His angels to manage thy harvest than that thou shouldst disregard His holy day." He exclaimed repeatedly to the people, with all his might, the following words, with his arm lifted up and tears flowing down his face: "O robbers! O robbers! O thieves! Alas! stealing the day of the Lord! What! robbing my Lord of His day! Oh robbers! the most vile and abominable!"

It might be asked again, he said, "What if one should suffer and be unable to pay his way, having not made all exertions even on the Sabbath, when it is a wet harvest?" He observed in answer to this: "Thousands that keep the Sabbath at all times have been enabled to live far better than thou, and certainly die infinitely better than thou art likely to do." Then he made strong allusions to London and other cities, that were set on fire, which he represented as a punishment from the Lord for the disrespect shown to His holy day. He particularly observed the threatenings in the Word of God for abusing the Sabbath; and enlarged on what is said in Jeremiah 17. 27 as a threat to set Jerusalem on fire for disregarding the Lord's day. He also dwelt on the promises made in the Bible to those that keep the day holy.

The people soon became greatly alarmed, appearing as persons guilty and miserable. There was no idea of lifting up even a silent voice, or of giving utterance to a word against the truth: all the men of arms lost their courage, and seemed to lay down their weapons of opposition. They seemed panic struck. Indeed, great seriousness and sobriety of mind possessed the multitude. Many were heard saying that they would not on any account go again to such a place to do business on the Sabbath. They kept their word, *for such misdeeds were never seen again in Flintshire*. A complete stop was put to the evil so rampant and dreadful at Rhuddlan. This was done, not by any human power, authority or force, but merely by preaching the gospel. It was seen then that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

It is said that the following observations of Elias, under God's blessing, aided in producing the desired effect: "It may be hinted by some one," he said, "that this fair is an old custom, it will recover itself." He replied in a very awful manner, "If any one will give the *least* encouragement to its revival, he will be accursed before the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But blessed is the man that opposeth this and every other species of iniquity."

It seems that several persons were truly converted under that extraordinary sermon. One man was so alarmed by hearing the things Elias said of Sabbath-breakers, that on his way home he imagined that his arm on which the hook rested was really withered; consequently the instrument fell to the ground, and he feared taking it up lest the other arm should be disabled. He lost the hook, and had the use of both arms; and more than that, he was born again under Elias' sermon! During the remainder of his days, he lived a decided Christian; he walked by faith, and died a happy death.

In his prayer after the sermon, Elias again entreated the Lord to put it into the heart of some of the great people to come forward in behalf of His holy day and the cause of His dear Son; he prayed with great respect for the Bishop and Dean of St. Asaph, the magistrates and clergy. The Dean soon afterwards heard of the circumstance, and sent a threatening letter to the place. But the nuisance had already been broken in its main strength.

Elias has himself noticed the above remarkable circumstance in his autobiography, as follows: "The Lord strengthened me, in the face of a great tumult, to preach at Rhuddlan in a fair held there on a Sunday during the harvest season. He gave me the victory. Very soon the custom was discontinued." This astonishing event occurred in the summer of 1802.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**The Mortification of Sin:** John Owen, abridged and made easy to read by Richard Rushing; paperback; 144 pages; price £3.75; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

*The Mortification of Sin* is one of Dr. Owen's great works. Perhaps at first there is a shrinking from the title, but really the venerable author deals with the whole of the Christian life. How can it be lived? How can a sinner with such a wicked heart walk worthy of his calling? How can he withstand temptation?

Some of the choice sentences from the book are:

"There is nothing in religion that hath any efficacy for compassing an end, but it hath it from God's appointment of it to that purpose."

"From Him (Christ) we have our mortification; He is exalted and made a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto us; and of our repentance our mortification is no small portion."

"Duties are excellent food for a healthy soul; they are no physic for a sick soul."

"He (the Holy Spirit) brings the cross of Christ into the heart of a sinner by faith, and gives communion with Christ in His death, and fellowship in His sufferings" – on "how doth the Spirit mortify sin?"

“Every unmortified sin will certainly do two things. 1. It will weaken the soul, and deprive it of its vigour. 2. It will darken the soul and deprive it of its comfort and peace.”

“God sees it best for us that we should be complete in nothing in ourselves; that in all things we must be complete in Christ.”

Now all these are from the *original* Dr. Owen (as are the extracts on pages 142, 143 and 144). What to make of the old divines being modernised, we hardly know what to say. The present work *The Mortification of Sin* is not only “made easy to read” but also “abridged” (by Richard Rushing). Now is it possible to abridge Owen? One old writer claimed he puts more in one sentence than many do in a page. And is it possible to make Owen easy to read? Owen is *not* easy. We are not told who Mr. Rushing is, but he appears to have done his work soberly and conscientiously (sadly not using the Authorised Version!)

We ourselves are not attracted to these new modernisations, but there is just one thing in their favour. Dr. Owen’s works contain a wealth of vital godliness. This is not a “reading age”; many of our intellectual young people just do not read. Very few today read Owen. His works lie neglected on the bookshelves. We most strongly favour the original – but it would be a good thing if not a few, reading an easy-to-read abridgement, were attracted by Dr. Owen’s writings, and this should prove an opened door to reading Dr. Owen in seventeenth century English.

**Christian Love**, by Hugh Binning; paperback; 112 pages; price £3.75; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

A few years ago we were pleasantly surprised to receive a beautiful book as a present from the U.S.A. – the complete works of Hugh Binning. The contents (mainly sermons) were excellent; but we were amazed at two things: that Hugh Binning was only 25 when he died, and also that he wrote (or preached) so extensively during his short life. In 2002 we published a sermon preached by him on John 2. 1 – the sinner’s Advocate.

Hugh Binning (1627-1653) was a Scottish minister in the days of the Covenanters. This little book was originally published under the title of *A Treatise on Christian Love*, and is based on the text: “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13. 35). Binning was deeply grieved by the divisions among the Lord’s people, especially the rancour shown at that time in the conflict between Resolutioners and Protesters. He himself was a Protester, but was saddened by much of the bitterness that was shown. His appeal, based on Scripture, is for love among the brethren.

At the end three sermons from his work *The Sinner’s Sanctuary* (on Romans 8) are included.

**Letters on Revival**, by Ebenezer Porter; paperback; 144 pages; price £4.95; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

We found this book interesting and profitable.

These letters were first written by Ebenezer Porter in 1832. Porter, an American Congregationalist minister, had witnessed the revival of religion that swept New England between 1798 and 1808, and also knew some of the older ministers at that time who had taken part in earlier revivals.

Ebenezer Porter longed that again there might be a true revival of vital godliness, but gives various warnings, and makes it clear that it was the preaching of the doctrines of grace, commonly called Calvinism, which was used by the Spirit of God. The dangers he warns against are pressing sinners too early to make an open profession of faith, and too easily accepting a person as truly converted of God – warnings which are specially needed in the present day. No doubt (though he does not mention the name) he had in mind the revivalist Charles G. Finney, whose preaching has strongly influenced American evangelism from that time down to the present day.

We must say that, unless we misunderstood them, pages 90-91 (Letter Six) were rather confusing. Porter seems to state that sinners have power in themselves to repent – although all through the book his teaching is clear on depravity and man's inability. Has a word been omitted? or is he just propounding another opinion?

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### HAVE I A HOPE OF GLORY?

Have I a hope of glory,  
Of reaching Canaan's shore,  
When told is life's brief story,  
And earthly hopes are o'er?  
Time's brightest joys must perish,  
Swiftly they pass away:  
Have I a hope to cherish  
When all things else decay?

Hope of the life immortal,  
Hope of the joys above,  
Of passing death's dark portal,  
To endless light and love?  
This were a hope to sweeten  
Life's bitterest cup to me;  
This were a hope to meeten  
Souls for eternity.

Yet could I weep for ever,  
And spend my life in prayer,  
And soil my garments never,  
And breathe no tainted air:  
Powerless are floods of tears  
A guilty soul to save,  
And vain are lifelong prayers,  
To gain the hope I crave.

Jesus the one foundation,  
Jesus the sinner's Friend,  
On Thee and Thy salvation  
My trembling hopes depend:

Have I – O search and try me –  
 Have I this hope divine?  
 Whatever Thou deny me,  
 Make this rich blessing mine.

O Jesus, elder Brother,  
 Saviour, Redeemer, Friend,  
 I dare not trust another;  
 On Thee I must depend;  
 Do Thou forsake me never,  
 Keep me in life and death,  
 Dwell, Lord, within me ever,  
 E'en to my latest breath.

And when earth's mists are fading  
 Fast from my closing eyes,  
 When past all human aiding,  
 My soul to Thee must rise,  
 Then let the hope of glory  
 A sure, firm anchor be,  
 Proving it no vain story  
 To trust and wait for Thee.

Ruth Hammond of Brighton, May 1880

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## OBITUARY

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**Hannah Mary Wilkins**, member of the church at Zoar Chapel, The Dicker, entered her eternal rest on December 18th, 2003, aged 89. Our dear friend grew up in the godly home of her parents, James and Bertha Payne, who were both members at Galeed Chapel, Brighton. The little book about their life, *Providence and Grace*, is well worth reading.

Our friend was evidently called by grace early in her life. By the age of fifteen she came into a long period of deep distress, feeling absolutely sure that she had committed the unpardonable sin. This came about as she had been reading Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* where he had the same temptation. This put terrible thoughts into her mind and she was constantly in anguish of spirit, wishing she was a beast of the field that had no soul. She lived under these awful temptations of the devil for a long time.

At the age of sixteen she began working in Bexhill as a mother's help, where she worshipped, when able, first of all at Ninfield in the afternoon and The Tabernacle, Hastings, in the evening. When going home for a weekend, her mother said she wanted her to go to Ebenezer Chapel, Hastings, which she did. On the very first evening service that she went, Mr. Robert Brooker preached from Isaiah 40. 1, 2, and as he was preaching the Lord favoured her to receive the pardon of her sins. She was now about eighteen, and after months of awful temptation regarding the unpardonable sin she said, "It was as though I looked for my sins and they could not be found." The sweetness then leaving her, she began to wonder if it was real and, in asking for another token, it was as though

the Lord said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Once again she was happy, but in seeking again, the Lord very gently said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" This was joined with, "Be not faithless, but believing." All she could say was, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Why me, why me, why such a wretch as me, for who of mercy need despair, since I have mercy found?"

I must say that before this happy time and after the terrible fear she had been through, which now seem to be removed, she then felt she did not feel her sins enough and asked the Lord to show her. She wished she had never done so, as the Lord gave her such a sight of her sins, which brought her so low, that if she had not received the pardon of her sins she would have despaired of hope. She says, "But when kneeling down one night under the weight of my sins, the Lord spoke, 'Beloved, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.' This completely broke me down and I had to get into bed immediately. I did not know whether to weep or rejoice – I did both. I cling to that word now whenever I feel wretched because of my sins."

Our dear friend was baptized by Mr. Robert Brooker in July 1933 at Hastings. It was there at Ebenezer, Hastings, that she walked in the time of her first love. She dearly loved Mr. Robert Brooker and Ebenezer. How long she was there is not recorded in her writings. There is no record in her writings after this regarding her movements, but we know that in the providence of God she returned to Galeed where her parents were members, and she transferred her membership there. Her mother died in 1946 and her father in 1956. Our friend does mention in her writings various times of blessing at Galeed.

During the war years 1939-1945 she was in the Services and had times of working in the NAAFI which provided canteens for servicemen and women. She often told me about remarkable answers to prayer whilst in this work – her life being spared and the Lord appearing for her. On one occasion she was helped to kneel and pray by her bed in front of worldly companions, the Lord speaking, "Them that honour Me I will honour, but they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed," right into her heart. The next morning, the supervisor organised her removal to another camp, where she was happier.

The Lord brought her into contact with Mr. Albert Wilkins in a remarkable way. He attended The Dicker, and on April 6th, 1954, they were married at Galeed by Mr. Jesse Delves. When leaving Galeed for The Dicker she said to herself, "I hope that nothing happens that I shall have to transfer my membership to The Dicker." But the Lord, in mercy, thought otherwise and brought this about in a remarkable way in 1961, through Mr. Tyler's ministry, under which her soul was fed. She had the pleasure in 1976 of her dear husband being also brought to join the church at The Dicker, but he passed away in January 1988. (The obituary of Mr. Albert Wilkins is recorded in the July 1988 *Gospel Standard*.)

By the beginning of 1992 our friend was in need of care. A room became available for her and on May 9th, 1992, she went into the Hove Bethesda Home, Mr. Philip Warren (senior) being used to confirm this move. It was here that she was so lovingly cared for, and here that she came to prize and profit under Mr. John Walder's ministry. One such occasion was at the Lord's table in February 1999 when our friend says that, after so many times of attending the Lord's table

and coming away disappointed, and fearing it would be so again, as they were singing a part of hymn 170, they came to verse 5 and it was as though the Lord was pleased to speak verses 5 and 6 right into her heart: "Sinner, thou hast done the deed, thou hast made the Saviour bleed," etc. It was as though the Lord was actually suffering then for her. This filled her soul with awe and she adds, "A mystery never to be understood, how that the Lord could ever have suffered for one so wretched and sinful as me."

During the eleven years of care in Bethesda she would often speak of good hearing times. In the year 2000 it was Hosea 14. 4 when Mr. Walder was preaching: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." This was followed by a time in hospital, when the Lord favoured her, as she says, "The Lord was with me; I felt a little closer to Him and felt the reality of His sufferings. I told Him He was precious and that He was my Saviour. And then coming back to my room, one night I awoke feeling that Jesus was with me, beside me, making me to realise in a sweet way that He really did suffer. I said, 'Yes, Lord Jesus, I know that Thou didst suffer and that for me, and for that sin,' and then He was gone, but the sweetness remains; I cannot forget it." She had gone to bed feeling so guilty in a certain matter and then the Lord drew near and granted forgiveness. Our friend then says, "I have written these things down, and may it be to the honour and glory of God alone, to such a poor sinner, a sinner loved with an everlasting love and saved by grace alone." Here her writings end.

In April 2003 she suddenly became blind and for a long time the devil tormented her when her eyes were closed with awful visions before her. She would tell me about this and the distress it gave her, but through mercy an operation was performed on her good eye, a cataract being removed, and once more she could see and was so thankful. However, in July 2003, whilst still blind, she was given a sight by faith of the Lord Jesus suffering hell for His dear people, and she among them. This was brought about by hymn 445 [on Christ's dying love].

During the last months of her life it was a continual pleasure to visit her; she was always wanting to speak of what the Lord had done for her, and her burden for her family and for The Dicker – she was so glad that the Lord had given them another pastor.

Friday, September 12th: another very profitable time with her, her room a Bethel.

Friday, November 21st: a sweet time again. Our friend was now having heart attacks.

Saturday, November 29th: our friend had been in hospital, where the Lord had again helped her, made her aware of how much she had been saved from, as she said, "Saved from the pangs of hell."

Thursday, December 4th: this was to be my last visit, as our dear friend passed away on Thursday, December 18th, at 8 p.m.

Her daughter and son-in-law, and one of her grand-daughters, were with our friend when she passed away. She had spent the whole night awake before her death the following evening, and she said how that she had tried to meditate on how Jesus had been alone all night upon the mountain top. And even in her last hours she so wanted to know that it was well with her two little baby great grand-daughters. The Lord indeed made our dear friend a mother in Israel.

S.M.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JUNE 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**ELISHA AND THE SYRIAN ARMY**  
**GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE STILL**

*Sermon preached at Westminster Chapel, London, on Friday evening,  
April 16th, 2004, on the occasion of the Gospel Standard Societies  
Annual Meetings.*

**Text:** “And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kings 6. 15-17).

This situation has constantly been repeated in the history of the church of God. The Lord’s little remnant, few, feeble; their enemies coming against them, strong, mighty, invincible. It seeming impossible there can be any way of deliverance; it seeming certain that God’s people will be overthrown. And then the Lord has made bare His almighty arm, protected His people, destroyed their enemies. It has been so right down the ages. It will be so right to the end of time.

You can go right back to the beginning of the Bible: Israel on the banks of the Red Sea, no way of escape, no way of deliverance. The Egyptians behind, the mountains hemming them in on either side, the waters of the Red Sea in front ready to swallow them up. “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” “They sank as lead in the mighty waters.” You go right to the end of the Word of God and you see all the hosts of hell fighting against the Lord’s little remnant, and yet they are not defeated. “They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.” And there are innumerable occasions in between. You might think of Sennacherib coming against Hezekiah. You might think of that mighty army coming against Jehoshaphat: “We have no might ... neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee.”

So it has ever been, and so it will be right down to the end of time. The Lord’s people will always have their enemies: sin, Satan, the world, and their enemies will always be strong, stronger than they. But there is one word that Satan cannot obliterate from Holy Scripture, one word which in all ages belongs to the Lord’s people, and it is this: “No weapon

that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.”

In the little passage that I have read, we have the man of God Elisha and his young servant alone in the city of Dothan. One morning the young servant boy goes out and it seems certain disaster. He sees the mighty Syrian army surrounding the city. And he knows that they have come with one purpose alone and that is to capture Elisha the man of God, to destroy Elisha the man of God. If ever there were an impossible case in all Scripture, in all the history of the church of God, this was it. You see, one man (or two if you count his servant boy) and a great army, the Syrian army sent to capture him. There they are surrounding the city of Dothan. It is no wonder the servant boy cried out, “Alas, my master! how shall we do?” Sometimes these troubles and these problems and these assaults, come very suddenly, very unexpectedly, don’t they? As far as we know Elisha was just not expecting this, neither was the servant boy. He got up early one morning, he looked out and he saw something which prostrated him. Now, the people of God over the ages have found this time after time. Also no doubt, beloved friends, you often find it in your personal life, in providence. You get up one morning and everything in your life seems to be right. Before the day is out, perhaps there is a ’phone call, perhaps the post arrives, perhaps someone knocks at your door, perhaps there is a bereavement, and the whole thing prostrates you. And, if you and I are left to ourselves we say, “Alas, my master! how shall we do?”

“When the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots.” Now, let us be clear, when these trials come, when there is the opposition of sin and Satan, whether it is against the church of God, whether it is against you personally; unbelief can never rise any higher than this, and it never will: “Alas, my master! how shall we do?” But Elisha answered, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Elisha could see things that the servant boy could not see. He could see “behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” Now, this was something, not just imagination, not even just faith; it was something that Elisha literally saw. God’s people at times can see it by faith. And you have all the difference here between carnal unbelief, which is in all of us by nature, and God-given faith. His servant said, “Alas, my master! how shall we do?”; that is unbelief. “And he answered,” that is faith, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Now, with Elisha, he actually saw it. With God’s people today it is God-given faith.

The Apostle Paul on one occasion said this: “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” You cannot

help seeing the things that are seen, but faith does not look at them. Faith looks a different way, faith looks a different direction. The servant boy was looking at the things that were seen. Now, Elisha saw them, he saw the Syrians and their chariots and their horses and their swords and their spears, he saw them just as much as his servant boy did, but he did not look at them. O the difference between unbelief and God-given faith! "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

"And he answered, Fear not." O this is one of the wonderful "fear nots" of the Word of God. And really, you know, if you look at the things that were seen, if you look at it carnally, or if you use human reason, there was every reason to fear, wasn't there? "He answered, Fear not." Why? "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." Now, to the servant it seemed foolishness, it seemed nonsense. He must have thought that something strange had happened to his master. But Elisha could see it. He could see a host that to his servant was invisible. He could see that the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about him.

Well, what of us today? What of the church of God in the wilderness? What of our little denomination? What of our churches? What of those that oppose? What about all the forces of evil and infidelity? What about all the powers of hell? Do you believe it, "Fear not"? Can you say it? Do you believe it, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them"? You see, with Elisha it was a host of angels bright and glorious, wasn't it? And that is a deep, mysterious subject, but we are told, aren't we, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" This invisible guard over the people of God. And there have been many instances in the history of God's people when their enemies have actually looked and they have seen a mysterious guard around the people of God. Wasn't there a little account fairly recently in the *Zion's Witness* magazine about some godly people on the mission field, travelling in great danger, and they felt sure they were going to be attacked? But they weren't attacked. And later they found out the reason they had not been attacked was because their enemies had seen twelve (was it?) bright shining guards watching over them. If I remember the story aright, at that very moment there was a little group of twelve people at a prayer meeting, wrestling for them in prayer that the Lord would keep them safe.

Now, it is a deep, mysterious subject. "For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." But, beloved friends, leaving all that, leaving the guard of angels, let us think of

almighty God Himself. “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Why did I read to you that beautiful little 56th Psalm? Well, David seemed surrounded with foes. He was just plagued with them. There was Saul seeking to destroy him, there were Philistines, then later on there was going to come his own son Absalom against him. He seemed to be surrounded with foes and enemies seeking to destroy him. Right in the middle of that Psalm comes one beautiful little word: “This I know; for God is for me.” Well, David could not help seeing the things that were seen; seeing his enemies, seeing the Philistines, seeing Saul, but he was not looking at them. His eyes were turned another way. He viewed God, his covenant God. He viewed Him as almighty. He was the One on whom his hope depended, the One to whom he prayed. “This I know; for God is for me,” and if God be for me, who can be against me?

Ah, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” So it is almighty God. And you can think of so many things bound up – the covenant of grace. O to have the covenant of grace on our side! “Although my house be not so with God” – well, there are your Syrians surrounding the city, there are your Philistines, there is King Saul. “Although my house be not so with God” – “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” – “yet hath He made with me” – even me, such a sinner as me – “an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” And, dear child of God, there is your everlasting safety.

“Its bonds shall never break,  
Though earth’s old columns bow;  
The strong, the tempted, and the weak,  
Are one in Jesus now.”

“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” We have the Word of God on our side. And what about the promises? “Exceeding great and precious promises” that are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. And they are all on the side of the Lord’s people, and they cannot be broken.

“Sooner all nature shall change,  
Than one of God’s promises fail.”

“Hath He said, and shall He not also do it?”

“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” On this beautiful subject my mind went to those concluding verses of Romans chapter 8. It is a wonderful chapter, isn’t it? It begins with “No condemnation” and it ends with “No separation,” and all the way through it is everlasting love. Now, towards the end there are all those challenges. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” And then, he issues this challenge: “Who is he that condemneth?” Well, unbelief

can give you plenty of answers to that. Just like this servant boy, you look round – “Who is he that condemneth?” Well, you say, the holy law of God, that condemns me; Satan condemns me; divine justice condemns me; my own conscience condemns me; sometimes people condemn me. You can find plenty of Syrians surrounding the city of Dothan, can’t you? “Who is he that condemneth?” “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.” Now, there is your answer. “Yea rather, that is risen again” – there is your answer. “Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” And then when you come right to the end, here you have the city surrounded by Syrians. You think of them all: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” You have plenty of Syrians with their swords and spears surrounding your city. Ah, but he says, “I am persuaded ...” and he goes through all that long list, as if he can look them all in the face, and he says, “I am persuaded, that ...” none of them “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Elisha could see it, but the servant boy couldn’t. “And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw.” Well, just to linger for a moment here – surely that is our prayer for our children and for our young people. “Lord, I pray thee, open their eyes that they may see.” That they might see things they never saw by nature, that they might see things they never saw before; see God in all His holiness; see eternity in all its solemnity; see death in all its terror; see their sin in all its guilt; see the world in all its vanity; see the people of God in all their blessedness; and above all, see Christ in all His glory and in all His beauty. So that is our prayer for all you young people and all you children that we are pleased to see with us this evening – that the Lord in love and mercy will open your eyes. With some of you He has. And where some of you can say, “I believe He has opened my eyes to see my need,” may He open your eyes that “thine eyes may see the King in His beauty.”

“And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw.” But, beloved friends, we need to pray it for ourselves, all of us, we need to pray it for ourselves, that the Lord will open our eyes, that we will see things we have never seen before – in God’s Word, in the gospel, in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. O we see so many

things; we see so many things that we wish we did not see. And there are many things we long to see and we do not see them. O, but may our eyes be opened! "Lord ... open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw." Now, may that be the prayer of you and me, and may it be answered.

The way it specially rested with me this evening – perhaps you wondered why I read Hebrews chapter 2. Well, without going into all the background and the context and the exposition of that quotation from the 8th Psalm, the apostle is speaking of some things that God's people would like to see, and they do not see. And, of course, there are many things with God's people that they do see, and they wish they did not see. Ah, but he says, "But we see Jesus." Now, it is in that sense especially – Lord, open our eyes that we may see. We can see all these Syrians, we can see all these enemies, we can see all these dangers, we can see all these foes, we can see all these sins. O, but open our eyes that we may see; turn our eyes another way to Jesus and His blood. May it be, "But we see Jesus." Not just to see this guard of angels, but something better, something more glorious even than this guard of angels. We see all these things that trouble us, all these things against us. But, Lord open our eyes that we may see, and look away from all these things, and enter here: "But we see Jesus." May that be your prayer as a congregation this evening before we go home: "Sir, we would see Jesus." Well, we would, wouldn't we? Nothing would suit us better. "We would see Jesus."

Well, just a few things here. Just like Elisha and the servant looking round and seeing these Syrians and chariots and horses, enemies, things to oppose, things to destroy; and that prayer to look a different way, to have eyes opened to see something better, something different. We think of the world today, and as we look around in the world and as we hear of things in the world, there are so many things we wish we did not see, aren't there? And there are so many things we would love to see and we do not. O, but Lord, open our eyes that we may see. Not just a host of guardian angels, but the Lord of angels, the Creator of angels, God's dear Son. O, may it be, as has been prayed a few times today, "To see no man, save Jesus only." To see Him on the throne, Jesus in control, the government upon His shoulder. O, to be enabled with opened eyes at times to look away from all the confusion and evil and sorrow and death in this poor perishing world, and to look upwards, heavenwards, Christwards, and to see Him there on the throne. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

I will bring it a bit closer. The church of God, our little group of churches. There are things we long to see, and we pray for them, but we do not see them. We long to see that gracious reviving, we long to see

sinner being born of the Spirit of God, we long to see them making an open profession of the Lord's name. We long to see gracious ministers being raised up, we long to see godly pastors being appointed. These things we long to see and we are disappointed really, aren't we! We do not see them. It is not as it was in days past. But certainly we see a lot of things in our churches and in our midst we wish were not there. We wish we did not see them. Just like looking out and seeing all these Syrians – Lord, open our eyes that we might see something different, that we might see something better.

“Sweet to look upward to the place  
Where Jesus pleads above.”

And He is still the great Head of the church. And if you and I love the church, the Lord Jesus loves the church more.

I have been looking at the closing chapter in Micah's prophecy. He speaks of a dreadful day in the earth, and in the professing church of God, so much like our own. And he mentions some terrible things. Then suddenly he says this: “Therefore I will look unto the Lord.” He has had his eyes opened. He is not looking at Syrians and Philistines and enemies and foes; he is looking up to heaven. “Therefore” – you would think therefore would be the wrong word. You have all these terrible things – “Therefore.” But it is just the opposite way round: “*Therefore* I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.” Wasn't it Mr. Raven who used to say, “The outlook may be dark, but the uplook is bright”? Now, Lord, open our eyes that we might see.

O, but to bring it closer still. Personally, we look in our own hearts. It is something like the servant boy looking out that morning, plenty to frighten us, things that would destroy us, things that threaten our death. Are you satisfied as you look in your own heart? You look in your heart. There are a lot of things you wish you could see there, but you do not see them. You wish you could see more love to the Saviour. And there are many things there you wish you didn't see – all that hard-heartedness and deadness and dryness and barrenness and sin and guilt. Well, Joseph Hart says, “Pore not on thyself too long.” O, Lord, open my eyes that I may see, not just “pore on myself too long.”

“Look to Jesus, kind as strong –  
Mercy joined with power.”

O, to keep our eyes on Jesus fixed. To come into that beautiful word, those things we do not see, those things we would see, “But we see Jesus.” And if it is like this: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” Why was He “made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death”? That He might

atone for sin, that He might put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, that by one offering He might perfect for ever them that are sanctified. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." O, but to see Him crowned with glory and honour, having triumphed over sin, death, hell and the grave. Crowned with glory and honour, ever living, eternally the same, almighty to save. Lord, open our eyes that we may see. And whatever else, and whatever we do see in our own hearts, may it be this: "But we see Jesus," my only hope, my only foundation, my only plea. There is no other, and we seek no other.

So we might go on. Lord, open our eyes that we may see. We are in the midst of trouble; trouble like a gloomy cloud comes. We look out, like Elisha, like his servant; whichever way we look it seems to be trouble surrounding us. What did Toplady say? – "encompassed"? That is what Elisha and the servant were – they were encompassed.

"Encompassed with clouds of distress,  
And tempted all hope to resign."

"But we see Jesus," a merciful and faithful High Priest who sympathises, who understands, who "with heaven and earth at His command, waits to answer prayer." "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Whatever your troubles are this evening, whatever surrounds you, whatever encompasses you, if the Lord opens your eyes to look heavenwards to see that merciful and faithful High Priest, that will put everything right. "Lord ... open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw." We perhaps think of the unknown way, we look forward. All these things we see, but we wish we did not see them. We shrink from them, these dark gloomy mountains, these crooked things. Open our eyes that we may see Jesus going before. "But we see Jesus." "Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him; lo, I have told you." Lord, open our eyes that we may see.

At times we look forward to the swellings of Jordan, the solemn article and hour of death, and that is worse than any Syrians, Philistines, horses, chariots, swords, spears. "How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" And left to ourselves we say, alas, alas, how shall I do? O, "But we see Jesus" and His precious blood, and that He has gone before, and that He has tasted death; made a way through the swellings of Jordan for the ransomed to pass over. O, to have our eyes fixed on Him who has gone before, the dear Lord Jesus in His precious sin-atoning death and glorious resurrection, and may faith cry,



“Nor fear to cross that gloomy sea,  
Since Thou hast tasted death for me.”

“His servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

“A sovereign Protector I have,  
Unseen, yet for ever at hand.”

Now one last word, and it is a solemn one. Elisha prayed a second time. The first time it was that the young man's eyes might be opened. The second time it was that all his enemies might be blinded; and they were, to their overthrow and defeat. It is a solemn thing if you have the Lord's people praying against you. And it is a solemn thing if you have the Lord Himself against you. Do not forget, there are two prayers in 2 Kings chapter 6. One a most beautiful prayer; O, but what an awfully solemn prayer the other: “Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness.” And the Lord answered this prayer. You need to be careful of people whose prayers the Lord answers. And you need to be very careful that you do not do anything to grieve the people of God, to distress the people of God.

When I was a young minister I learnt a very solemn lesson that I never forgot. There were a few of the Lord's people, and they were good, godly people, but really looking back they treated me wretchedly. The time came, a circumstance arose, and, to put it in simple language, in a nice way I could just get my own back. But the Lord showed me: never do anything to hurt the people of God. If you touch them you touch the apple of His eye. They are the body of Christ. Would you wound the body of Christ? Would you tear asunder the body of Christ? That taught me a lesson I have never forgotten. Never wilfully do anything to wound or to harm the people of God, because God loves them, and God defends them, and God will always have the last word.

Well, our mercy is that Elisha's God still lives and reigns. You remember when Elijah was separated from Elisha, Elisha asked the question, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” And immediately he proved the answer. He is still almighty. He is still in heaven on the throne. He is still with His people here on earth. And we can say just the same about Elisha, the Elisha of this wonderful account in 2 Kings chapter 6. Where is his God? Does He still live? Does He still reign? He is still in heaven. He is still with His people.

O may the Lord bless you and may the Lord bless His Word.

## THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETIES

*Report of the Annual Meetings of the Gospel Standard Societies  
held on Friday, April 16th, 2004, at Westminster Chapel, London*

### MORNING PRAYER MEETING

Mr. R.D.G. Field (Pastor, Dicker) read Psalm 51, and spoke as follows:

I just want to make a few remarks, as helped, beloved friends. First of all, this prayer meeting was advertised for confession, supplication and thanksgiving. Those three blessed things are all found in this sacred Psalm.

Real confession is a most blessed thing which only the Lord can give. Real confession is heart confession, it is as we sang in the hymn just now, and may it be our fervent prayer this day:

“Convince us of our sin,  
Then lead to Jesus’ blood;  
And to our wondering view reveal  
The secret love of God.”

Sadly, real heart confession seems so lacking in our little denomination today. There are many prayer meetings that take place, but what real confession of sin and heart repentance is there? May the Lord grant us real heart confession of our own personal sins, of our church sins, of our denominational sins, and the only way we shall be brought to that real confession is to be taught by the Holy Spirit what vile sinners we are. The more we know our sin, the more we shall need that real heart confession. Think of what David said: “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.” You see, David did not know or acknowledge his sin until God sent Nathan unto him, and said, “Thou art the man.” It was then he realised his sinful state, his wretched condition; it was then he had to acknowledge his sin and be brought to real heart repentance.

The second thing is supplication. How David here had to plead: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Do you know what it is truly to plead that before the Lord, from a truly broken heart like David did: “Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities”? It is sinners, friends, that can say, spiritually-taught sinners, “and none but they, How precious is the Saviour!” You see, David knew so much of the need of that precious blood of the dear Redeemer because he knew so much of the sin that was within him. May the Lord bring us each personally and collectively to

a real knowledge of our sin and to plead like David did for that pardon and forgiveness and mercy.

The third thing – thanksgiving. David in this Psalm, did he not say, “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness. O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise”? May we be enabled today personally to render unto the Lord the praise that is due that we are not in a deserved hell, that “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities,” that we are still here on praying ground. Real thanksgiving just as real prayer is God-given. It comes forth from the heart, and Paul, in writing to the churches on each occasion exhorted them to prayer and to thanksgiving. The hymnwriter said,

“He justly claims a song from me:  
His loving-kindness, O how free!”

Did not the apostle say: “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”? And, “But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

So may there be throughout this prayer meeting and throughout this day and the remainder of our lives, that real confession.

“To see sin smarts but slightly;” (the hymnwriter said)  
“To own, with lip confession,  
Is easier still; but O to feel  
Cuts deep beyond expression.”

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” And then may we know that real pleading and supplicating with the Lord, and may we know too that real praise due to His holy name. Well, they are a few scattered thoughts. May the Lord bless them to our souls and may we know the reality of this beautiful Psalm in our soul’s experience.

Hymns 27, 806 and 918 were sung during the prayer meeting, and the following prayed: Mr. J.E. Pack (Pastor, Irthlingborough), Mr. H.J. Flitton (Melbourne, Australia), Mr. R.C. Rayner (Braintree), Mr. D.E. Cornford (Heathfield), Mr. A. Crowter (Attleborough), Mr. Field closing in prayer.

## AFTERNOON MEETING

After the singing of hymn 1, the Chairman of the Societies, Mr. G.D. Buss, called on Mr. S. Mercer (Pastor, Eastbourne) to seek the Lord’s blessing on the meetings.

The Chairman then read from Ephesians 4, and then in announcing hymn 974, which was sung, said: I would just say, brethren, that in choosing this hymn I speak to myself more than anybody else in this building this afternoon. And there was a word that rested on my spirit, as I sought the Lord for this hymn, and you will find it in 1 Corinthians 14. 20: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." Interpreted by our own dear Saviour in His perfect ministry, "be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." And that is the spirit in which I would like us to sing hymn 974, searching ourselves as we sing it.

CHAIRMAN: Beloved friends, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome so many of you as you gather this afternoon to our 132nd Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Aid Society, and the 127th Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Poor Relief Society. It is a great mercy that after so many years these funds are still being used for the help of God's dear people, and may we be given wisdom as good stewards of the manifold grace of God in the handling of these matters.

The following is the Annual Report for 2003 of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Societies, which was not read.

### **GOSPEL STANDARD AID AND POOR RELIEF SOCIETIES**

Dear Friends,

This year has been difficult but the purposes for which the Societies were formed have continued to be fulfilled. The funds have been used to assist many friends and the Committee have been helped to deal with a number of issues which are important to the churches as a whole. The relationship of the churches to one another and to the Societies has been referred to on a number of occasions in the past and this association of our churches which form the body of the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists ensures the independence of each church. It is the truth of God and the doctrines of grace that bind us together in union one with another and to Christ the glorious Head of the church.

The Committee earnestly desire that this union may continue to be manifest and they endeavour to preserve it when dealing with difficulties that come before them. Much grace and wisdom is necessary and the Committee seek that all they are required to do may be done in the fear of the Lord and with a single eye to His honour and glory. The influence of carnal mindedness and the lack of spiritual discernment is increasingly apparent in some of the problems that arise, and more than ever before what a need there is for a turning unto the Lord in heart and purpose and a sincere looking to Him for wisdom and guidance!

At the Annual General Meeting last year questions were raised by a subscriber about the legality of some of the actions that the Committee had taken during 2002. A complaint was made to the Charity Commission raising these same issues and, after lengthy correspondence and a thorough investigation carried out by the Charity Commission, the Committee are pleased to report that the Commission is entirely satisfied that the affairs of the Societies are in order and that nothing was done which was unlawful.

The salaries paid to our Editors do not require authorisation by the Charity

Commission because the Gospel Standard Magazine Fund is governed by a trust established on June 27th, 1879, and neither of our Editors are trustees of it or had any influence in their appointment as Editors by the trustees of the Fund.

Further, the Charity Commission have confirmed that they are satisfied that the grants paid to the trustees who are Strict Baptist ministers have been made in furtherance of the objects of the Gospel Standard Aid Society and were a proper application of charity funds.

It has also been confirmed that where a charity's governing document predates the publication of the Charities Act 1992, a requirement in the governing document that the accounts be audited may be construed to imply independent examination. The Charity Commission have confirmed that their enquiries are completed and their file is closed.

Despite our unworthiness the Committee record with gratitude the goodness of the Lord during the year now past and they are thankful to be able to report that the financial position of the Societies continues to be satisfactory.

Although there has been a further reduction in the Societies' income for the year due to a continuing decline in the rate of interest received on investments and to fluctuations in the amount of voluntary contributions made to the Societies, the financial position remains satisfactory. The purposes for which the Societies were commenced continue to be fulfilled and wherever a financial need is made known to the Committee, they give assistance according to the rules of the Societies. The income of the Aid Society was £1,493 less than last year although legacies of £1,500 were received. Investment income was £2,957 less than 2002, and this resulted from the maturity of investments in Government Stock which had been yielding a little over 8% and the reinvestment of those funds in a bank deposit yielding less than half that amount. Grants were paid to twenty recipients on a quarterly basis and one payment was made to a minister to help with the cost of changing his car. The investments with Abbey National and Woolwich Plc have been withdrawn and a deposit made with the COIF Charities Deposit Fund which will yield a higher rate of interest than previously received. There was an excess of expenditure over income for the year of £2,531 compared with a similar excess last year of £18,868.

The recurring income of the Poor Relief Society was only £938 less than the previous year despite a lower amount being received overall by way of interest on the Society's investments. A legacy of £500 was received and voluntary contributions were £522 more than in 2002. Grants paid amounted to £33,740, which is £1,760 less than in the previous year. Grants were paid regularly each quarter to seventeen recipients and to fourteen chapels and, in addition, there were two special grants paid during the year. The Society received £28,321, being the proceeds of sale of Hilmarton Chapel, and during the year three small charities were wound up and the funds amounting to £1,355 were transferred into the Poor Relief Society. For the year there was therefore an overall surplus of £21,574 compared with a deficiency last year of £4,447. The continuing support of chapels in taking collections and making donations to the Societies is much appreciated and the tax repayments that are received on subscriptions and donations made personally are also of great benefit. Funds were withdrawn from Abbey National and Woolwich Plc and reinvested in a COIF Charities Deposit account at an increased rate of interest than before.

Collections taken for the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund were £1,121

higher than in the previous year but donations were £4,271 less because in 2002 there was a substantial gift aid donation made. Grants paid by the Fund were £880 more than in the previous year. A total of ninety-four chapels and individuals received benefit totalling £13,780 compared with ninety-three in the previous year who were paid a total of £12,900. The payments made to chapels were distributed amongst those in need who attend those chapels and for whom assistance had been requested. £9,000 was invested in a COIF Charities Deposit account. There was an excess of expenditure over income for the year of £2,081 compared with a surplus in 2002 of £6,943.

The Convalescent Fund only made one grant during the year of £100 and a surplus was realised of £1,531 compared with the £1,248 in the previous year. The deposit with the Abbey National was withdrawn during the year and this, together with other funds available, was invested in a COIF Charities Deposit account.

Sales of the magazines compare favourably with the previous year, the number of copies being almost the same. A number of our younger friends now subscribe to the magazines as older friends pass away or because of failing eyesight can no longer read them. The receipts from the sale of bound volumes is slightly higher than in 2002, although the cost of producing those volumes also increased. The cost of postage and dispatch increased but this was covered by the increase in the amount received from magazine subscribers. Personal donations were lower because in 2002 a substantial gift aid donation was made. Sadly, collections for the Magazine Fund are £1,703 lower than in 2002, but £981 of this reduction was the collection taken at the 2002 Annual Meetings for the Magazine Fund. The cost of production of the *Gospel Standard* has been reduced because of modern technology but distribution costs have increased. For some time the pages of the wrapper have been supplied to our printers on disc and from October 2003 the text of the magazine was also supplied in this way. This saving in printing costs has been possible through the valuable help given by Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Kingham to our Editor, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom. In the new year the pages of the *Friendly Companion* will be supplied to our printers in the same format. Gratitude is again expressed to the Gospel Standard Trust for the generous financial help they give toward the cost of publishing the magazines.

We again acknowledge with gratitude the help that the Lord has given to our Editors in their labours and seek that the Lord will continue to uphold them. The burden of their office is ongoing because material must constantly be sought for publication in the following months. As friends have renewed their subscriptions to the magazines for 2004, a number of appreciative letters have been sent by readers. They testify of the spiritual benefit they have received through reading the magazines and say how thankful they are that the magazines continue to be published. The circulation of the magazines extends to Europe, America and Australia with a few copies going to Africa.

The Committee review annually their investment policy, their reserves policy and risk management policy. As investments have matured, the proceeds have been retained in cash and invested to obtain the most advantageous rate of interest whilst ensuring security of the capital.

Although our friends are often reminded that becoming a subscriber to the Societies brings an entitlement to a vote at the Annual Meetings, few new subscribers come forward. As our older friends pass away it is important that

younger friends who love the truth and subscribe to the Gospel Standard 35 Articles of Faith become subscribers, and the Committee invite applications. New subscribers who hold our position will be welcome.

Representations have been made by the Current Affairs Committee on a number of issues during the year but it is usual for a very general acknowledgement to any letter to be received. However, if a letter is addressed to the Home Secretary a more detailed reply is usually received. The sub-committee dealing with current affairs are careful to make representations where issues are of real importance.

We again thank our friends for their prayerful and practical support during the year. We live in a very dark day and personally and collectively have much to mourn over. We are thankful that the Lord has not entirely left us as a group of churches despite our sins and wanderings from Him, and earnestly seek that under the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit there might be a gracious renewing personally and reviving amongst us. We are particularly concerned for our young people and wonder what the future will unfold. However, we are comforted in that the Lord on high omnipotent reigneth and that our times are in His gracious hand. There is an erosion of our civil and religious liberties and sometimes it seems that a day of persecution may not be far distant. Legislation passed by the European Commission affects our land but may the Lord in much mercy hear the prayers of His little remnant and be a wall of fire round about us. The Committee seek that the Lord's rich blessing may rest upon our churches, our ministers and all those who desire to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

Yours to serve,  
The Committee

The Secretary, Mr. H. Mercer, spoke as follows:

MR. MERCER: Mr. Chairman and dear friends:

We are thankful to be brought again to this annual occasion and would remember with gratitude the Lord's mercies to us during the past year. It has been a difficult year but we have great cause to acknowledge that it is having obtained help of God we have continued unto this day. The Lord has promised to supply all of the needs of His people and He will cause us to look to Him and to no other source for that supply. The Committee have had to prove that their help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth.

In reviewing the beginnings of the Societies, it is remarkable that on the wrapper of the *Gospel Standard* for May 1872 a letter was published suggesting that a fund be opened for widows of deceased ministers, and Mr. John Gadsby supported this suggestion. A meeting was subsequently held at which a large number of ministers were present and a discussion took place about the basis upon which the Aid Society should be formed. A second general meeting was held in July 1872, chaired by Mr. John Gadsby, at which the Articles of Faith upon which the Society is based were settled and the rules of the Society were adopted. The Gospel Standard Aid Society was therefore established to benefit aged and infirm Strict Baptist ministers and the widows of Strict Baptist ministers.

In a similar way a meeting was held on October 12th, 1878, when the Gospel Standard Poor Relief Society was begun. This Society was formed to relieve Strict Baptist ministers and those only, irrespective of age, who may be

temporarily laid aside through affliction and who stand in need of help, and those only members of or regular attendants at a Strict Baptist place of worship who are believed to have a work of grace in their hearts, who are not under 60 years of age and who have been members or regular attendants for at least three years.

Since the formation of the Societies, there have been a number of revisions to the rules, all of which have been authorised by the Charity Commission. The most recent revision was on March 6th, 1998, when the Charity Commission authorised that the funds of the Aid Society may be used for the relief of Strict Baptist ministers and widows and dependants of Strict Baptist ministers who are in need, hardship or distress [if under 60], if and in so far as the income of the Society cannot be applied towards the relief of Strict Baptist ministers and the widows and the dependants of Strict Baptist ministers who are over the age of 60 and sick, convalescent, disabled or infirm. Until December 1997 the grants paid to ministers who did not qualify under the Aid Society were paid by the Poor Relief Society, but as a result of the scheme sealed on March 6th, 1998, these grants were paid through the Aid Society.

The Societies were originally formed to carry out this charitable work but over the years a denominational structure has evolved through the association of our churches with the Gospel Standard position. In this sad day the close association of our churches is being eroded by dissension, and as a group of churches we are also becoming fewer numerically. However, the original intentions of our forefathers are still being fulfilled and the charities continue to help financially a considerable number of friends and chapels.

It is clear that spiritually we are in a very low place because of our sins and departures from the precepts of the gospel. There is a solemn complacency among us, and sadly formality and outward correctness appears to be mistaken for the evidence of grace. May the Lord in mercy appear for us in this dark day and in particular keep our young people from wandering away from the truth. Many of them are confused because of the seeming contradiction between what they see is taking place in our churches and what we profess. How important it is that those who love the truth stand firm and defend the truth, even though it may be opposed!

The financial position of the Societies remains strong and, after taking into account the proceeds of sale of Hilmarton chapel and small amounts received on the winding up of closed charities, there was a surplus for the year of £23,435. After realised losses on investments and the reduction in the value of the investments held on December 31st, 2003, there was a net surplus for the year of £18,375.

The notes to the accounts give additional information relating to the statement of financial activities, and the analysed accounts on pages 20 to 23 set out the position on each of the five funds comprising the Gospel Standard Societies. The major part of the income of the Aid Society and the Poor Relief Society arises from interest on investments, without which the grants that are paid regularly would not be funded. The Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund is heavily reliant upon collections and donations from chapels and our friends, and you will see that the amount of the grants paid out in 2003 was higher than in the previous year. The Convalescent Fund is comparatively inactive because the needs for which this Fund was provided do not occur as they did in the past.

The Magazine Fund shows a surplus again for 2003. Part of the surplus is



attributable to the recovery of subscription arrears amounting to £2,463. Considerable savings in the cost of production of the magazines have been made this year because the material for both magazines is now sent to the printers on disc. May our Editors continue to be helped in the preparation of material for the magazines.

Mr. J.A. Watts is not seeking re-election to the Committee because of increasing age and ill health. He was elected to the Committee on April 12th, 1973, and during the thirty-one years he has been a member of the Committee he has served the churches faithfully and unstintingly. His gracious ability in so many different matters has been a strength to his fellow Committee members and his counsel will be sorely missed. Mr. Watts was also Bethesda Secretary from 1969 to 1990. We wish him the Lord's richest blessing.

At the Meetings last year, a number of questions were asked about the conduct of the business of the Societies. A subscriber had requested that the Charity Commission investigate the affairs of the Societies, particularly the correctness of the payment of salaries to the Editors of the magazines, the authority for the payment of grants to trustees, and the apparent breach of the rules because an independent inspection of the Societies' accounts was made rather than an audit. I wrote to the Charity Commission on April 30th, 2003 informing them of what took place at the Annual Meetings but received a letter dated May 6th from the Charity Commission containing a number of questions arising from the formal complaint lodged against the Societies. The way in which the trustees conduct the business of the Societies was subjected to close scrutiny and lengthy correspondence followed. In view of the rejection by Mr. Tyler of the statements made in the Annual Report for 2003 and my letter of January 30th, 2004, I feel it is necessary to give some detail about the Charity Commission conclusions.

Mr. Chairman, my credibility and that of the Committee is questioned and I ask for your forbearance.

There is an indenture dated June 27th, 1879, which establishes the Magazine Fund as a separate charity. With respect to the salaries paid to the Editors, the Charity Commission wrote to me on October 1st, 2003, stating that, "We understand that Mr. Ramsbottom and Mr. Buss are not and have not during their editorships of the *Gospel Standard* and the *Friendly Companion* been trustees of the trust established by the indenture dated June 27th, 1879 (the Magazine Fund). Further, we note your assurance that whilst the indenture includes a power for the Gospel Standard Aid Society and the Gospel Standard Poor Relief Society (of which Mr. Ramsbottom and Mr. Buss are trustees) to appoint the trustees of the Magazine Fund, care was taken to manage any potential conflicts of interest associated with their appointment to the paid editorships of the magazines. On this basis, our authority is not required for Mr. Ramsbottom and Mr. Buss to continue to be paid for editing the magazines from the Magazine Fund."

In the same letter, the Charity Commission stated in respect of grants paid to trustees who are Strict Baptist ministers to enable them to replace their cars that, "We note that the trustees see the grants to trustees who are Strict Baptist ministers as having been made in furtherance of the objects of the Gospel Standard Aid Society. As this is the case I can confirm that we would accept that these grants were a proper application of charity funds."

The same letter requests that a written protocol be adopted stating how the Societies will handle potential conflicts of interest. At the October 2003 meeting of the Committee this written protocol was formally approved and a copy of it was later sent to the Charity Commission.

A further letter was received from the Charity Commission dated October 2nd, 2003, stating that the Charity Commission, after seeking guidance from their accountants regarding the requirement for the Societies' annual accounts to be audited, confirm the position that if a charity is not a company and its governing document pre-dates the publication of the Charities Act 1992, a requirement in the governing document that the accounts be "audited" may be construed to imply independent examination. The Charity Commission said, however, if there is doubt over how a reference to audit in the governing document should be construed, the trustees should consider amending the governing document. They said that as far as the Gospel Standard Societies is concerned, an amendment to rule AG14 of the Societies rules would not be required to authorise the substitution of an independent examination of the accounts for an audit but the trustees could, to avoid misunderstanding, decide to amend this rule.

Finally, I received a letter on October 17th, 2003, informing me that on the basis of the assurances that were given in response to the Commission's recent enquiries and on the understanding that the trustees will put in place a protocol setting out how potential conflicts of interest will be identified and managed, there were currently no outstanding issues on which further information was required.

To ensure that I clearly understood the position of the Charity Commission, I wrote to them on December 1st informing them that at their meeting in October the trustees formally approved and adopted a written protocol stating how the Societies will handle potential conflicts of interest, and asking the Commission to confirm to me that the matters they had considered are closed. I stated that it was very important to be able to report to the subscribers on the outcome of the investigation and would appreciate it if the Commission could let me know that the file on these matters is closed. I received confirmation on December 17th, 2003, that there were currently no outstanding issues on which the Commission required information, and their file in respect of the matters on which we had been corresponding is closed.

These facts were stated in the Annual Report for 2003 and confirmed in a letter I wrote to the subscribers dated January 30th, 2004.

Subsequently, it appears that Mr. Tyler has made a further complaint to the Charity Commission and as a result of this I have received a letter dated April 6th, 2004 asking for further information. I replied on April 7th, and will read the letters to you. [The letters were then read.] Enquiries have again been raised on the accounts for 2002 and the figure stated in the Charity Commission letter for incoming resources is incorrect.

Mr. Tyler also received from the Charity Commission a letter dated April 6th, which he has chosen to circulate to a considerable number of people. He has stated at the head of the letter, "This letter now proves that the Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 2003, together with Mr. H. Mercer's letter dated January 30th, 2004, are erroneous." This is a very serious allegation and casts doubt upon my personal integrity. I shall not comment on this suggestion, in view of the fact that the Charity Commission in writing to Mr. Tyler on April 6th,

have given him no grounds at all to make such defamatory remarks.

I apologise for taking so much time to explain the outcome of the correspondence with the Charity Commission and sincerely hope that this will be the end of the matter.

The troubles we are in have been permitted and the Committee's desire is that the Lord would graciously undertake for us in this sad day and bring us all to real repentance. The difficulties we have distract our minds and are a hindrance to us. Our desire is to discharge honestly our responsibilities for earthly things and to be found seeking after those things which are of real importance. These are the blessings that are in Christ and enrich poor sinners for time and eternity. The vital thing is to possess a saving knowledge of Christ and to have Him formed in our hearts the hope of heaven.

The Committee sincerely thank our many friends for their prayerful and practical support and seek the Lord's blessing upon our churches here and overseas. May the Lord graciously arise for our help.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Mercer for that very full explanation of events. We hope you will understand the necessity of being as open as we possibly can to leave no room for any suggestion that we are trying to cover anything up whatsoever. Has any subscriber a question to ask concerning the Report as published for the year 2003?

Mr. P.C. Tyler rose to speak, complaining that the Gospel Standard Committee had refused to meet him to discuss his problems at The Dicker. He said matters in The Dicker church were disorderly, and they and the Committee had treated him with contempt. He lodged a complaint with The Charity Commission because the Committee would not meet him. He also spoke of collusion between the Committee, The Dicker church and the Editor.\*

The Chairman reminded Mr. Tyler that it was out of order to discuss church matters here.

Mr. Tyler further complained about the distribution of funds not being fair, and the Committee acting wrongly.

After the Chairman had pointed out that the Rules had been changed legally (to permit ministers under 60 to receive Aid Society money), Mr. Tyler unreservedly withdrew this particular charge.

Mr. Tyler then stated that his name should not have been removed from the list of ministers, and that he should be reinstated.

The Chairman then made three points:

1. The Committee cannot get involved in why The Dicker church suspended Mr. Tyler.

2. The Committee was not aware that Mr. Tyler had any financial questions when he requested a meeting.

3. The Committee cannot put Mr. Tyler's name back on the list while he is reporting it to the Charity Commissioners, and causing such heartache and grief.

Mr. R.J. Farley rose to speak, saying he was troubled about The Dicker's treatment of Mr. Tyler and felt that justice was not being done. The Chairman said we were not here to discuss this, only the accounts and reports.

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\* The Committee wish it to be known that this was not so.

Mr. Farley said he felt there should be a place in the Annual Meeting agenda for any other business. The Chairman repeated that we cannot discuss church problems at the Annual Meeting.

Before resuming his seat, Mr. Farley stated the way in which he thought a minister's name should be removed from the list.

Mr. David Goodge rose to speak, making three points. (As Mr. Goodge did not go up to the microphone, much of what he said could not be heard by many who were present.) The three points were:

1. A suspended member is not withdrawn from – only waiting for a decision.

2. Are ministers not on the list counted as inferior?

3. Every minister whose name is submitted for the list should be included.

The Chairman explained that a suspended member is not in good standing with his church. Also, he explained the way in which ministers' names are put on the list.

It was proposed by Mr. J.W. Stevens (South Moreton) and seconded by Mr. T.W. Hope (Pastor, Ripley) that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Societies for 2003 be approved and adopted. This was carried *nem con*.

The following is the Report of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund for 2003, which was not read.

### **GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND**

Dear Friends,

The trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements for the year ended December 31st, 2003.

Legal and administrative information set out on pages 2 and 3 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements and the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP) issued in October 2000.

#### *Object of the Charity*

The object of the Charity is the relief of persons in need, and in particular of elderly persons in need, who are

a) sick or infirm; and

b) either members of a Gospel Standard church, or regular attenders at a Gospel Standard chapel.

The Fund is used to maintain residential care homes and sheltered accommodation in the form of flatlets. Grants can also be paid towards the cost of caring for approved applicants, either in their own homes, or in other residential or nursing homes approved by the Bethesda Fund Committee.

#### *Organisational structure*

The Bethesda Fund Committee meets at least five times each year, when major decisions concerning finance and future planning are taken. Each of the four Bethesda Homes has a Home Management Committee which is chaired (whenever possible) by a member of the Bethesda Fund Committee. The Home Management Committee implements directions given by the Bethesda Fund Committee, and prepares an annual budget for approval. In addition, a Home

Support Group of local people takes an interest in the staff and residents and supports the Home Manager in any way possible. Minutes of the proceedings of the Home Management Committees and Home Support Groups are submitted to the Bethesda Fund Committee. The Home Manager is responsible for the day-to-day running and organisation of the Home. Each Home (with the exception of Harpenden) has a Local Secretary who carries out much of the administrative work and plays a key part in drawing together the various aspects of managing the Home, working closely with the Home Manager. At Harpenden there is an Administrative Assistant.

### *Review of activities*

The primary activity of the Charity remains the provision of care for the elderly in the four Bethesda Homes at Brighton & Hove, Harpenden, Studley and Tunbridge Wells. Sheltered flatlets for those still able to care for themselves are provided at Harpenden and Redhill.

Occupancy levels in the Homes have continued at a satisfactory level throughout the year. Of particular note is the Tunbridge Wells Home which has been completely full for the whole year. Although there are a number of vacancies at Harpenden, a steady stream of temporary short-stay residents has kept the Home busy, particularly during the summer months. During the year nine residents have passed away, and there have been six admissions. At Studley, Mrs. D.B. Gosden reached the great age of 100 years in May, whilst at Harpenden Mr. J.C. Cornwell passed away in August a few months short of his 100th birthday. Mr. Cornwell was a remarkable man, who, until the last year or so, frequently went out for long walks in all weathers.

All of the Homes have continued to give attention to meeting the requirements of the Care Standards Act and the National Minimum Standards. One costly requirement is the necessity of protecting all central heating radiators and hot water pipes throughout the Homes, either by fitting guards or by replacing the existing radiators with low surface temperature radiators. At Harpenden it was decided to replace the existing radiators at a cost of £22,000, which was carried out in the summer of 2003, but the newer Homes, such as Studley, are planning to fit radiator guards. Either way, the work is extensive, and disruptive.

National Minimum Standard 33 requires there to be in place at each Home a professionally recognised and verifiable system of quality assurance. During the year a meeting was arranged at the Bethesda General Office when the statutory requirements were examined in detail. It was agreed that a self-assessment manual produced by the National Institute of Social Work entitled *Evaluating the Quality of Care* would be adopted by each Home as the basis of their quality assurance system. This will be supplemented by service-user questionnaires, and two further questionnaires for completion by relatives and stakeholders such as GPs and other health workers.

Regular maintenance of the Homes and Flatlets continues. Improvements to one of the bathrooms at Brighton has taken place at a cost of £5,225. At the Harpenden Home a covered way was erected during the year to enable the residents to get in and out of the minibus in the dry, a provision that is of particular benefit to wheelchair users. In spite of objections from some of the neighbours, the finished result is very satisfactory, and is not unsightly. The cost of this project, including planning and architect's fees, amounted to £6,003. A

consultant has been appointed to report on the central heating system at Tunbridge Wells, as extensive work will be required in the near future, including the replacement of the boiler. The regular maintenance of the fire systems is a statutory requirement, and much work is involved in keeping all parts of the system up-to-date. This year, automatic door release mechanisms have been installed (or will shortly be installed) instantly to close fire doors in the event of a fire. Each resident's room is affected, and the other public rooms of the Homes. Similar devices have been in place in the corridors of the Homes for several years.

The year 2003 marked the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Tunbridge Wells Home. An open day was held on Saturday, October 18th, 2003, when the Home was open for visitors from 2.00 p.m. During the afternoon there was a time of reading and prayer in the Home which was conducted by the Home Chairman, Mr. T.J. Rosier. This was followed by an excellent buffet tea. The day concluded with a service of thanksgiving held at Hanover Chapel at 5.30 p.m. when Mr. C.A. Wood preached, unusually taking two texts, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you" and "An old disciple." The interest taken in the Home by a good number of friends was much appreciated by the residents and staff.

Staff changes have occurred in every Home, in some cases with care assistants from Holland returning home after perhaps six or twelve months, and other staff leaving to commence nurse training. In at least one Home there has been a severe shortage of domestic staff. By the year 2005 it will be necessary for every Home to have at least 50% of care staff qualified to NVQ level 2, a target which will not be easy to meet. However, some staff have now achieved the qualification, and some have gone on to study for level 3.

After initial teething troubles, the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is now improving its performance, and from October 2003 all staff, both new and existing, and volunteer workers, have been required to obtain a CRB disclosure before they can work in the Home or be offered employment. The applications to the CRB involve our Home Managers in yet more paperwork.

Advance paperwork before a visit of inspectors from the National Care Standards Commission also involves much detailed form filling, and we can only sympathise with the mountain of paperwork that now faces our Home Managers. At times it seems overwhelming.

One new resident moved into the Redhill Flatlets in February, leaving one vacant Flatlet for the remainder of the year. There are two residents in the Harpenden Flatlets, with a staff member from the Harpenden Home temporarily occupying the third Flatlet. The Flatlets continue to serve a useful purpose in providing independent accommodation for those still able to care for themselves, but with help on hand should it be needed.

Additional information concerning the activities of the Homes and Flatlets can be found on pages 12 to 21.

### *Financial results*

During the year expenditure exceeded income producing a deficit of £55,054 compared with a surplus of £9,418 in 2002. Legacies received were the lowest for 23 years at £17,585. This compares with £171,090 in 2002 and £411,359 in 2001. Investment income continues to fall, reflecting lower interest rates generally. The four Bethesda Homes produced a deficit of £31,438 which

is considered to be reasonable in a year of high expenditure on repairs and renewals, some of which was to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards. Maintenance fee subsidies paid to residents who are unable to meet the full cost of care have continued to grow, this year amounting to £57,235. A detailed explanation of the subsidies paid can be found in note 6 to the Financial Statements.

### *Investment policy*

During the year the trustees reviewed the Charity's investment policy setting out Bethesda's investment objectives. The trustees remain willing to consider only investments classified as low risk. In practice, this means that surplus funds are maintained in short-term deposit accounts at competitive rates of interest with reputable banks, building societies and common deposit funds. The average rate of interest received during the year was 3.6% compared to 3.9% the previous year (and 5.1 % the year before that). The trustees consider the rate to be satisfactory, given the generally low rates prevailing. During the year the Woolwich Premier 30 was closed, and a new account was opened with CAF Bank Ltd. where a more favourable rate of interest could be obtained. At the time of writing this report it seems likely that interest rates will rise during 2004. The investment policy will be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently if a change in circumstances should make it desirable.

### *Reserves policy*

The Charity has a reserves policy which is reviewed at least annually by the trustees.

We consider reserves as that part of our general purpose funds which do not need to be spent immediately and which are not committed or designated. They are the resources we have or can make available to spend on any of our objectives once we have met our known commitments and covered any other planned expenditure.

The trustees consider it necessary to hold reserves, believing that the Charity has a commitment, not only to the present generation of Gospel Standard Strict Baptists, but also to a generation to come. The fees charged to our residents in the Bethesda Homes are the main incoming resource of the Charity. However, past experience has shown that occupancy levels can fluctuate and may not in the future be maintained at the 2003 level, which was significantly higher than the previous three years. A drop in occupancy levels would be a serious drain on our reserves. Legacy income is our second most important source of income but varies greatly year by year, and can never be predicted. The Charity has no endowment funding and is therefore entirely dependent (apart from residents' fees) upon donor funding from year to year. Protection is required against catastrophic or lesser but damaging events.

The trustees believe that the Charity should endeavour to hold, as a minimum, reserves amounting to the "Total resources expended" for one year as stated in the last published Statement of Financial Activities. However, from the past history of the Charity, it is recognised that to state an absolute figure is not entirely appropriate, as from time to time, in the providence of God, major legacies and other resources have been received in times of need. The trustees are firmly convinced that the Charity should be run on Scriptural lines, whereby they look to the Lord to provide for what they believe is His work, remembering

that “the silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2. 8).

The reserves at the year end are represented by the net current assets shown in the Statement of Financial Activities less any expenditure contracted for or planned. Although the reserves are higher than the recommended minimum, the trustees do not intend to take any extraordinary steps for the time being to reduce the reserves level in line with the stated policy.

#### *Risks management policy*

The trustees have continued to identify the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. The trustees wish to ensure that systems are established to mitigate those risks as far as practicable by the implementation of risk management and prevention programmes, which will include risks associated with the provision of care.

The Charity’s policy reflects the principle that effective risks management is the responsibility of all levels of management and personnel. It is intended that the review of risks will be ongoing by encouraging timely reporting by staff on quality issues and adverse occurrences within the Bethesda Homes.

#### *Future developments*

Apart from work to meet the National Minimum Standards already referred to in this report, and the replacement of the boiler at Tunbridge Wells, there are no major developments planned for the foreseeable future.

#### *Trustees*

The names of the six members of the Bethesda Fund Committee who served during the year are listed on page 2 of this report. Early in the year agreement was reached with the Charity Commissioners to remove the distinction between nominated and co-opted members. All appointments to the Bethesda Fund Committee are subject to the approval of the joint Committee of the Gospel Standard Societies. With increasing age the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. J.A. Hart, decided that the time had now come for him to lay down the position he had held for 17 years. Mr. Hart first joined the Bethesda Fund Committee in 1976, and was appointed Chairman in 1986, taking over from Mr. J.T. Pollington. We do thank him for undertaking the onerous task of Chairman for such a long period. At the request of the Committee, Mr. Henry Mercer has kindly agreed to accept the invitation to be the new Chairman, and we wish him the Lord’s help as he takes on these further responsibilities.

#### *Trustees’ responsibilities*

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity at the year end and of its incoming resources and resources expended during that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.



The trustees are required to keep proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### *Volunteers*

With increasing pressure on people's time, we would like especially to thank the many volunteers who give their assistance in a variety of ways to the Homes and Flatlets. Without their commitment and expertise Bethesda would be the poorer. Home Management Committees and Home Support Groups meet regularly throughout the year. Some of our lady supporters come in weekly to assist the residents with handicrafts and other activities. The operation of the trolley shops takes considerable time, but they are much appreciated by the residents, who can give special orders if they wish. Then there are the minibuses drivers, whose willingness to help in taking the residents to and from chapel is deeply appreciated. We thank those men who come to take daily reading and prayer with the residents, some travelling long distances to provide this important part of the daily life of the Home. May the Lord bless all those who have been enabled "to strengthen our hands in this good work."

### *Conclusion*

In an age when the Christian constitution of this country is under attack as never before, it becomes more important than ever that suitable provision is made for those who, through grace, have been separated in heart and mind from the spirit of this world. It would be distressing in the extreme to the elderly people from our chapels to have to endure the worldly atmosphere of other homes for the elderly, with the intrusion of television and entertainment, and to be cut off entirely from the services of the Lord's house. However good the care might be, to be daily forced to mix with those with whom they can feel no union of spirit must be hard to bear. We believe the Homes were founded in love (John 13. 35) and the spirit of love that is manifested in the Bethesda Homes is often remarked on by visitors. Our desire for the Homes is that they might continue to be a refuge for the elderly, the infirm, the afflicted, and the weary.

For fifty-nine years the Bethesda Fund has been maintained through many political and legislative changes. In thankfulness we can raise our Ebenezer and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." The future, as always, is unknown, but we continue to look to that same God who "giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry" (Psa. 147. 9). "Shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 6. 30).

The Bethesda Secretary, Mr. T.H.W. Scott, spoke as follows:

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, subscribers and dear friends. You will notice that the Annual Report before you is the 59th. This means, of course, that we have now entered the 60th year of the Charity, which was instituted in the year 1944. It is exactly 60 years ago, at these same Annual Meetings of the Societies in April 1944, that a statement was issued by the Committee in which great concern was expressed "about aged, godly friends in our denomination who, when ill and unable to care for themselves, have no gracious kinsfolk or friends

to wait upon them. Several pathetic instances of removal to an infirmary, a most uncongenial environment, have recently come to our notice.” It was from this now somewhat dated statement that the work first began. It may not be amiss to reflect that the first grant from the Fund was made in October 1944 when a payment of ten shillings a week (50p) was made to the nursing of Mr. Taylor, the aged deacon at Melksham chapel. It was almost four years later that the very first Bethesda resident moved into the Redhill Home. This was Miss Georgina Godsmark, and her fees at that time were just twenty-six shillings a week. As we consider all that has happened since in those 60 years, we have to say, “What hath God wrought!”

If we turn now to the year 2003, the deficit in running the Homes has continued to fall, and, in fact, is the smallest deficit for the last twelve years at £31,438. However, overall the Bethesda Fund has made a loss for the year of just over £55,000. This is mainly due to the receipt of a much lower level of legacy income – I believe in the printed Report it says it is the lowest level for twenty-three years – at £17,585. I have always said that legacy income is the least predictable source of income. For example, in the previous two years legacies were £171,00 and £411,000, and obviously legacy income will have a very great effect on the final results for any given year.

From April 1st this year the Bethesda fees have been increased by 5%; the basic weekly fee is now £334.25. This follows three years of much higher increases which were necessary in an attempt to reduce the losses on running the Homes and to keep any losses to a reasonable level. Much depends on occupancy levels, and I am pleased to say that this year has started well with virtually one hundred per cent occupancy at the Tunbridge Wells Home, and there was a time in early March when all the rooms in the Harpenden Home were spoken for.

One final comment on the Accounts is concerning the maintenance fee subsidies paid to residents. You will see from the Statement of Financial Activities that this year these amounted to over £57,000. An explanation of the circumstances in which these subsidies are paid is given in Note 6 to the Accounts.

I would like to mention at this point The Piggott Charity as the year 2003 was the tenth year in which Bethesda residents could benefit from this Charity. The Piggott Charity is a connected charity under the control of the trustees of the Bethesda Fund. The John Piggott’s Almshouse Charity, as it was originally known, was set up about one hundred years ago providing four almshouses at St. Ives in Cambridgeshire. Ten years ago agreement was reached with the Charity Commission allowing the income from the proceeds of the sale of the almshouses to be used for the assistance of poorer residents in our Bethesda Homes. During the year grants were paid to twenty-five residents. However, with the prevailing low rates of interest the amounts paid were small.

At Bethesda we generally think of residents with physical needs, but at the moment we have a number of residents who are mentally frail too. Sometimes these residents require much patience on the part of the staff, and I have been impressed with the love shown towards residents whose mental powers are much reduced. Often residents feel to be a burden to others as their infirmities increase. I was struck recently in reading about the case of Barzillai, who said to the king, “I am this day fourscore years old: why should I yet be a burden unto my lord the

king?" I may not have quoted it quite right, but we do thank our Home Managers and all the staff for the love and the encouragement they give to residents with all their many needs.

Although we think of the care staff, we do not forget the valuable contribution made by the other members of staff: the domestic staff, the cooks, and in each of our Homes great emphasis is placed on the grounds surrounding the Homes. In all of the Homes we are thankful we have capable gardeners, and their work gives great pleasure to the residents and visitors.

Speaking of staff, all of the Homes have had difficulty in recruiting, and at times the shortage of staff has been quite severe. We do hope and pray that the Lord will constrain others to apply to work in our Homes. Each of our permanent care staff are expected to undertake NVQs in care, and indeed it is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards that by the year 2005 at least 50% of care staff must be qualified to NVQ Level 2. We like to think that there is a career pattern within Bethesda progressing to a Senior Care Assistant, and as experience is gained, more into management. Although we value every member of staff, in order to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Fund, we do like to have a proportion of staff from within our own denomination, and so I hope someone may feel that call, "Come over and help us."

We still employ a number of care staff from Holland, although perhaps not quite as many as we used to since the minimum age has been raised to 18. I would say to any of our Dutch friends who may read this later in the *Gospel Standard*, if they know of anyone who may like to come, normally for a minimum period of six months, we shall be very pleased to hear from them. Also I sometimes wonder whether our readers in Scotland may know of a young person or someone older who may like to come and work in the south of England for a period.

Policies and procedures now play a large part in the administration of the Homes. Every resident in Bethesda has an Individual Care Plan which is regularly reviewed, often in conjunction with relatives or friends. Our Homes are governed by five basic principles, such as the right to privacy, the right to dignity and granting as far as possible independence and choice. It is not easy for a resident to leave their own home with all the memories and the familiarity, and the staff do all they can to see that when a resident moves into care everything possible is done to help them settle in.

Further change is taking place in the Government's regulation of the care industry. On April 1st, the Commission for Social Care Inspection took over from the National Care Standards Commission. The Commission will be the single social care inspectorate for England. It is a totally new body independent of the Government and with much greater powers than the bodies it replaces. It seems that the new Commission intends to monitor more closely the care given, we may say, on the shop floor, rather than pursuing the paper trail that seemed to be the main emphasis of the National Care Standards Commission. Government funding for care continues to be inadequate, although the Health Minister, Dr. Stephen Ladyman, insists that authorities are given sufficient funds to meet their communities' needs. There is expected to be a significant increase in the 85-plus population during the next seven years and one can only see the situation getting worse rather than better.

I would mention that we have one vacant flatlet at Redhill, and if anyone

is interested, then please do contact either myself or our Warden, Mr. Frank Hayden. This is a ground-floor flat and could be very suitable for someone still wishing to live independently but with help on hand should it be required.

I would mention that last July our Chairman, Mr. Hart, relinquished his position as Chairman of the Bethesda Fund Committee after 17 years. The job of Chairman is no easy task and we shall miss him greatly, although we are thankful he is continuing as a member of the Committee. We are grateful that Mr. Henry Mercer has kindly agreed to be the new Chairman of the Committee.

Before closing, I too would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr. John Watts, as he retires from the Committee of the Gospel Standard Societies. As has already been said, Mr. Watts was General Secretary of the Bethesda Fund for 21 years, and he has continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of Bethesda since his retirement. He was a very great help to me personally, especially in the early days of my Secretaryship, when his knowledge going back over so many years was invaluable.

We do feel to have many mercies to record as we look back on the last year. Many residents continue to express their thankfulness that the Homes are provided for them. Often comments are made, "Whatever would I have done if I could not have come here?" We do pray that the Lord will be with us still, and that wisdom and grace will be given to conduct our Homes in the fear of the Lord.

The Chairman thanked the Secretary for his Report.

An opportunity was given for questions, but none were asked.

CHAIRMAN: May I place on record my gratitude as Chairman to both of our Secretaries. Many of you would not realise just how many hours of work are involved in all the background work to the Societies and it is not just pen-pushing. These are matters of great exercise, cost sleepless nights, and affect their family life and, in the case of Mr. Mercer, he is one of the Lord's servants. I do think they need our prayers to be held up like Aaron and Hur held Moses' hands up in his time of need. I would commend all our Secretaries, including our Secretary of the Trust and other friends who help our Societies willingly and lovingly, not for gain, but for Christ's sake. We do sincerely thank both of our Secretaries for the work they do.

Can I also have it minuted, friends, that when our Secretary spoke just now, the evidence clearly shows that the report or letter he did send was not erroneous. I do want that minuted in our minutes of this meeting. I feel that is very important.

I would also add, at the subsequent Committee Meeting after the Annual Meeting, we do review the Meeting and those matters raised by Mr. Goodge, Mr. Farley and Mr. Tyler will be brought forward on the agenda at the next meeting to be discussed prayerfully in the fear of the Lord.

It was proposed by Mr. D.J. Lawson (Clifton) and seconded by Mr. G.E. Hadley (Pastor, Stotfold) that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund for 2003 be approved and adopted. This was carried *nem con*.

MR. MERCER: In accordance with General Rule AG3, the Committee for the ensuing year is appointed at the Annual General Meeting held in April of

each year, and “the members of the existing Committee shall be eligible for re-election.” In addition this Rule states that the Committee shall at all times have power to add to their number and that the appointments shall be confirmed at the next general Meeting of subscribers. One new member has been added to the Committee and there are therefore two resolutions to lay before you.

It has been our practice at each Annual Meeting to re-elect the Editor of the *Gospel Standard* and the Treasurer of the Societies to the Committee. This is not strictly necessary according to the Rules because they are *ex-officio* members by virtue of their office. For this reason Mr. Ramsbottom’s name will not be included among those put forward for re-election although he has the right to attend any Committee Meeting he may wish. For the sake of completeness Mr. Playfoot’s name is included.

The first resolution to lay before you is for the re-election of the Committee which was elected at the Annual General Meeting last year with the exception of the name of Mr. J.A. Watts. The retiring members who seek re-election are: Mr. G.D. Buss, Mr. D.J. Christian, Mr. J.H. Cottingham, Mr. R.D.G. Field, Mr. J.A. Hart, Mr. G.W. Hyde, Mr. J.E. Pack, Mr. D.J. Playfoot, Mr. M.D. Ridout and Mr. T.J. Rosier.

It was proposed by Mr. R.W. Woodhams (Pastor, Rotherfield) and seconded by Mr. J.B. Hart (Rotherfield) that the persons whose names have been read be re-elected to serve on the Committee for the ensuing year. This was carried *nem con.*

MR. MERCER: The second resolution is in respect of Mr. T.H.W. Scott (Bethel, Luton) who has joined the Committee since the last General Meeting, and is as follows: “That the appointment of Mr. T.H.W. Scott to the Committee be confirmed and that he serve on the Committee for the ensuing year.”

Mr. S. Mercer (Pastor, Eastbourne) proposed and Mr. A. Hughes (Pastor, Dartford) seconded this resolution, which was carried *nem con.*

The Chairman asked Mr. T.J. Rosier to reply to the vote of confidence in the Committee.

MR. T.J. ROSIER: Dear friends, on behalf of the Committee we do sincerely thank you for your support and for your confidence in us. We seek your prayers in the ensuing year, and our desire is that in all things Christ might be glorified. We do sincerely thank you.

CHAIRMAN: We have to elect a new Funding Trustee as Mr. J.A. Watts has retired. Again I hand this over to Mr. Mercer to handle.

MR. MERCER: There are as you know four Funding Trustees and Mr. Watts, as he has retired as a Committee Member, is now ineligible. The Committee has put forward the name of Mr. G.D. Buss as a nomination in his place and I wonder if one subscriber would please be prepared to propose that resolution and another subscriber to second the resolution that Mr. G.D. Buss be appointed a Funding Trustee of the Societies.

Mr. J.W. Stevens (South Moreton) proposed and Mr. S.A. Hyde (Pastor, Shaw’s Corner, Redhill) seconded this resolution, which was carried *nem con.*

CHAIRMAN: Now, as you know, according to our Rule AG3 a General Meeting of the subscribers has to be held in London in April of each year. It has

been suggested that we should have an option of meeting outside London occasionally if it was desirable. But to do that we have to amend our Rule so to do.

MR. MERCER: Any amendment to the Rules, dear friends, has to be approved by a General Meeting, having been agreed by the Committee. And not less that two months after the General Meeting another General Meeting has to endorse the approval of the first General Meeting. The proposal of the Committee was that, if you agreed that Rule AG3 be amended, to state “a General Meeting of the subscribers shall be held in London or, if considered desirable, outside of London in April of each year.” If you approve that today, it will be submitted again for approval to the Northern General Meeting to be held in Manchester, all being well, in September.

The only reason for this amendment is for convenience, that if it should be deemed desirable as the Chairman said, we have the option to call the meeting outside of London. It is appreciated that being in London is extremely convenient from a travelling point of view, but it is just to have the flexibility, if you are agreeable to that.

Mr. K. Price (Pastor, Bethel Chapel, Kendal) proposed and Mr. D.J. Broome (Trowbridge) seconded this resolution. Carried, 1 against.

Mr. D.J. Lawson enquired the cost of using Westminster Chapel. The Secretary replied that last year it was £1,150; this year £2,643. Though the friends at Westminster give us very good service, the Committee are concerned at the amount paid out of charity money.

The Chairman once more mentioned that we would welcome new subscribers, those who are with us in heart.

Greetings have been received from Mr. J.K. Stehouwer, Mr. G.L. TenBroeke and Mr. M.T. Pickett in the U.S.A., and also from Christian friends. A welcome was given to Mr. H.J. Flitton, and our love sent through him to the Australian churches.

Mention was made of Mr. Stehouwer’s forthcoming visit to this country, and that of Mr. Ramsbottom to the U.S.A.

The Chairman commended to the Meeting the work of the Gospel Standard Library.

Hymn 993 was then sung.

CHAIRMAN: I would direct your thoughts to Isaiah 54, verse 10: “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

These words were given by the blessed and Holy Spirit through His servant Isaiah at a time when the church of Christ was in great distress – so great that the complaint of the church in chapter 49 was this: “The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.” Now those of you who know the Word of God well will say, But does not it say: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”? It does indeed say that, and it is a “thus saith the Lord.” But the psalmist said in another place, “Thou didst

hide Thy face and I was troubled.” If ever the blessed Spirit withdraws comfort, nothing can profitably fill that vacuum, nothing. Men may try with sparks of their own kindling. It may be a diversion to the right hand or to the left, but, friends, a living child of God knows only one thing will put the matter right – Christ. Not just Christ on the printed page, not just Christ in opinion or speculation or theory, but Christ revealed, applied, sealed to the heart by the Holy Ghost Himself, whose sacred office it is. And what a wonderful office it is! How we should thank the blessed Spirit for this office: to take of the things of Jesus and reveal them to poor sinners! And is not His name the Comforter? Would His name be the Comforter if, on the one hand, there were no comfort to bring and, on the other hand, none to be comforted? No, the two go together. “Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.”

Sooner or later, as indeed we were reminded by one of the brethren in prayer this morning, about the famine, that famine of the lack of God’s felt presence; that famine of the Lord’s withholding; that famine of the lack of power; that famine of the absence of a broken heart and a contrite spirit – when the child of God and the church collectively are brought down so low that they know only grace and nothing else; only mercy and nothing else; nothing but a sovereign act of a sovereign God will reach them. Then is the moment for the Lord’s comfort to come. Some of you may have been waiting long for it and wonder if it will ever come. But you know what we read in Psalm 102: “When the Lord shall appear in His glory, He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.” And it is the revelation of His glory that brings the felt destitution, and then the cry that goes up: Lord, help; Lord, hear; Lord, undertake; Lord, save.

And then can the Lord be silent? Can He turn a deaf ear? No. Go back to Isaiah 49: “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Isaiah said, Well I want a token of it. I want a proof of it. I have been so long in the dark. I cannot see my signs. I cannot see my evidences. Where is the token? “Behold, I have graven thee” – thy name, thy case, thy care, thy concern, thy burden, thy wounds, thy needs – “upon the palms of My hands.” See them there in My hands. “Thy walls are continually before Me.” In other words, will He forget His people? No. As long as His name is Love, He cannot, He will not. And sooner or later the child of God – and yes, the church of God – come to prove it. And that is what our text says this afternoon: mountains may depart, hills may be removed – our text is stronger than that – “Mountains *shall* depart, and the hills be removed.”

What does it tell us? Three things. One: the very earth on which you and I are living will soon depart; we are in the latter days. Satan is very busy; it is very evident. And what manner of persons ought we to

be, knowing that all these things shall soon be dissolved? O, dear friends, let us not be distracted from the cross, from Christ, from the blood we so much need, from the mercy that is at Calvary, from the love of God in Christ Jesus, from the one thing needful. When all is said and done, all these other things that disturb, distract and divert our minds, what will it be when the earth is departed and the heavens rolled up like a scroll? The vital question will be then, "Have I union with the church's living Head?" That, that is the vital thing.

Secondly: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed." All those things you have been relying on in your flesh: that arm of flesh, that nominal profession of the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that natural religion, all that seems so stable and so steady that you rested on in your day of carnal ease. But one by one the Lord removes the props. First one here, another there, and you sink lower and lower, till you wonder, Lord where will it all end? I will tell you where it will end: "Underneath are the everlasting arms." And they will never move, and they will never be taken away from a child of God. And, dear friends, what are the everlasting arms? They are this covenant in our text. What are the everlasting arms? They are the prayers of the dear Redeemer for His people. "Founded on right His prayer avails." "Underneath," all your sorrows, and sins, and temptations, and emptyings and strippings, and layings low, are the "everlasting arms." Friends, when by God's grace you are enabled to sink into those, how glad you are that the mountains and the hills you were falsely resting on departed, and your works, your reputation, another man's opinion of you, what good did they do?

"Compared with Christ, in all beside  
No comeliness I see;  
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,  
Is to be one with Thee."

Then you will bless God, you will praise Him for His everlasting arms. But first, the mountains have to be removed. God will not take second place. He will not share His throne. He will not share His glory. Friend, He is either all or nothing to you.

Again, what does it mean: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed"? Your mountains this afternoon, your hills, those obstacles, those stumbling blocks, those difficulties; the devil tells you they will crush you, they will be the end of you, you will never come through it. Our text says you will. The kindness in the covenant, and the mercy in covenant love, will outlive all your mountains, all your valleys, all your crooked things, all your thorns in the flesh, all that weighs you down, presses you to the ground. It is the mountains that depart, not God's covenant. It is the hills that will be removed, not His love, not His mercy. That is what our text tells us this afternoon. And what is this



kindness, and what is this covenant? Why, dear friends, it is that that was fixed on the church ere time began. When God the Father in everlasting love to His dear Son, and everlasting love to the church in Christ, gave to His dear Son a bride – to be called out of the ruins of the race of Adam from Adam's day to the end of time, a people for His praise, a bride, a flock, a temple – yes, "Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost," He says of His dear church. Everlasting kindness! And many waters cannot quench love. Friends, even the waters of Calvary, Gethsemane, the judgment hall, even the hidings of His Father's face did not quench that love. No. What a mercy! Cannot depart.

Now dear, friends, you come into your trial, you come into your difficulty, you come into your fires, your waters. O, you say, Surely now, because of my sins, and my backslidings, and my wanderings, and my failings, and my infirmities that stare me in the face, surely, surely now it will be removed. I ask you three questions. Did the prodigal son's father cease to love him? No. I ask you another question. Did Isaac cease to love Jacob even though he had treated him so basely? No. I ask you one further question. Did the dear Redeemer turn to the dying thief and remind him how he had railed with all the rest and cast in His teeth what the other thief had been doing? He makes no mention of it. Instead He attends to that dying thief's cry who fled for mercy: "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Can it be removed?

"Forget thee I will not, I cannot; thy name  
Engraved on My heart does for ever remain;  
The palms of My hands while I look on I see  
The wounds I received when suffering for thee."

No, friends, like the waters of Noah, God has promised they will go no more over the earth. So the dear child of God, in Christ, seeing the storm pass. So when He cried, "It is finished," the wrath of God against the sins of the church was exhausted to all eternity. And now, blessed be God,

"No wrath on His brow He does wear,  
Nor will He poor mourners condemn."

And you are that poor mourner this afternoon, poor sinner. What does He say? "Neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Mercy quickened you, mercy convinced you, mercy stripped you, mercy laid you low, mercy drew you, mercy told you: "I love you well, My child." And,

"They who once His kindness prove,  
Find it everlasting love."

Hymn 500 was sung to close the Meeting.

## TRUE REPENTANCE

*By F.W. Krummacher*

“Through death unto life” – this is the law of the kingdom of heaven. “He that loseth his life shall find it.” A day of penitence precedes the day of exaltation. John stands at the gate of the sanctuary of grace, and exclaims, “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3. 8). But the Sunday coat does not constitute such a day of penitence, any more than the going to church, the downward inclination of the head, or an assumed expression of countenance.

When is a day of repentance celebrated in the proper manner? I will tell you. It is, then, first of all, my friends, when the proper bells usher in the solemnity. And which are they? The bells of our church, or of the whole town? It would be well if this were the case. We would ring them day and night till the tongues of them glowed, and the ropes broke. The true bells hang on high, indeed, but in no stone-built tower. They give a clear sound, but they are not made of metal. No mortal hand puts them in motion: they ring of themselves, or else not at all. Where do they hang? High above the stars, in the divine counsel of grace. When it is there said, “Such a one shall weep at My feet,” the true bells are then rung, and a day of penitence and repentance is solemnised upon earth. Saul no longer kicks against the pricks, Nebuchadnezzar becomes a writhing worm, and the king of Nineveh sits in sackcloth and in ashes.

But when is a day of penitence of the proper kind celebrated? I reply further, when the true church is thrown open. The true church – is that the building in which we are assembled? Would that it were! But I am afraid that the present day again shows us that its doors being open constitutes no day of penitence. The church that I mean is contained within thee. It is thy heart. O how is it closed by nature! What a dreadful bar has the evil one drawn before it! There is no want of those who attend this church. We preachers send out many every Sunday with directions to enter the church. Those who thus attend the church are the sayings of the living God, the words of eternal truth, such as, “Awake, thou that sleepest”; “Deliver thy soul”; “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”; “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” These and similar passages we send with a mission into the midst of you, and say to them, “Enter into the temple of this or that unconverted individual’s heart,” and they go forth; but when they reach you, they find, indeed, your bodily ear open, or at most, the cellar door of your memory and understanding, in the coldness of which they freeze to death; whilst the temple of your heart is fast closed, and is inwardly dead and desolate, and only a flock of night birds, such as unbelief, error, the love of the world and sin, horde together there, like so many spectres and frightful phantoms. How gladly would we open the gates to these worthy guests,

the passages of divine truth, that they might expel the vile rabble! But however we may attempt to make an opening, whether knocking violently, with the hammer or the axe, or gently, with the golden keys of entreaty and exhortation – it is all in vain; it is not the work of man. Another must perform it, even He who opened the heart of Lydia. Lydia then gave heed to the things which were spoken of Paul; the admonitions, doctrines and instructions of the apostle then broke into Lydia's heart, as if by storm.

But when does the day of penitence arrive? I reply, lastly when the true preacher appears. And who is he? Is it myself, or some other? No, not even Paul, Peter nor John. Even these are unable of themselves to bring about a day of penitence. There is only one who can effect it – a Preacher from on high. How does He appear? Clothed in light. Is He learned? He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. Is He eloquent? His tongue utters sparks, flashes and flames. Is He strong and powerful? Powerful enough to melt, with one breath, an adamant heart. The preacher is the blessed Comforter, the Spirit from on high.

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER

*By J.H. Gosden*

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Having dwelt briefly upon believers' baptism as an initial rite to the public profession of Christ's name and a pre-requisite to church communion and the scriptural door of entrance to the Lord's Supper, we now venture a few observations upon the latter most sacred privilege. Whilst the formal sacramentalist may over-emphasise his ceremonial and give a disproportionate view of the ordinance, yet the true spiritual significance of the Lord's Supper can hardly be exaggerated. Rightly observed, it is a spiritual communion of the body and blood of Christ. Abused, it becomes an "eating and drinking damnation" (1 Cor. 10. 16; 11. 29). For if Christ preached becomes a "savour of death unto death" in those hearers who never receive the truth in the love of it, much more an unworthy partaking of the very emblems of His precious sufferings and death becomes a means of condemnation to the participant. Perilous beyond expression, in this regard, is the continual urging of worldly church-folk repeatedly to receive the "sacrament" at the hands of a carnal clergy, as if thereby to extenuate their habitual ungodliness and to provide for impunity in its continuance! We trust we have not so learned Christ. Our trouble is not that we cannot have more of the world's vain enjoyments, but that there is in us a depraved nature disposed to violate the aspirations of the new man of the heart. The papal and (with few

exceptions) the Anglican concept of the Lord's Supper is today very far removed from its divine, original simplicity. But our present design is rather to attempt a brief outline of our own apprehension of the Scripture doctrine and practice, than to expose the abuse and perversion of Christian ordinances.

Unspeakable condescension and majestic simplicity graced every action and word our blessed Redeemer employed at the institution of His divine ordinance. The circumstances of that holy conclave were truly remarkable. Eleven of the twelve disciples were present with their divine Master in that upper room. Judas had been present at the passover immediately preceding, but not until he had gone "immediately out" after receiving the sop did the Lord Jesus thus tenderly address them: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you... A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." "A little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me." "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 13. 30-35; 14. 19; 16. 33).

Then followed the holy prayer of intercession to His divine Father, a touching, tender, dignified expression of His affectionate care for His unworthy but beloved people, and a rich epitome of His never-ceasing advocacy for them in heaven. "Father! O Father! Heavenly Father! O My Father! O righteous Father!" Sacred intimacy, clear intimation of essential eternal relationship! "Those whom Thou hast given Me." "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it." "Not ashamed to call them brethren." "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." O blessed, paternal adoption of the unworthy elect children, through the eternal Son's incarnation and redeeming work! (John 17. 11, 26; Gal. 4. 5; Heb. 2. 11; Eph. 1. 5). And this adoption was not confined to those eleven, nor was the communion. It did exclude the twelfth, Judas being one of the twelve, but a devil (John 6. 70, 71). True fellowship with the Father and with His Son (1 John 1. 3) extends to all for whom Christ prayed and for whom He died (these being co-extensive with all who are by the Holy Spirit made true believers): "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us"; "And other sheep I have ... them also I must bring." "I lay down My life for the sheep." "Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep" (John 17. 20, 21; 10. 15, 26).

Such was the atmosphere of that upper room immediately prior to the awful enactments of Gethsemane and Calvary. "When Jesus had

spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples... and Judas also ... knew the place.” The traitor had deprived himself of the privilege of hearing the most sacred of all Christ’s affectionate utterances, being engaged in assembling the “band of officers and men” to take Him whom he had all along feignedly owned as his Master. To his own place he soon went, and to this condemnation was he appointed (1 Pet. 2. 8; John 17. 12). From the upper room to the agony and bloody sweat of Gethsemane, and to the betrayal and the judgment hall and the cross, went forth the great Redeemer and Captain of our salvation, to unfold in awful reality the mystery of the broken bread and the poured-out wine. (“The body [substance] is of Christ”: Col. 2. 17). Those guileless lips which but a few minutes previously had uttered over the sacred elements the hallowed formula, “This do in remembrance of Me,” were now employed – not in self-vindication but in noblest obedience: “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” “O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done”!

Thus became available for all true believers the Bread of Life and the cup of blessing (John 6. 53; 1 Cor. 10. 16). This is the source of all spiritual communion. And church communion (where real) flows from the knowledge of this, and is regulated by Holy Scripture. In it there is, i. An act of humble obedience to the Lord’s own command: “This do in remembrance of Me.” ii. A public witnessing to the Lord’s death: “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come” (1 Cor. 11. 26). iii. An act of worship, a grateful acknowledgment of deepest indebtedness to the Lord of life and glory for eternal redemption (Eph. 1. 7). All such acts of obedience and of worship, fruits of grace in the exercise of faith and love, conduce to a renewing of spiritual strength to the participants; whilst the Lord condescends to be glorified therein. Whenever He by the comfort of His love and felt presence signalises His approval of such acts, an unspeakable honour is put upon the worshippers. The absence of this, while a matter of anxious soul exercise, is not a reason for discontinuing the obedience.

The requisite preparation is laid down by the apostle: “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (1 Cor. 11. 28). By means of sincere self-examination, in the light and power of the Holy Ghost, the believer may come afresh to feel his deep need of that precious, sin-atoning sacrifice which is represented in the Lord’s Supper. Confession of all discovered transgressions and sins will follow, and a believing application to the throne of grace for mercy and pardon. Faith, thus working by love, purifies the heart, dissolves it in contrition; sin is hated and forsaken anew, and Christ becomes again the

Chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely to the soul. Then as Christ's body is discerned, there will be an intelligent, reverential, humble partaking of the sacred elements as the divinely-selected symbols of a crucified Redeemer and His dying love. None can truly partake of "Christ our Passover slain for us," without the bitter herbs of conviction of sin and sorrow for sin (1 Cor. 5. 7; Ex. 12).

*(To be concluded)*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Sermons by Ernest Roe;** series of 12 page pamphlets; price 50p plus postage; obtainable from Christian Bookshop, 21 Queen Street, Ossett, West Yorkshire, WF5 8AS.

These sermons are a delight to read, and will prove most useful for "reading services" when no minister is present.

We never met Ernest Roe, who died in 1967, but evidently he was "a workman who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God." A book of his life and sermons was published some years ago.

There are a few things which make Mr. Roe's sermons of special value: 1. clear doctrinal teaching; 2. spiritual, experimental application; 3. the exaltation of Christ; 4. careful exposition; and 5. a warmth and homeliness in the delivery.

"How is the fine gold become dim!" We mourn how far the standard of preaching among our congregations has fallen in the past forty years. But is there a fault also with the hearing? Many appear to be satisfied if some favourite text or hymn is quoted – whatever the nature of the sermon.

**A Short Account of Ebenezer Baptist Chapel, Stone-in-Oxney, Kent,** compiled by M. Pont and M. Hyde; 16 page pamphlet; price £1.50 including postage; obtainable from Matthew Hyde, 5 Hawthorn Cottages, Appledore, Ashford, Kent, TN26 2AH.

This booklet is well researched, well written and beautifully produced. There are interesting pictures (some in colour) and a good bibliography. The only known recorded sermon that was preached at Stone is included. This is by Thomas Butler of Frittenden, and was preached in 1895.

Very wonderful has been the witness to the grace of God over many years in the villages of England. This account was written to mark the 200th anniversary at Stone. Our chapels have a long and, in many cases, glorious history. We are always glad when some printed account is published so that God's mercies do not "lie forgotten in unthankfulness, and without praises die."

**Common Grace and the Call of the Gospel,** by George M. Ella; paperback; 100 pages; price £5.95 plus £1.50 p&p; published by Go Publications, and obtainable from The Cairn, Hill Top, Eggleston, Co. Durham, DL12 0AU.

The Puritans and old Scottish divines often spoke of "common grace." By this they meant the common providence and general goodness of God to all His creatures, restraining iniquity and causing the sun to shine on the righteous and

the wicked alike. With this doctrine we would agree – though we do not like the expression “common grace.” (In Scripture, grace is never common, always special.)

But now an extended interpretation of “common grace” is being given – a love of God to all mankind in general and a sincere desire for the salvation of all (though the secret will of God is only the salvation of the elect). On this view of common grace is based the free offer of the gospel.

We feel Dr. Ella’s reply to this is much needed, and though he uses strong language, this also is needed. Clearly does he demolish the arguments of those who support the above “common grace” theory of God’s desire for the salvation of all – this from professed Calvinists.

With a few things we closely relate with Dr. Ella:

1. Again and again the propounders of these unscriptural theories contradict themselves, delighting to speak of “tension in Scripture,” “antinomy,” etc.

2. They all set up a “bogey man” of Hyper-Calvinism (which has never existed) and then assail it.

3. Their writings are badly researched. They get things wrong and mix things up.

4. One or two of the leading proponents, when pressed closely, have had to admit that they have not read Gill (whom they are condemning) or Tobias Crisp (whom they are condemning). They are just repeating what others have said.

We have felt strongly on these few things for a long time, and are glad that now Dr. Ella has brought them into the open.

It is very interesting to note that Dr. Ella contends strongly that on many points, C.H. Spurgeon and Martyn Lloyd-Jones (so often quoted) would have agreed with him, and not with his opponents!

**Morning Thoughts**, by Octavius Winslow; large hardback; 788 pages; price \$35; published by and obtainable from Reformation Heritage Books, 2919 Leonard St. N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525, U.S.A.

An older generation in our churches was very fond of writings by or about the Winslow family. Octavius (1808-1878) was a very popular minister in England in the nineteenth century, apparently not specially allied to any denomination. Interestingly, the Winslow family was descended from Edward Winslow, one of the leaders of the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed to America in 1620.

There are several profitable “Morning and Evening Portions”; these morning portions have the advantage of being specially selected from his writings by Octavius Winslow himself. The sub-title of the book is “Daily Walking with God.”

Most beautifully produced, the portions are in very large, clear, easy-to-read print.

We feel that the best way to show the value of the book is to give two extracts:

“January 14. ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ Matthew 6. 34. It is a matter of much practical importance, that you take heed not to anticipate or to forestall the promised grace. For every possible circumstance in which you

may be placed, the fulness of Christ and the supplies of the covenant are provided. That provision is only meted out as the occasions for whose history it was provided occur. Beware of creating trouble by antedating it. Seen through the mist, the advancing object may appear gigantic in size, and terrific in appearance; and yet the trouble you so much dread may never come; or coming, it will assuredly bring with it the 'word spoken in due season.' In the case of every child of God, calamity never comes alone; it invariably brings Jesus with it."

"March 30 (part). 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' Hebrews 10. 19. In all true prayer great stress should be laid on the blood of Jesus. Perhaps no evidence distinguishes a declension in the power and spirituality of prayer more strongly than an overlooking of this. Where the atoning blood is kept out of view, not recognised, not pleaded, not made the grand plea, there is a deficiency of power in prayer. Words are nothing, fluency of expression nothing, niceties of language and brilliancy of thought nothing, and even apparent fervour nothing, where the blood of Christ – the new and the living way of access to God, the grand plea that moves Omnipotence, that gives admission within the holy of holies – is slighted, undervalued, and not made the groundwork of every petition."

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### BE MERCIFUL TO ME

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With broken heart and contrite sigh,  
A trembling sinner, Lord, I cry:  
Thy pardoning grace is rich and free;  
O God! be merciful to me.

I smite upon my troubled breast,  
With deep and conscious guilt oppressed;  
Christ and His cross my only plea;  
O God! be merciful to me.

Far off I stand with tearful eyes,  
Nor dare uplift them to the skies;  
But Thou dost all my anguish see;  
O God! be merciful to me.

Not alms, nor deeds that I have done,  
Can for a single sin atone;  
To Calvary alone I flee;  
O God! be merciful to me.

And when redeemed from sin and hell,  
With all the ransomed throng I dwell,  
My raptured song shall ever be,  
God has been merciful to me.

Cornelius Elven (1797-1873)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JULY 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**GOD IS LOVE**

*Sermon preached by J.K. Popham at Galeed Chapel, Brighton,  
on July 27th, 1924.*

**Text:** "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19).

In this chapter of the Epistle, it is declared that God is love. This may be understood of God in His glorious eternity; and as His nature is love, therefore the love of God is boundless, infinite as His nature. And God, because He is love, loving only holiness, necessarily hates sin. We may hate it because of its inconvenience, because it is to be punished. He hates it because it is contrary to His nature. O sinner! if you live in sin to the day of your death and die in sin, you will prove, not what man says – that God is love, and therefore too kind to be severe in punishing sin and sinners – but you will find that His nature, which is declared to be love, makes it a necessity that you should be punished. If you die in Adam, you will die in a dead head; you will die in sin inherited and acted by you; you will die under a broken law; and what can God do but hate the image of death that is on you? The Lord give you repentance.

When this infinite, this boundless ocean of love is concerned about salvation, then it flows in an appointed channel and is concerned to save the fallen bride of Christ, the chosen and adopted people, who are adopted to be the sons of God; and who see the love of God manifested in them, as it is flowing to them continually from Him, in whom it is in its fulness. This will bring out the everlasting song from the hearts of those to whom it is made known; and they will find to their everlasting joy that God's love could not be hindered from coming to them. Though they wanted it not, sought it not, liked it not, it *would* come. God has said – as in Ezekiel it is spoken – He has said to the dead, polluted and uncomely child, "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.... Now when I passed by thee ... behold, thy time was the time of love" Ezek. 16. 6, 8). Some of you have said this, have you not? and it may be you are now saying it inwardly:

"For this I sigh, for this I pine,  
This only portion, Lord, be mine,  
Be mine this better part."

This love of God is free. He owes it to no sinner to love him. He owes it not to us that He should love us and take care of us; for we deeply revolted from Him, and would have none of Him. O it is free! and when it comes, we know it. We have the best, the sweetest, the strongest of all certainties when we feel the love of God in our hearts. And this freeness is seen, in that it would come to the most unlovely objects. What was there in us to merit esteem, or to give the Creator delight? Our poor love, creature love, is attracted by objects that please it; and is repelled by objects that are displeasing. His love goes just the reverse way – the most displeasing objects find that infinite love was set upon them. And where it is so, love finds out a way to do good to the objects of it, to bless them, to save them.

In this chapter, the Spirit of God by John tells us how we are to know the love of God, how it was manifested: “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” (1 John 4. 9). Therefore the first Object of divine love is the Son of God, elected and chosen to be the Servant of God; to be the Head of His body, the Husband of His bride and the Saviour of His church. You will never know what the love of God is but as it flows through Jesus Christ. You will never know what it is for God to have pleasure in you but as it comes to you through Him, to whom the Lord said: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” If ever you give God pleasure, if ever He sees you weeping at His throne of grace, if ever He has in you a broken heart to heal, a wounded conscience to comfort; if ever He has in you a weak creature to support, an empty vessel to fill, it will be because He saw you, and loved you, and cared for you, in His dearly-beloved Son. And this will make you wonderfully pleased with Christ when you feel it. O you will fall in love with this heavenly Lover when you perceive Him loving your soul well enough to come and bear your sins in His own body on the tree!

Love shines in Christ; and if you ask where the greatest manifestation of love is, where the love of the Father is in its height, its highest glory, where the love of the Son is in all its infinite intensity of suffering, where the love of the Spirit is in all its glory; I say if you ask the question, I will say, “Come with me – as the Lord may help us to go there – come with me to Calvary,” and there all the sweetness, the freeness, the goodness and the majesty of love will be seen. And there our rebellious spirits will be stilled, our unbelieving hearts will be overcome, our bound-up spirits loosened, and every wound healed.

O the love of God which is in Christ and manifested in Him, in taking away our sins! I wish I wanted this more; I need it, you need it. The Lord give us more hunger and thirst after this – the love of God in

Christ. And sweet experimental religion is a religion of love. Love supple, will comfort the heart, and purifies the conscience. Love will bring you out of a felt hell into an enjoyed heaven; will bring you from all your weakening fears, your binding corruptions, your hardness of heart and your unbelief, into sweet liberty and divine comfort. Love is in the gospel; the gospel of Christ is a gospel of love. Nothing is so sacred as love; nothing is so jealous as love. The Apostle Paul expresses the gospel in one wonderful word, for therein he says is revealed the righteousness of God without the law, as it is written: "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1. 17); the righteousness of God in the gospel being revealed and made known without the works of the law. The apostle says now that the righteousness in which we must stand – if we stand – will be the righteousness which will cover the guilty soul and give him a desire for heaven; the righteousness which will scatter his fears, and humble his proud heart, and bring his mind into sweet submission to the will of God. That righteousness in which God's character, nature and goodness will appear is not revealed in the law, but in the gospel.

And this love is made known by the Holy Spirit: He sheds it abroad in the heart. If you feel one day that you can shed some sweet tears in your spirit because you have sinned, and your repentance softens you, and you gladly take the lowest place, and get as low as you can in humbling yourself before the Lord, and are enabled to embrace a dying Saviour as your only hope of salvation and of heaven; if this should be your experience at any time, then the love of God is here in you. It comes *from* love. Love is the very essence of the work in you. Love produces the sweetness that you feel in repentance. It is different from remorse; it is different from wishing that you had not done this or that, different altogether. Remorse may make you repent, because the lash will be laid on you. True repentance does not look at hell but at the cross. True repentance is loving God and hating yourself; and this flows from His love to you. True repentance does not look at punishment but at pardon; and flows sweetly, more sweetly and powerfully from pardon than from anything else. Contrition! O it is sweet to lie mourning and rejoicing at the footstool of mercy, with the dear Saviour in view!

This is love. The love of God in Christ is very wonderful. If ever the Lord enables us to realise it, we shall know that it is very wonderful to be embraced by the same love that embraced the Lord Jesus; and to be delighted in, with the very same delight with which the Father delights in the Son. We love Him when we realise this, that God's love is one, my friends; the Head and the body are embraced with the same arms. The Husband and the bride are regarded in the same light, and loved with the same love, and blessed with the same blessing, eternal blessedness from the bosom of God.

The love of the Father stood at no expense, no expense was too much for it; and the greatest proof, and the greatest gift of this priceless love, was the gift from His own bosom of the Son. He had been lying there eternally as His Son. May the Lord reveal this to me and to you. "Greater love hath no man than this," that God should freely, and out of His own love, give His blessed Son, that we, poor sinners, chosen in Him, might live through Him. And as the Father's love would stand at no expense, so neither would the Son's love, it was the same; and He knew well the price He must pay when He became incarnate. He knew what He must suffer; and He said to those who would spare Him the suffering – through the misunderstanding of His merciful object in coming – He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24. 26). What must Christ suffer? He must suffer the imputation of sin, He must suffer the curse of the law, He must suffer the smiting of the sword which God called to awake against Him, the assaults of the devil, the pains of hell; these came to Him, hell bringing punishment. In His case, innocent punishment, just punishment, as Rutherford speaks: "The innocent hell of suffering entered into the very soul of the Lord Jesus"; and He knew all this. He entered into the compact with His Father, with His eyes open, if I may so speak. As Adam was not deceived as Eve; so Christ when He came, came with His heart fully aware of what He must suffer. "And did the darling Son of God undertake this for me?" one says. O that poor sinner longs to say this:

"For love of me, the Son of God,  
Drained every drop of vital blood.  
Long time I after idols ran;  
But now my God's a martyred Man."

And nothing will soften your stony hearts, nothing warm your icy hearts, like the love, blood and sufferings of this Eternal Lover, Jesus Christ.

The love of the Spirit is exhibited here in this – He came to Christ, entered into His human nature, and filled it with His immeasurable gifts and graces. I would that it might please the Lord to direct your hearts into this branch of divine truth – that the Holy Ghost was given to Jesus Christ without measure; that He anointed Him, was with Him, helped Him, when Christ the Man was thus blessed with the oil of gladness above His fellows; that grace was poured into His lips, that He might give it out in the gospel; that He had in Him this Holy Spirit in all His power, "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord"; which made "Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord"; and that the Holy Spirit anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor. If we be led into this branch of the Spirit's work, then we shall see this mercy,

namely, that all who receive the Holy Ghost in any measure into their hearts, receive Him through Jesus Christ. And hence that Scripture, where Peter says: "This Jesus hath God raised up ... therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2. 32, 33); and that which was shed forth was the Holy Ghost.

O sinners! you who have received the Holy Ghost, you received Him through the sufferings of the now exalted Saviour. You received a measure of grace out of the fulness of Christ by that coming, by the Spirit sent into your hearts. And this love of God, it is a pillow for a weary soul; it is the convoy of a sinner exposed to dangers; it is the comfort of a worm when troubled. Blessed love, sweet love; it sweetens the cup of trial; it humbles the poor, proud heart; it sets a prospect before faith; it tells a mourning sinner when the days of his mourning are to be ended; it shows him the way to heaven.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3. 1). Just meditate on this: "an alien made a child"; a rebel reconciled and made a friend; a distant sinner made near; one bearing the image of death, blessed with the image of Christ. This is the love of God. It will lighten all your burdens; you will feel that you can carry any cross with love in your soul. It brings the sweetest submission. You will feel that nothing can hurt you when the love of God is in you; no rebellion can come where the love of God is made known.

There is no end to it; as there was no beginning, so there is no end to it. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31. 3). Bad behaviour wounds the Saviour; but it does not kill His love. It vexes and grieves the Spirit, but He comes again; and though He fights against us with His Word, and in His operations, so as to wound us, it is that He may heal us. And the Father, He sees a poor prodigal returning; and all His love comes out, and makes Him move to the son, this poor returning son, who, though he lost all he had, and wasted his substance, did not, could not lose his sonship. This love has no end; it never terminates.

And this precious, this eternal love, has one effect among many, which effect is set forth in the text: "We love Him, because He first loved us." And now I would for a little time speak of what is so little, so small and fitful – our love to the dear, loving God. It is a poor love; no saint will ever say that he loves as he ought to do and as he would. It is a poor love; and yet it is acceptable to God. It pleases Him; it is the salt that salts every sacrifice that you make for the Lord; it is the charity that endureth longer than faith and hope. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity,

these three; but the greatest of these is charity"; greater, because it lasts longer. When faith shall have a happy end in heaven, and even hope shall sweetly expire in realisation, then love shall still remain. It is glorious, kind:

"No other change shall that sustain,  
Save only to increase."

Do we love Him? Sometimes we know that we do. Sometimes we wish to do so. Sometimes we hope we do. Sometimes we fear that we do not. Let us look at this a little. Once a woman stood silently behind the Saviour and washed His feet with her tears, wiping them with the hair of her head; she was a forgiven woman, a sinner. And the Pharisee in whose house this was done said that if He were a prophet, He would know that this woman was a sinner. O but the Lord *did* know! And His love made her tears run so fast and so copiously that they were sufficient to wash His sacred feet. Did you ever repent? Did you ever repent with hell in view? Did you ever repent with the rod on your back? Did you ever repent because the dear Saviour was before your sight, in your eye, and in your heart? Did you ever repent because sin in you was contrary to God's nature? because of rebellion against His revealed will? and because sin broke the sinless heart of the Lord Jesus, made Him grieve, made Him a Man of sorrows, and brought Him into an intimate acquaintance with grief? O such repentance flows from love! You always grieve if you grieve one whom you have loved and do love. It is very, very painful to grieve one whom you care about; and when love embraces the dear Saviour of sinners, then the sinner does mourn.

Do not think that this will belong only to the beginning of your experience of the Lord's favour; it will grow as your acquaintance and experience of this love grows. And the older you get, the more grieved you will be over anything that grieves the Lord. If you live to be as old as I am, you will feel – as the love of God is in you – that you can never weep enough and never be sorry enough. But O it will not be with hell before you! It may be with heaven before you, and perhaps near to you. Then you will say, "Lord, I am sorry; and I grieve that I have grieved Thee so often, and so much, and have sinned against Thy love, Thy goodness and Thy mercy." You are not laying again the foundation of repentance towards God; but you are weeping over a manifested Saviour, whose love touches your heart. I would not be without repentance for the world. O repentance is very sweet! Contrition is very sweet; it softens you and softens your affections towards Christ; and nothing will make you more grieved over any dishonour that is done to Him than this. You will value the Saviour; you will love His Person.

I shall, I hope, never be weary of speaking about the Person of Jesus Christ; and I hope you will never be weary of hearing about it. Although

what I say is so poor, may it be acceptable to your hearts. The Person of the Lord Jesus. Think of Him! God sent His Son. Where did He send Him to? To this lower world. What to do? To take on Him our nature. The only-begotten Son, eternally in the bosom of the Father, was sent by His Father to take on Him the nature of the children; the children being “partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” And what for? Why, that through death He might destroy the power of death; and deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Do you prize this Person – God and Man in One Person – and love Him? O when you do, you will never have enough crowns to put on His Head: never have praises enough in your heart to give Him! You will never be able to honour Him as your affections would dictate; never be able to bless Him enough for living and dying; and never be sorry enough that you have a nature contrary to Him.

We love Him, love Him for this love of His; love Him for His very Self, His own Person. What makes the sinner sink into a kind of nothingness that is very sweet for him to feel? Why, the presence of his Lord, which enlarges his heart and makes the affections spring up; the presence of his Lover, the Lord Jesus, which makes him wonder with a wonder that can never, never, never be satisfied, a wonder over eternal goodness and wisdom, that this dear Saviour should come to take on Him our infirmities and bear our sicknesses. O it is this that does a sinner good and makes him love the Lord, the Saviour, who did not ask and who does not ask a sinner to be good; but comes and makes him good, makes the tree good. He comes without saying that you must bring this in your hand; but says, “Buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.”

Do you love Him? love His righteousness? love His fountain open for sin and uncleanness? love His condescension in visiting sinners still? love His patience in bearing with you? Love is jealous in visiting the unfaithfulness of your hearts to Him. Do you love the rod which it pleases the Lord to lay upon you, because it is so needed, and so merciful? Do you love His Word because it is so faithful; and coming in the power of the Spirit, so effectual, to help you, to teach you, to separate you, and to give you certainty?

“We love Him.” His love is in all His actions toward us; and when we perceive that, then we love Him. His love is in all His ways; He never takes a step toward a dealing with any of His children in which love is not, His own love, His great love. Christ died for love, for love’s sake, for His church’s sake; and therefore that love abides, and acts and moves. Love devises good to its object, and the love of Christ is always doing that, devising good, that He may do them good at their latter end.

When this is known, love to Him who thus loves us, is the effect, the sweet effect, the great effect. You will always say that you love Him more when you know His love to you; and when you feel it – if I may say so – flooding your spirit, then you will have no tormenting fear. This love casts out fear. “Fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4. 18). But it does not say that he has no love. Love and fear may be very mixed in a child of God; and though he is fearful and in bondage, feeling unable to claim things; yet his very spirit is free, as being born of heaven. And sometimes his love works in a feeling of tenderness towards Christ; sometimes in a panting after Christ; sometimes in a looking to Christ with delight; sometimes feeling, “O if I could only get near that Apple Tree which is among the trees of the wood, exalted above them all, better than all; if only I could get near, I would sit down under His shadow with great delight, and I would eat of His sweet fruit.”

“We love Him.” And then another thing. If you love the Lord you will want Him; no loving soul can be happy without His presence. It was very ignorant of His disciples – and we should have been quite as ignorant, if not more so – very ignorant to mourn so inordinately when the Lord was about to leave them, as to His bodily presence. He taught them that there was a presence better than that; also that the world had no communion with Him; that the world did not enjoy what the disciples did. Just think of it, and you will see then, that what the Lord said was wise and loving – “It is expedient for you that I go away. It is expedient that you should not be always cognizant of My presence, as here. It is better for you that I go to heaven; and I will send you My Spirit, and He shall cause you to see Me as the world seeth Me not. The world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me. You shall see Me though I am in heaven. You shall see Me interceding, see Me ruling in heaven, on earth and in hell, managing, guiding and ruling over all providences.” You shall see Him; and love says: “O Lord, do visit me!”

Dear friends, this love in your souls will make you willing to have a right hand cut off, if it offends you; a right eye plucked out, if it offends you. And this love may tell you one day to your astonishment that the fiery trial salts you, that you are salted with fire; that this fiery trial cleanses evil, and therefore the fire, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that which salts you, and makes the cutting off of a right hand and the plucking out of a right eye an acceptable sacrifice to God. All this self-denial, without the Spirit, is so marred that there is no acceptability in it; but with the Holy Ghost, with His divine fire in the soul, the sacrifice ascends to heaven and is acceptable. As the Apostle Paul says, “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12. 1); not your salvation; but being saved,



“your reasonable service.”

“We love Him.” We want His presence. And therefore, if we love the Lord Jesus, then His name and honour will be dear to us. However ungrateful you are, some of you may find one day that you love the Lord by these means – if someone were to speak against Him, if a man should say that He is not the Son of God, and did not come down from the bosom of the Father. John speaks in this Epistle, and says that such a man does not know God; and you would say in your heart – you who really love the Lord Jesus – “Why, He *did* come down; He *did* leave His Father’s bosom; He suffered, and bled, and died.” One may speak thus about the Scriptures and say, “They are not inspired.” O but you say, “They are; the Lord Jesus constantly quoted the Scriptures of the Old Testament, constantly brought forth the Word of God in His ministry; and set forth Jonah as a sign of Himself; although today men ridicule it.”

And love will make you cleave to Him in His blessed Word. So when the ordinances are revealed, a child of God says, “I would like to walk in them; but I am not worthy, I am not fit to do it.” May love burn in you from a sense of His love to you, so that you may be constrained to say, “What doth hinder me from being baptized? What doth hinder me from sitting at the table with the Lord’s friends?” You will say to all hindrances, when this love comes into your heart, “O hinder me not, let me be with His friends, let me be with them in the ordinances, in the ways of the footsteps of the flock.”

“We love Him, because He first loved us.” And then His precepts; they will not be matters of indifference to us. The psalmist said, “I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right” (Psa. 119. 128). Whatever the Lord Jesus forbids, love says, “I would not do.” But whatever He commands, love says, “I would like to be enabled to do it.” It is good to be blessed in this way, to

“... love the Lord with mind and heart,  
His people and His ways,”

And to feel,

“Envy, and pride, and lust depart,”

that we might praise His blessed name and walk in His ordained way.

Now may we as a people understand this in some measure. It will make us like a flock, coming up from the shearing, and from the washing, none barren among them; it will make us pleasing to God. There is a pleasantness in the saints where love is; love is pleased with them, and they are pleased with love. Love is pleased to manifest itself to them, and they are pleased with the manifestations that love is pleased to speak. They are pleased with love in their hearts, and they say,

“My soul, with joy attend,  
While Jesus silence breaks.”

Love makes us pray. Children are free in the house, free in the family, free with their parents, free to speak, free to complain of trouble, free to ask for bread. Children have privileges; love gives them privileges, sweet privileges. A legal heart says, “O but this is too bold!” Love makes you bold. If your heart condemn you not, then you have confidence toward God. If your heart condemn you, if your conscience be guilty, listen to it; and the Lord help you to go to the fountain, and to plead what He has said. If you have a condemning heart, God is greater even than your heart; and He knoweth all things, the secret spring of your desires, the secrets of your sorrows, the secrets of your prayers. He knows all things that are in your heart; and if you feel that you cannot do without Him, cannot be comfortable or happy without Him, He knows all that.

“We love Him.” Do we love Him? To His enemies, the Lord Jesus said, “What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?” And if that question were now put to us, what could we say? “What think ye of Christ?” My heart says, “I think well of Him. I have thoughts of Him that are sweet to me; I think of Him as the Son of God; I think of Him as Incarnate Deity; I think of Him as obeying; I think of Him as on the cross, and in the grave, and rising from the grave, and going to heaven.” “What think ye of Christ?” Is He a Friend? Is He a Brother born for your adversity? Is He the One whom you want? “O but I have no qualifications for Him.” All the qualifications will lie here:

“All the fitness He requireth,  
Is to feel your need of Him;  
This He gives you,  
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.”

Now, poor lovers of the Lord Jesus, with some fear mixing with your love and holding you in bondage – go to Him and ask Him to cast out fear by giving you more love, to make you perfect in love. And you, living people, born again, who have not as yet known the liberty of the gospel, come with your bondage to this free Spirit, and He will give you what you want.

“Prayer indited by the Lord,  
The Lord will surely hear.”

The eye of the Lord is upon you, the ear of the Lord is open to your cry; and the face of the Lord will never be against you. No, He is full of mercy, and “pity joined with power”; and all His goodness and kindness towards sinners flow from His free, eternal, undeserved love.

The Lord command that His blessing may be in your hearts, shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. Amen.

## THE PATIENT ENDURING OF WRONGS

*By Ambrose Serle (1742-1812)*

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Like the blessed psalmist, I have sometimes been rewarded evil for good, to the great discomfort of my soul. It seems trying to flesh and blood, that is, to my animal and corrupt passions, to bear all and say nothing. But yet this is generally my wisdom and duty.

It is my wisdom, because then I do not stir up further evil and strife in my own bosom, or in others; and I moreover engage my gracious Master to undertake for me, by committing all in silent patience to Him, who hath engaged to make everything, and such things as these most certainly among the rest, work together for my good. Thus that which appears to be only a natural evil will, by His superior management and control, be turned into a spiritual blessing.

It is also my duty to suffer patiently, considering Him who endured the most severe contradiction of sinners against Himself; because thereby I prove that I belong to Him; for which purpose perhaps trials of this kind may have been permitted to fall upon me. If I have right and truth on my side, it is not only faithless, but also unreasonable, to be impatient. I ought rather to be thankful in that behalf, and to ask mercy and grace for those who slander me against all equity, and without a cause. It is indeed unpleasant to have the treatment which he experienced, who said, I became a reproach amongst all my neighbours; and they of my acquaintance were afraid of me; and they that did see me without, conveyed themselves from me. But this may be God's physic to my soul, which is not given me for my pleasure, but as the means, though painful means, of future good. My worldly attachments, or my Christian attachments in a worldly way, may be growing stronger than are for the true health of my soul; and, therefore, this is a call to live more inwardly upon grace, and to wait in faith and prayer for more communion with God. When I gain His company, by losing the company or the friendship of men, and even good men with great corruptions like my own, I have no reason to lament any loss, but to be thankful with all humility for the kindness of every providence which leads me nearer, and keeps me closer to my blessed Lord. He is a tried and sure Friend indeed, a Friend for eternity.

If I took another sort of conduct, and exposed those as I might, and perhaps as they justly may deserve, who have done me evil for good, I should indulge only that base revenge of my fallen nature, which would plunge me as deep another way in the corruption of which I have right to complain. I may and ought to use the caution of keeping out of the way of injury, but I must not revenge it either by word or deed. While I am only wronged, I am safe; but I am open to all manner of evil when guilty of wrong.

Above all the harm that can be done me by creatures, let me tremble at my own passions, which like tinder are ready to kindle by the smallest spark of mental fire. May I tremble also at the officious readiness of others to increase my inflammation by their own. And alas! how much more ready is corrupt nature to feel and foment discord than to subdue and abhor it! Let me pray then to be delivered from the strife of other men's tongues; and to have a strong restraint, for such I greatly need, upon mine. Sin is "the great kill-friend," as one calls it; may I therefore beg to be guarded against sin, both in myself and others.

O Lord, what a nature, and what a world, do I live in! I groan under a nature which is ready to meet all the evils and confusions that are in the world, and to make every one of them my own. How doth the unquiet spirit of man plunge himself, and all about him, into confusion, miseries and distresses, engendering unhappy discords among individuals, and bloody, cruel wars among the nations! And how often, my blessed Master, instead of retiring to Thy bosom, have I myself allowed this spirit of violence within me, and met it in other men! How much have I wronged my enemies by not praying for them, as I ought, when they have vented their wrongs against me! With how little patience and submission to Thy will have I endured these wrongs; not considering that they could not have come unless they had been permitted by Thee, and were allowed to come altogether for my good!

O Lord, wipe off my guilt by Thy most precious blood, and enable me in future, as well not to take offence, as to be earnest to give none. So shall I appear indeed to be the disciple of Thee, my Saviour, who like a patient, silent lamb didst endure all manner of insults and injuries; and so, in following Thee, I shall find peace at least by Thy grace, both in Thy bosom and in my own, though I find none beside throughout this distracted world.

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### THE CHURCH'S LONGING FOR CHRIST

*From Dr. Hawker's Commentary on the Song of Solomon, newly published by The Huntingtonian Press.*

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"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions?" (Song 1. 7).

There is a great beauty in this verse. The church had been speaking in the preceding to the virgin daughters of Jerusalem. She now turns from them to speak to Jesus. The communion of saints is sweet; but O! how infinitely sweeter is fellowship and communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1. 3). But what doth the church say

to Jesus? She considers Him under one of His precious characters, as the great Shepherd of His fold, the church; and viewing herself as His property, both by the Father's gift, His own purchase, and the conquests of His grace by His Holy Spirit, she earnestly desires that He would tell her where it was that He fed His flock, and where He caused it to rest at noon. Every word in this sweet verse is most highly interesting; but it would swell the commentary to a length not admissible in a work of this kind to enlarge upon the several portions of it. A few of the more striking particulars must be sufficient.

In the first place, the cry of a truly awakened soul, for personal enjoyment of Jesus and all His benefits, is here strongly expressed: "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth!" Reader! it is the truest sign of interest in Jesus when the soul is going out after Him in longing desires. And do observe further, that the soul may be going out in the most earnest desires after Jesus when, as in the instance of the church here, the soul may be at a loss where to find her Beloved. There may be, and there sometimes is, in the best of Christ's disciples, darkness upon the mind from the persecution of the world, the temptations of Satan, and from the body of sin and death they carry about with them; but when Jesus, by His Holy Spirit, awakens anew this desire of the soul, these desires plainly prove that the grace of the Lord Jesus remains unextinguished.

In the next place, we may observe the unanswerable strength of the arguments the church makes use of to prevail with Jesus. He is her Beloved; and she is in extreme need.

Reader! it is a precious testimony in the soul when like Peter, amidst the numberless circumstances of unworthiness which are in me, I can still say, "Lord! Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." And shall one that loves Jesus be as one that loves Him not? Shall I be in doubt like others that know Thee not, whether I am Thine, or not? Shall I, whom Thou hast betrothed to Thyself as Thy spouse, be regarded as if I was an harlot? Shall it be thought by others that are turned aside, and who are not of Thy fold, that I am like one of them? O! show me where Thou feedest, where Thy flock is; that, like a lamb of it, I may be found among Thy fold, and fed from Thine own hand, and brought under Thine own eye and care.

There is a very great beauty in this character of the Lord Jesus considered in His pastoral office, in which the church here beholds Him. And if the reader hath not been much accustomed to consider Jesus under this character and office, I shall rejoice if the reference to Him, which the church makes in this most interesting point of view, should call up his attention. Through the whole of the eventful history of the church, from the very first forming of it to the ministry of Jesus from His incarnation, the Lord seems to have been pleased that His people should consider

Him under this character: hence one of the sacred writers cries out, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth" (Psa. 80. 1). And as if God our Father meant to hold Him forth to His people in a yet more endearing point of view, it is remarkable that He is called God's Shepherd (Zech. 13. 7). And that His people might know Him as such, as suited to all their wants and circumstances, He is expressly distinguished under the various names of the great Shepherd (Heb. 13. 20); the good Shepherd (John 10. 11); the chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5. 4), and the like; intimating that He is exactly suited to every case of His flock. His greatness becomes their security for all things; His goodness, never to let them want; His sovereignty, and being the only One, implies that every other is unnecessary. And as the Father's Shepherd, coming in His name, appointed by His authority, all His acts are valid, and His sheep cannot but be eternally secure. They shall never perish, nor any pluck them out of His hand; because His Father gave them, who is greater than all, and none can pluck them out of His Father's hand. "I," saith Jesus, "and My Father are one" (John 10. 28-30).

I stay not to particularise the many precious things folded up in this one character of Jesus: I only refer the reader to the several passages in His sacred Word which confirm the glorious truth: and I beg of him to read the same with attention, and form, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, his opinion of their importance: John 10. 16-18; Psa. 23; Ezek. 34; Heb. 13. 20.

But besides the character of Jesus as a Shepherd, we must notice the office also belonging to our dear Lord, of feeding. "Tell me," saith the church, "where Thou feedest." Now this is a most delightful feature in the portrait of Jesus. It was prophesied of Him before His coming that He should feed His flock like a shepherd (Isa. 40. 11). And it is affirmed of Him after His return to glory, that He is the Lamb in the midst of the throne to feed His church (Rev. 7. 17). So that this act of Christ is perpetual. And if we take into our consideration what is evidently implied in feeding, we shall discover that it intends everything necessary to be done for the welfare of His flock. It is the office of the shepherd, not only to provide pasture, but to protect from rapine; not only to guard the weak, but to restore wanderers, to heal the diseased, to search and seek out those that are scattered in the dark and cloudy day; or, as Jesus most gloriously expresses it Himself: to "seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and ... to bind up that which was broken, and ... strengthen that which was sick" (Ezek. 34. 16).

Reader! have you considered your Almighty Shepherd under this sweet character? Have you yourself experienced the tenderness of your Shepherd? Do you know Him, as going in and out before you in the

pastures of His holy Word, in the ordinances of worship, and in the gracious services of His house of prayer? Do you know Him in His voice, in seasons of wandering, in His watching over you like the Shepherd of Bethlehem in night seasons; in His deliverance of you "from the lion's dens, and the mountains of the leopards"? O the preciousness of knowing the Redeemer under this endearing character! The sheep of Christ, who are the objects of His care, can best describe what is implied in this one feature of their Lord's love towards them. The office of the Shepherd is distinguished in the freeness and graciousness of His love. Though the sheep fail in their obedience, Jesus never fails in His love. It is His own grace, not our desert, which becomes the rule of His conduct. Frequently the poor, silly sheep is unconscious of his wants and weaknesses; but doth the Shepherd wait to be informed? Is it needful that they should cry before He relieves? O no! Their need affords the opportunity for the display of His grace, and His own love is the sole motive of all His mercy and tenderness towards them.

Precious Shepherd of Thy blood-bought sheep! the flock of slaughter! how delightful is it to my soul that the needy as well as the full, the distressed as well as the strong, the wandering as well as the restored, are the peculiar objects of Thy care. I have gone astray, dear Lord, like a sheep that is lost: "seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments" (Psa. 119. 176).

But we must not stop here. The Lord Jesus not only feeds His flock like a shepherd, but in the act of feeding, the food with which He feeds them infinitely surpasseth all other sustenance: for He not only feeds them in His ordinances, by the ministry of His Word, with the discoveries of His grace, the precious nourishment of the gospel, but He Himself gives them to eat of the hidden manna, the bread of life, even His own body and blood, which is meat and drink indeed. And His language is, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Reader! doth not your very soul cry out, in the contemplation of this unequalled love of the Lord Jesus, "Lord! evermore give me this bread" (John 6. 27-58)? O dearest, merciful, gracious Redeemer! feed my soul with the manifestations of Thy glory – give me to see what Thou art in Thyself, what Thou art to Thy people, what Thou hast done for Thy church, and what relation Thou standest in to them! Feed my soul with the communications of Thy love – let my soul live upon Thee in Thy pardoning, refreshing, renewing, strengthening, confirming grace. And let the consolation of Thy Holy Spirit become the perpetual nourishment of my soul when, in all His blessed offices, He is taking of Thine and showing unto me.

There is another point to be considered in this delightful verse and that is the question of the church, where Jesus feeds, and where He

causeth His flock to rest at noon. By which we may observe that it is not enough for the seeking soul to know how, and with what sweet and suitable food the great Shepherd supplies the necessities of His flock, but where the seeking soul is to come. To this the answer is direct: wherever the pure and unadulterated gospel is preached and gospel ordinances are faithfully administered, there the Redeemer hath promised His presence, wherever two or three are gathered together in His name (Matt. 18. 20). There He will be found of them that seek Him. And also under the noon of persecution, the noon of temptation, the noon of affliction, or any other season of trial, like the scorching heat of a sultry day, in a dry and barren land where no water is, there Jesus hath His resting places, and deeply exercised souls may find a sweet resting place in Him through the everlasting covenant love and faithfulness of the Father, the justifying blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the powerful efficacy, strength and aid of God the Holy Ghost. "This is the rest," saith the prophet in allusion to all the grand things, "wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing" (Isa. 28. 12).

Reader! do you seek with the church to the great Shepherd for this resting place? Here set up thy rest in the faithfulness of Jehovah against all the accusations of conscience, the charges of Satan, the arrest of justice and the curse of God's broken law. This is what my soul would plead, in the double plea of the sovereign grace of God the Father's covenant love and God the Redeemer's justifying blood and righteousness; and sure I am, as Job justly argued, "Will He plead against me with His great power?" when He hath put the strength of His own salvation in me. There, in Jesus' finished work, the righteous might dispute with Him; so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge. There can be no ground for fear of condemnation from God the Father while my soul stands clothed and justified before Him in the appointed and approved righteousness of God the Son (cf. Job 23. 6).

*We were very pleased to receive this delightful new publication, which we hope to review shortly. Till the end of the year it is available (£10 including postage) from the Huntingtonian Press, 72a Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hants., SO30 4EB. The comments on verse 7 are much longer than on most verses.*

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How continually, at all times, and under all circumstances, we need to be looking up to the Lord Himself to teach, guide, and lead us! And have we not His own gracious promise that, if we acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our paths? "I will guide thee with Mine eye."

*J.C. Philpot*



## THE LORD'S SUPPER

By J.H. Gosden

(Concluded from page 198)

He took the bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me." The mystery of Christ's broken body is too sacred to allow of any deviation from the very elements Himself defined and used in that inaugural supper. Bread, as broken by Himself, the dear Saviour chose to be the ceremonial representation of His sacred crucifixion. It is not less than sacrilege to use any other substance or adopt any other manner. Wafers are not bread. Cutting is not breaking. Christ took *bread*, and He blessed it (gave thanks), and *brake* it.

"This is My body" – represents My body, now to be given by way of sacrifice – "given for you." For you? Yes, to make atonement for your sins: "Who His own Self bear our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2. 24). O the ugliness of sin! O the love of Christ, the Lamb of God, in bearing away the sin of the world (John 1. 29)! And O His condescension in instituting this solemn ceremonial remembrance, and saying to sinners, "This do in remembrance of Me"! O the unworthiness of the sinner! Worthy Christ and His death to be had in everlasting remembrance! "Memory," says Bunyan, "is an act of love." Divine love says:

"I ask no price for all I give,  
But O remember ME!"

I give Myself, and with that gift all others. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8. 32.)

To eat the emblem of Christ's broken body is a public profession of having received Christ crucified by faith as the very life and nourishment of the soul. "I am the Bread of Life." Here is a substantial repast for the famishing poor. Here is life for dying sinners. "'Tis by Thy death we live, O Lord." What mind of man will ever fathom the deep significance of Christ's word: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John 6. 57)? The doctrine of Christ is solid nutrition to faith (1 Tim. 4. 6). This spiritual partaking does not depend upon the ordinance. It is to be feared that many partake of that who never spiritually receive Christ by faith; while some have real communion with the Lord who never sit down at His table here below. But the due observance of public church communion at the Lord's Supper, according to His example and command, is frequently made a means of grace to the soul whereby the

Holy Ghost strengthens faith and grants “the substance with the sign.”

Hereby, also, mutual love between members is sustained, revived and increased; love being the “bond of perfectness” (Col. 3. 14). For in the self-examination prescribed as a preparation for the holy Supper, there will come into consideration, among other matters, our attitude and behaviour and feeling towards our fellow-members. There cannot be communion where discord prevails. All selfishness, pride, jealousies, animosities, hypocrisies, envies, malice, evil thinking and evil speaking, must be studiously eschewed and emphatically renounced, and grace sought to pardon and subdue. The very holiness of the feast precludes an approach to it while harbouring unkind feelings against any saint or whilst nursing any sin. The least felt realisation of interest in “Christ our Passover slain for us” (under whose shelter alone there is deliverance from the “wrath to come”) produces a humbling sense of deepest obligation to loyalty to Christ’s Lordship. And as that obligation is mutually felt, bands of fellowship and communion will be fostered in a sober attendance upon the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. Tender love and reverential fear thus flowing out to the great Head, the members partake of the savour of that “precious ointment ... that ran down” to the skirts of Aaron’s garments. Good indeed is it for “brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psa. 133), each feeling the unworthiest and least. As says Paul: “We being many are one bread, and one body” (1 Cor. 10. 17), referring to the communion.

Flowing from this “dew of Hermon” will be a united striving for the good of the church and the honour of Christ, a mutual prayerful interest, exhortation, and provocation unto love and good works (Heb. 10. 24). As the feast is to be partaken of “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,” and “they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle,” there must be a going forth without the camp bearing Christ’s reproach – a godly separation from the world in all who would manifest a loyal subjection to the King of grace. It is a shame and disgrace to the Christian profession when persons appear at the communion table in the livery of the enemies of the Holy One of God. Of all places, this least becomes worldly conformity. It is a holy convocation.

In the Levitical dispensation, the eating of the blood was expressly forbidden: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17. 11). But in the gospel dispensation, the blood is to be partaken of ceremonially in the ordinance, and spiritually by faith: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6. 53). That not a bodily but a believing partaking is the chief intention, Christ Himself clearly stated: “The flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto

you, they are Spirit, and they are life" (v. 63). As the disciples of old, so every true believer is compelled to depend upon communications from Christ for spiritual life: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (v. 68).

The church of Rome (and the imitators of that foul system, the Anglo-Romanists) deny the cup to the laity. But the Lord Christ said, as He took the cup and gave thanks and handed it to His disciples: "Drink ye *all* of it; for this cup is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Presumably those clerics wish to reserve to themselves the sacerdotal power to remit sin, and think to do so by exclusively drinking the sacramental wine. An arrogant and blasphemous claim indeed! We are neither dependent upon ecclesiastics nor upon the sacrament for divine pardon. But since we all need the remission of sins, and there is none apart from the shedding of blood, Christ emphasised His disciples *all partaking* of the blood of the grape, "the fruit of the vine." An apt representation of the manner in which Christ's most precious blood was shed: the pressure of divine wrath, the weight of imputed sin, the agony of His holy soul; the piercing of that sword of inflexible justice awaking against the Man Jehovah's Fellow! "This do in remembrance of Me!"

But there is the testament. "A testament is of force after men are dead." Settled upon all the elect is God's eternal good will, everlasting blessedness, great and precious covenant promises. They are heirs of promise, joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. As God-Man, the eternal Son of God incarnate, He received the inheritance of a more excellent name than angels (Heb. 1. 4). He is exalted at the right hand of the Father, sits with Him on His throne, and is King in Zion. His people are His inheritance. Their inheritance they receive as adopted sons through the redeeming blood of the everlasting covenant (Gal. 4. 5; Rom. 8. 17). All Christ is and has is theirs: all blessings contained in those exceeding great and precious covenant promises which in Christ Jesus are Yea and Amen (2 Pet. 1. 4; 2 Cor. 1. 20). These things the sacred cup in the ordinance sets forth. Eternal redemption from sin, death and hell, and an eternal inheritance according to the New Testament – the will of God in Christ Jesus. A full cup of salvation for sinners, in consequence of the drinking by the Lord Jesus of the bitter cup of wrath due to their sin. "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." "Drink ye all of it" – the cup of remembrance. "This do in remembrance of Me." O the costliness, O the freeness, O the fulness, O the bitterness, and O the sweetness of salvation!

We would speak tenderly with respect to the necessity we feel of confining the ordinance of the Lord's Supper and church privileges strictly to those who have been baptized on a profession of their

repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. By this restriction we do not say or imply that none but those who thus obey their Lord are saved. This we have already noticed in our remarks upon believers' baptism. The distinction must be preserved between spiritual private communion and public church communion. We firmly believe that our practice of admitting only baptized believers to the communion service is strictly according to Scripture revelation, apostolic procedure and early church practice. That other methods have been adopted by some who truly fear the Lord is mysterious. But the fact that they are godly people must not allow us to exercise what is mis-called Christian charity, and modify what we solemnly believe to be Christ's order. He is the only Head of His church, and our esteem for the best of men must always be subordinate to our loyalty to our only Redeemer and Lord.

That the primitive form, unmodified, of the Lord's Supper and of believers' baptism is to continue in the church to the end of time, we have express Scripture proof. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: *and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*" "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *till He come*" (Matt. 28. 18-20; 1 Cor. 11. 26).

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Heb. 13. 20, 21).

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It is a part of true Christian wisdom, of living faith, of real humility of mind, of submission to the will of God, to be content to believe what we cannot see. "He leadeth the blind by a way that they knew not." A sense of this blindness will lead us to commit our way unto the Lord, to trust in Him that He may bring it to pass. But we have to mourn over our ignorance, darkness, unbelief, infidelity, and that wretched want of submission to the will of God, which adds so much to the weight of every trial. If we could but believe, and be firmly established in the belief, that our various trials, whether bodily, or family, or mental, or connected with the church, were for our own good, how much would it lighten their load. But to grope for the wall like the blind, and to grope as if we had no eyes, leaves us to carry the burden alone, and you know what poor fainting work we make of it when we have to carry the load with our own arms. The sweet persuasion that the Lord has sent the trial, will support us in it, and will bring us out of it, wonderfully lightens every trial, however weighty it may be in itself.

*J.C. Philpot*

## LET THEM DECLARE HIS PRAISE IN THE ISLANDS

*The life and poetry of Hallgrímur Pétursson*

*By Dr. I.A Sadler*

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### Part 1

The words of God by the prophet Isaiah are gloriously fulfilled in the blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ: "I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49. 6). After the Lord's resurrection, Jesus commanded the disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 15). They were to be witnesses of the Lord's death and resurrection beginning in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and "unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1. 8). The great message, which was to go forth by the power of the Holy Spirit, was that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24. 47).

We are frequently reminded of the glorious spread of the gospel within Africa, China and America, but it is almost unknown that this prophecy has been remarkably fulfilled in Iceland. This obscure island, consisting of vast tracts of wilderness, deserts, glaciers and volcanoes, received the same blessings of salvation by the Holy Spirit as our own land at the time of the Reformation. "For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.... And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35. 6, 10).

Apart from a few Irish monks and hermits from the ancient Celtic church, Iceland was settled by the Vikings in the ninth and tenth centuries, who brought with them the pagan idolatry of Scandinavia. Although the country became nominally Christian in 1000 A.D., this was an accommodation between the corrupted Christianity of the Middle Ages and Norse paganism. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw the literary "classics" of the Sagas; but in no way could these be regarded as Christian works, being heavily influenced by Norse mythology. However, in the time of the Puritans one of the greatest works of poetry in the Icelandic language was composed by the Lutheran minister Hallgrímur Pétursson. The great theme of this poetry was not the myths of paganism, but the glorious and blessed passion of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. Therefore, in these articles we will seek to write a little about the life of Hallgrímur Pétursson, but more particularly provide some extracts of his poetry, which have been translated into English.

It was not until the Reformation that the light of the gospel truly shone forth in Iceland. The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit through

the witness of Martin Luther quickly spread from Germany to Denmark, from where the Reformation spread to Iceland (then a possession of the Danish crown). As in Britain, there was the desire for the Word of God to be translated into the native tongue; accordingly, the New Testament was first published in Icelandic in 1540.

Icelanders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lived through extreme hardship. Yet the light of the gospel shone in a way unknown to the present Icelandic nation, which has (like Britain) been corrupted through affluence, worldliness and immorality. However, any present-day visitor to the capital city, Reykjavík, cannot but notice Hallgríms Church dominating the city's sky-line. It is the largest church building in Iceland and is a twentieth century memorial to Hallgrímur Pétursson. This is some token of the enduring effect that this servant of the Lord had upon the Icelandic nation; though sadly, there is little evidence today of the deep, spiritual experience of salvation in Jesus that Hallgrímur Pétursson proclaimed.

Hallgrímur Pétursson was born in 1614. Although his father was an ordinary farmer, he was a relative of Guðmundur Thorláksson, the Bishop of Hólar (at that time Iceland was divided into two bishoprics, Hólar in the north, and Skálholt in the south). Guðmundur Thorláksson was greatly devoted to the Reformers' ideal of giving to the common people the Word of God in their own language; and thus in 1584 he published the whole Bible in Icelandic. He also gave encouragement to poets to compose religious verses and hymns, insisting that these should be no less worthy in quality than any secular literature. Guðmundur Thorláksson was Bishop of Hólar for 56 years (from 1571 to 1627), and it was in his latter days that he took on the young Hallgrímur Pétursson to work at the cathedral at Hólar. Hallgrímur Pétursson was regarded even then as both outspoken and exceptionally gifted with words. However, when still in his teens, he left Hólar and went to Denmark, where he became an apprentice metalworker. The Lord's sovereign hand was then seen, as a very learned (and evidently gracious) Iclander, Brynjólfur Sveinsson, took the young Hallgrímur under his wing, getting him into a good school in Copenhagen. This might not seem of great significance at first sight, but Brynjólfur Sveinsson was later to become Bishop of Skálholt and to be the means of Hallgrímur Pétursson entering into the ministry of the gospel in Iceland.

In Copenhagen the young Hallgrímur studied for four years, and was about to take his final examinations in 1636, when an event occurred that was to affect the whole course of his life. He was appointed to give Christian instruction to a group of former slaves who had been freed on payment of a ransom. These poor individuals had been captured in 1627 when North African pirates attacked the coast of Iceland, who, after

committing every kind of atrocity, carried away many Icelanders to be sold into slavery in Africa. Upon their release in 1636 they were conveyed to Denmark. It was whilst they awaited a passage back to Iceland, that the young Hallgrímur Pétursson was given his charge of teaching them the Christian faith, after their long period of slavery in a Muslim country. Amongst the former slaves was a woman sixteen years his senior, Gudrud Simonardottir. Although Gudrud's husband (as far as they knew) might still have been alive in Iceland, she and Hallgrímur fell in love; this put an abrupt end to his studies. They returned together to Iceland in 1637, and after establishing that Gudrud's husband was in fact dead, they were married.

One is reminded of the scripture, "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13. 15). After deserting his charge caring for the spiritual well-being of the many souls entrusted to him, and not least for an unseemly attachment to a lady who may well have been married, the Lord in His sovereign mercy put Hallgrímur into the fiery trial, that the dross might be purged and sin brought keenly to the conscience. In his poetry, written in later years about the sufferings of the Redeemer, Hallgrímur frequently refers to those sins of his youth that would have brought his soul into eternal ruin, but for the grace of God and the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After their marriage in 1637, Hallgrímur and Gudrud settled at Reykjanes. The hardships that they must have endured can barely be imagined. The houses that most Icelanders lived in were hovels, with a shortage of fuel, food and bare essentials in a very harsh climate. Reykjanes is a particularly forbidding part of Iceland. (Most visitors to Iceland today land there at the International Airport, and many are startled by the awesome desolation of the windswept volcanic landscape that awaits their arrival). Hallgrímur had to turn to casual labour and fishing to provide for his household. These times were ones of deep trial and afflictions, including the loss of several of his children. Yet it was the Lord's purpose that, like the Apostle Peter, Hallgrímur was to become a fisher of men. The Lord deeply taught him and brought him to repentance over his sins.

Hallgrímur was in the case of John Mark, who the Apostle Paul had cause not to take with him, for he had "departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work" (Acts 15. 38). Yet many years later Paul wrote, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. 4. 11). So it was with Hallgrímur. After seven years had passed by, his former mentor in Copenhagen, Brynjólfur Sveinsson called him to the ministry at Hvalsnes (not far from the modern Reykjavík). This was a poor "living" and the position was held in little regard; nevertheless, his ministry was to speak

forth not just across Iceland during his own lifetime, but also for centuries after his death. Since Hallgrímur's disgrace in Copenhagen, Brynjólfur Sveinsson had returned to Iceland and had been made Bishop of Skálholt; but he had never forgotten Hallgrímur in spite of the disappointment he had caused him. Truly the Lord's sovereign purposes were gloriously wrought out through these extraordinary circumstances.

In 1651 Hallgrímur Pétursson removed to be the minister at Saurbaer in Hvalfjörður. Here he was to labour for many years and write his most famous and spiritual poetry, displaying the depth of the Lord's teaching in his ministry. It was in the years 1656 to 1659 that he was led by the Holy Spirit to meditate particularly upon Christ's passion; from this came the "Hymns of the Passion." These consist of fifty meditations in poetry (amounting to over 200 pages), which trace out the events from Christ's entry into Gethsemane until His burial. At first their value was not recognised, and they were not published until 1666. This must have been a great trial to Hallgrímur, having laboured for so long and with such evident anointing of the Holy Spirit. But the Lord's ways are perfect, and at length he saw the fruit of his labours.

We will now turn to consider the "Hymns of the Passion," giving some examples of the sweet and powerful verses that run throughout. The short preface by Hallgrímur Pétursson makes it clear that the hymns are written to the "God-fearing reader." The grand theme is fellowship with the Lord Jesus in His sufferings at Calvary. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. 3. 10). Hallgrímur Pétursson writes about the dying love of the Lord Jesus, which when revealed by the Holy Spirit brings repentance into the believer's heart and spiritual fruit in his life. The "Hymns of the Passion" also express that same earnest desire and exhortation of the Apostle Paul: "It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13. 11, 12).

As we close this article, we will quote the opening verses of the first hymn. Then, later, if the Lord will, we will seek to trace out through a selection of the poetry in the "Hymns of the Passion" the dying love of the Lord from Gethsemane to His death and burial.

Arise, my soul, my heart, my mind,  
And all that I within me find,  
Come, help me, tongue, my Lord to own  
And make His wondrous passion known!

Paul, the apostle, chose this theme;  
To preach it was his task supreme –



The Passion of the Crucified,  
That sinners might be justified.

Since Jesus gave His latest breath  
To save me from eternal death,  
Should not the powers He thus renewed  
Show forth to Him my gratitude?

At last repentance rends my heart,  
How poorly have I played my part;  
What Jesus suffered in my place  
I oft forget, to my disgrace!

My soul, behold the sacrifice  
Which paid our trespass' awful price,  
Restored the rebel sinner's state.  
What joy on this to meditate!

What soothes so well the heart's deep sore,  
As gazing on the pains He bore?  
This sight all sin and stumbling bans,  
The face "more marred than any man's."

Tell me, my soul, where thou canst see  
More clearly God's rich love to thee  
Than in the pains that Jesus bore,  
A hapless rebel to restore?

O, Saviour, let Thy Spirit guide,  
That none but Thee be glorified.  
Let every word and thought expressed  
To every one that reads be blessed.

(Hymn 1, vv. 1-8)

*Footnote:* The information in these articles is mostly taken from the "Hymns of the Passion," published by Hallgríms Church, Reykjavík, 1978. The translation was undertaken by Mr. Arthur Gook (1883-1959), a member of the "Open Brethren," who spent much of his life and ministry in Iceland. The translation is not strictly word-for-word, as the English version of the poetry has been rendered in the same metre as the Icelandic original. Therefore some licence in paraphrasing is understandable and necessary. However, there are some isolated verses which have an Arminian appearance (especially if taken out of context), but a careful comparison with the original Icelandic shows that these are more a feature of the English rendering, rather than the original. Nevertheless, these defects are rare and do not detract from the spiritual profit of the English version.

The author purchased copies of the Icelandic and English versions some years ago in Reykjavík, but to his knowledge the English translation is virtually unobtainable in this country.

*(To be continued)*

## A FEW THOUGHTS FROM JOHN ELIAS

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On first reading the biography of John Elias over twenty-five years ago (see page 152) we jotted down the following thoughts. We believe they are just as relevant today.

We solemnly feel that the vital thing lacking in our churches today is POWER, the power of God. We have been much struck by some of the sayings of that remarkable Welsh preacher, John Elias (1774-1841). One would almost think he was alive today, viewing some of our solemn scenes. John Elias was a man who had seen wonderful days of spiritual prosperity in his youth. Thousands had gathered to hear his preaching, and there had been a marked outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The lives of the people had been eminent in godliness and grace. But at the end of his life he saw a decline. One striking thing that he said just before he died was to this effect: Ministers today say exactly the same things as they did fifty years ago, they use the identical words, but there are not the same effects. The very same things are requested at the prayer meetings as fifty years ago, but the same answers are not received, and so the asking goes on without any solemn concern that the answers are not being received. How true of us! He felt that the godly men of old (naming Daniel Rowland, Howell Harris and Thomas Charles) would not have recognised them as belonging to their family. We might take up the strain and wonder what Gadsby, Warburton and Kershaw would have thought of us. We speak the same language; but where is the power?

John Elias adds:

“We stand in need of those fresh, powerful manifestations from heaven. We are, alas! accustomed to go on with the service of God in human strength; praying, hearing and preaching in that way! We are so lukewarm, without the light and the power of the Spirit! We neither feel nor see others experiencing His powerful operations! It is not often that unbelievers may, when they come to our congregations, cry out, ‘God is of a truth among you.’ *And, alas! there is but little lamentation on that account!*”

We would pray earnestly for *more power in our preaching*. To quote John Elias again:

“Ministers seem often satisfied with having freedom to speak, and seeing many hearing them with attention and delight; but alas! without experiencing the effects of the power promised to attend the ministry of the gospel, the power necessary to produce a saving change in the sinner!.... The ministry neither alarms, terrifies nor disturbs ungodly persons who sit under it.... No experimental, thoughtful Christian can

deny that God has withdrawn Himself from us, as to the particular operations of His Spirit and the especial manifestation of His grace.”

To quote John Elias once more:

“There is but little thirst for the gracious and powerful visitations of God, and also, the prayers for these blessings are weak and cold.... Is there not reason to fear that the prayers of many of us are merely customary and formal, asking many things without feeling the need of them? We seldom inquire whether our prayers are answered; and if not, what hinders them? Do we avoid indulging in those thoughts or practices that hinder and mar our prayers? Are we indifferent as to the aid of the Spirit in prayer? O seek His face – His face; seek Him with *all* your heart! There are many in the church, I believe, who have seen better days, but they sleep heavily now.”

To quote John Elias for the last time:

“It is difficult to judge by the fruits of hundreds of professors that they are godly! There are signs of worldly-mindedness in many of the aged. In others there is a lack of principle in doing righteousness. The young people conform to the world, following its ways and foolish fashion. Others delight in wrangling disputes, and foolish and unprofitable questions. There is a multitude of mixed people lusting after the things of Egypt – hankering after the expressions and the baser things of other denominations and religious parties. They delight in swimming in the stream of the spirit of the age in things political and religious.”

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**John Elias: Life, Letters and Essays**, by Edward Morgan; hardback; 417 pages; price £14.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

John Elias (1774-1841) was one of the eminent preachers of Wales, greatly used by God. Amazing are some of the accounts of his ministry. (The account of how his preaching put a stop to Sabbath-breaking in North Wales appeared last month.)

This is a fine book which first appeared in 1844 and was reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust in 1973. Nothing but good can come of the reappearance of these excellent books; we hope there are more to come. The Apostle John wrote much concerning “love to the brethren,” and surely one aspect of this love is to delight in reading the lives of those who have gone before. “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee,” wrote the psalmist.

A few further comments on John Elias appear on page 226.

**CHRIST THE FORERUNNER***"I go and prepare a place for you" (John 14. 3).*

And art Thou, gracious Master, gone,  
 A mansion to prepare for me?  
 Shall I behold Thee on the throne,  
 And there for ever sit with Thee?  
 Then, let the world approve or blame,  
 I'll triumph in Thy glorious name.

Should I, to gain the world's applause,  
 Or to escape its harmless frown,  
 Refuse to countenance Thy cause,  
 And make Thy people's lot my own,  
 What shame would fill me in that day  
 When Thou Thy glory wilt display!

And what is man, and what his smile?  
 The terror of his anger what?  
 Like grass, he flourishes awhile;  
 But soon his place shall know him not.  
 Through fear of such a one shall I,  
 The Lord of heaven and earth deny?

No! let the world cast out my name,  
 And vile account me if they will:  
 If to confess the Lord be shame,  
 I purpose to be viler still;  
 For Thee, my God, I all resign,  
 Content if I can call Thee mine.

What transport then shall fill my heart,  
 When Thou my worthless name wilt own;  
 When I shall see Thee as Thou art,  
 And know as I myself am known!  
 From sin and fear and sorrow free,  
 My soul shall find its rest in Thee.

T. Kelly (1769-1854)

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There is no greater inheritance than to be a son or daughter of the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6. 18). Gold and silver cannot purchase this; for Jehovah has redeemed His church and people, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19). To have an interest in the covenant love of the Father, the redeeming blood of the Son, and the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit is worth a million of worlds. Without such an interest we must be eternally miserable, and with it eternally happy.

*J.C. Philpot*

## OBITUARY

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**Henry Bouma**, pastor at Old Paths chapel, Choteau, Montana, U.S.A., died on February 19th, 2004, aged 75. The following are his own writings.

It is with great struggle that I write, hoping it may come from an honest heart, humbled by God's grace. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10. 5).

In my childhood (about six or seven years old) I believe God already quickened my heart, opening my ear for His word, making my heart tender before God with a godly fear. This heart-quickenning began first in Sunday school taught by mother and father as we worshipped at home, having no church in Montana at that time. Secondly, the sermons read by my father gave me a desire to return to the Lord. My heart being tender before God, I found how far I was from Him because of sin. Sometimes I would hear a sermon on the necessity of repentance, and at other times how impossible it was for me. Coming more and more to see and understand my sinful state, I tried with my whole heart to keep the law, only finding it holy and my sins against it. Many times while my brothers and sisters were out playing, I was in my bedroom begging God for mercy and love because of my separation from Him because of sin. I found myself falling further and further from Him, more guilty before Him as time went on.

At the age of eleven or twelve, the Lord intensified the curse and condemnation upon sin and my guilt before Him as a heavy burden of my heart. "My soul was sore vexed," seeing sin and guilt and God's wrath upon it. I could find no rest. I sometimes struggled before God as desolate, cursed with hell opened for me, afraid if I went to sleep I would wake up in hell. Some sermons told me to flee to the Lord, while others told how helpless I was to deliver myself. I was at my wits' end. Death became very real to me and seemed even at my door. My nerves became shattered. My cry became, "If only I had a hope and could believe the Lord had begun a good work, He would carry it on."

The devil soon tried to convince me I was in the wrong doctrine. One evening I was pleading to the Lord: "What way is wrong or right? Show me the right way." After long in the night crying to the Lord, struggling against darkness and the power of Satan, crying for forgiveness, I believe the Lord gave me comfort by applying John 17. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." It came very clear and powerful. I took rest in my soul for some time, believing God had begun a good work in me.

At about fourteen to fifteen years of age, my evil heart led me to a backslidden condition. A great struggle began in my soul. I again found myself lost for eternity. This struggle lasted for some time. One afternoon, working in the field I shut off my tractor and cried to the Lord. It was impressed on my heart that when I arrived home I should read Psalm 121.

Coming home that evening, I found that the family had gone somewhere. As I left the pickup and wondered where the family had gone, it came to me again to read Psalm 121. I went upstairs to my bedroom. Kneeling before my bed as a guilty sinner, I asked God whatever was in that Psalm to bless it to my soul. In closing in prayer, the Bible fell open to Psalm 121. Upon reading it, this Psalm

dropped with such sweetness and power, it was too wonderful for me (as in Luke 24. 41: "They yet believed not for joy"). Psalm 121. 7: "He shall preserve thy soul," and verse 8: "from this time forth, and even for evermore," all of which especially gave me great encouragement.

Then later (at about age sixteen or seventeen) a minister spoke, "What do you know of Christ?" It fell with such weight upon my heart. It kept coming to me that life eternal was knowing Him (John 17. 3), and I did not know Him. How guilty I felt that, having asked the way, and the way spoken in that verse with power, I rested outside the way! My struggle became a day and night struggle. I believe I had a touch of Job's complaint: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! I would order my cause before Him," etc. (Job 23. 3, 4) for such a guilty one as I. Then one evening the Lord came with such manifestation of His presence, revealing to me the preciousness of Christ with the word of Ephesians 4. 24: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." I came into the house around 1 a.m. My mother still being up, asked how it was. I remember telling mother I could not doubt what I received that night. I believe it was as in Genesis 8. 9, the dove found preciousness in the ark, fluttering around it, not finding rest for the sole of her foot, yet not in the ark.

At twenty I started farming. The first year was dry. I did not get more harvest than the seed, but I had some good times in my soul. The next year was a good crop, but an early frost damaged the grain so the harvest was not even enough to pay my bills. I had much darkness and struggles against the power of Satan. The third year I had such struggles of heart, I asked the Lord to take everything, to break me (my mistake). We received an early snowstorm which covered all of my crop for the entire winter, thus only getting some of it harvested in the spring. I got drafted in the army in the spring of 1950. With losing all and being drafted in the army I became very rebellious – my prescription did not work. I met my wife in Germany while in the service. After getting out of the service, I got married.

Then the Lord came again, giving me much exercise. After some time of soul exercise, the Lord again visited me with much of His presence and Christ became very precious to my soul. At this time Choteau became a congregation (Netherland Reformed Congregation), and the people voted me to read sermons and lead in prayer with my father.

In 1959, the Lord blessed me with much nearness. I said to my wife, "This is so extraordinary, that the Lord is maybe preparing to take me away." One evening, my wife being in bed, the Lord applied Romans 10. 14, 15 very powerfully: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" I had a great exercise, believing the Lord had called me to the ministry. I told it to one of our ministers. He felt that it was clear but counselled me not to run ahead of the Lord because it did not mean that God was sending me yet. My flesh did not want to go and I did not feel worthy of it.

For the next four years, I became very involved in business, yet still leading in the church. In 1964, my family and I moved to Washington. There, being

under a very godly minister and being taught many things, the Lord led me deep in my foul and polluted state. I was under heavy struggle against my hard heart and against the power of darkness for about a year, and Satan attacked me even to the putting away of my life. One evening, while driving and calling to God for mercy to break my dark state, Satan tempted me at a curve on the road on the edge of a river in the mountains to go straight ahead. If anybody found me it would have been an accident. Speeding up to approximately sixty miles per hour, I came to the curve and cried, "Lord, help me!" I squealed my tyres around the corner (by the grace of God) and Satan was put to flight and the Lord again blessedly returned.

Later, I again became very exercised with the polluted state of my sins, born in sin, a stench in God's holy nostrils. One afternoon, John 4. 29 spoke powerfully to my soul: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" I saw a wonderful pleading ground, looking to God in Christ for forgiveness of sin. "Who told me all things that ever I did." I believe it was then that I could behold a holy God through Christ, and God could look upon a vile sinner like me in Christ. I saw what He had done to pay for my filth, carrying my sins to Calvary, and I had faith given to believe that He was in my stead, granting forgiveness for such a wretch like me. "Amazing grace." I also received very powerfully Psalm 40. 1, 2: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

After a couple months I was reading and praying and then went to bed about 12.30. I woke up at 2 a.m. with the words of Ephesians 5. 14: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." I got out of bed and went into my living room, where the Lord came with such a blessed visit, giving me firmly to believe that my sins were pardoned and blotted out. The blessed Redeemer redeemed me back to God. I believe that night He gave me to see that I was accepted in the Beloved. What a night that was, I hope I shall never forget. The next morning the minister had that verse for his text, with much sweetness to my soul.

A few months later there was a bad disease in the neighbourhood among the cattle. I had around one hundred head at that time. As I was feeding them, I looked at them, saying to the Lord, "These are Thy cattle; the cattle upon a thousand hills belong to Thee," so He could take them if He wished, and I would not vaccinate them. Just then the words came to me, "Feed My sheep"; I was feeding His cattle.

I was very close with our minister and experienced many blessed times. In 1972 the Lord led my family and I back to Montana. When arriving in Montana, the church voted me to lead the church in Choteau, Montana. At this time I became very exercised that it was now the time I must go forward in the ministry, believing the Lord was now sending me. I did not yet tell anything of it to the church. Being very exercised of my inability to preach, I began fighting much against it, the great responsibility causing much fear in my heart.

At this time a missionary (Gerrit Kuijt) came to Choteau on his vacation and preached for us. He did not know my exercise concerning my call. I asked God if I could hear from the pulpit to direct my heart in it in a clear way, if it was His

will. Pastor Kuijt gave for his text Acts 13. 2: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." He went on to say that Saul was called in Acts 9 and some time later as in Acts 13. 2 (his text), he said, "Now was the time." Much struggle was going on in my heart, believing I must, yet not having the courage to go forward. Having this struggle about a month, another minister came to Choteau. I asked the Lord if it would not tempt Him to hear it again from this pulpit. I laid it before Him: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." The minister spoke that evening from Matthew 10 of Christ sending out His disciples to preach. He stressed on verse 16: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Pastor Kuijt first preached from Acts 13. 2 – now is the time – and Matthew 10. 16 tells how God sends them. With this, I felt I must go forward to the church, yet felt so incapable – no Bible College, etc. I said, "Lord, I cannot do this great task"; as in Jeremiah 1. 6, "I cannot speak: for I am a child."

After a week with this kind of struggle, Ezekiel 29. 21 came with such power: "I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the Lord." At the end of that week, a minister from the East stopped to give us an evening service. I asked the Lord if I would not be tempting Him if I may hear the third witness. "In the mouth of two or three," etc. Reminding me of Abraham in Genesis 18. 32: "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once." When the minister started preaching, he gave his text from Ezekiel 29. 21: "I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them, and they shall know that I am the Lord." I then approached the church with my calling as here explained.

Having difficulties at this time with the Netherland Reformed Congregation denomination, the church of Choteau called me with a unanimous call. One thing of great importance after beginning to preach and leaving the denomination: a friend stated to me in the afternoon while visiting at the West Coast, "I predict God will stop you," giving me a great test of faith. That evening I called home to see how everything was getting along. My son stated, "Dad, a strange thing happened this afternoon. A hail storm hailed out all of the grain of every neighbour all around us, and never touched our grain." I felt God mightily showed me that He was not against me, and I was not in His disfavour in what we were doing.

The Lord led me into immersion of believers. After much struggle, the church made the transition and formed a new church government. We applied to Gospel Standard Strict Baptists of England and Michigan, U.S.A. After some time we were accepted, bringing us to this day. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." I believe the Lord promised in the beginning of my ministry, "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight" (Isa. 45. 2). He has, under many trials. God has been faithful even though I am unfaithful.

**Joseph Azor Short**, member of the church at Chippenham, and for many years a faithful minister of the gospel, died on June 14th, 2004, aged 91.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
AUGUST 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE

*"From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3. 15).*

*"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1. 5).*

Who can estimate the influence of a godly mother?

Here we have Timothy, a young man, a young minister, an eminent minister, and Paul speaks of four great influences on him when a child – his mother, his grandmother, the holy Scriptures, and especially the Holy Spirit.

"Thy mother Eunice." Eunice is one of the well-known mothers of Scripture. We think of Sarah; we think of Hannah; we think of Elisabeth; we think especially of Mary. And then Eunice. The influence of godly mothers in the history of the church of God has been immense – their prayers, their example, their teaching: those three things, not separated from one another. Their prayers, but what are prayers without a gracious example? And then the teaching. What are prayers, what is an example, if a mother never instructs, never teaches from the Scriptures, never says *Yes*, never says *No*, never says what is right, never says what is wrong? So the influence of godly mothers has been immense. Was it not the Jesuits who said that if they could have a child till he was seven years old, anyone else could have him afterwards?

"Thy mother Eunice." Eunice had problems, because she had an ungodly husband; not just an unbeliever: he was a heathen. Why ever this Jewess broke the holy law of God and married this ungodly Greek, we do not know. So she was at a disadvantage: she did not have the help and support of a godly husband. We know there were problems and difficulties, because the rite of circumcision had been neglected (Acts 16. 3). But with all these terrible disadvantages, a husband with no sympathy, she graciously brought up the little boy she loved. She prayed over him. She instructed him. "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures."

That is a beautiful word: "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith

that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice ....” So Eunice possessed “unfeigned faith.” What is “unfeigned faith”? Well, we can *feign* faith. We can come to chapel nicely dressed, walking solemnly with our heads bowed – but we are only *feigning* faith. We can meet with people outside, in the streets, those with whom we work, and they know we are Strict Baptists and we go to chapel. But we may be only *feigning* faith. But one thing is clear. We cannot feign faith in front of our children! If we try to feign faith before our children, they will be the first to see through us. Even little children can discern hypocrisy. Even little children can discern inconsistency. They know whether our religion is real or just pretended; whether it means everything to us or nothing to us.

If we are ever going to do our children any good, it must be “unfeigned faith.” That is the work of the Holy Spirit because *feigned* faith, artificial faith, pretended faith will neither do us or our children any good.

“From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures.” I fear that our little children are brought up too much on nonsense books. Perhaps there is nothing evil about them. But Eunice did not bring up Timothy on books like that. “From a child”: we understand the word here means *from an infant* she brought him up on the holy Scriptures. She taught him that there was a God and what God requires in His holy law. She taught him he was a sinner. She taught him there was a judgment. She set him an example and told him where he was wrong. We are not told whether at the time she had come into the light of the knowledge of Christ or whether it was still only the light of a Jewess who feared God. (In Acts 16 she is spoken of as a Christian believer, but this was when Timothy was grown up.) So according to her light, she taught Timothy the holy Scriptures.

Outside Scripture the most famous mother is undoubtedly Monica (whom the Roman Catholics call St. Monica). Like Eunice she too went astray and married a heathen. She had one son she dearly loved, a brilliant boy, one of the greatest intellects the world has known. But he followed the example of his father and became a wicked, immoral boy and man. His mother wrestled in prayer for him until her heart was almost broken, and in the end she went to see a godly man named Ambrose (usually known as St. Ambrose). After listening to her he replied, “I do not think it possible that the child of such prayers can ever perish!” He proved right. Monica’s son was Augustine, one of the greatest instruments for good the church of God has ever had. Monica said, “My pains for his second birth were more intense than the pains of his first birth.”

Many instances might be given. We think of Philip Doddridge as

a little boy sitting on his mother's knee while she spoke of the biblical stories depicted on the tiles by the fireplace. And God was sowing the seed in the little boy's heart.

But then there was Lois. "Thy grandmother Lois." We wonder what she thought when her daughter married a heathen. But she must have been a help to her daughter and a blessing to her grandson. Godly grandmothers can have a wonderful influence by their prayers, their teaching and their example.

We well remember our old grandmother, though we were only seven when she died. Her example. A young cousin seemed to be dying. She and her husband stayed up all night praying, and before morning light she knocked at the door where the little boy lived, saying, "That child can't die!" Then again, an influential lady came unexpectedly to tea one day. It was prayer meeting night. After tea grandmother said, "It is our prayer meeting. You are welcome to come with us." The lady replied, "It will be my pleasure to do so." Then we remember how she died – not well enough to go to chapel, but requesting hymn 477 be sung and Revelation 21 read, and dying in the chair before the family returned. How in childhood days, when thinking of her, that word resounded: "Lived a life of faith and prayer."

We understand that every Lord's day in chapel, she looked round on all her children and grandchildren, and feelingly said, "'We too' – every one of them, Lord; do not leave one out; not me only, Lord –

*'We too, amid the sacred throng,  
Low at His feet would fall,  
Join in the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all.'*"

"Thy grandmother Lois." Grandmothers have a wonderful privilege in all their contacts with their grandchildren. May our grandmothers be Loises. Be willing to speak to your grandchildren, to encourage them, to reprove them, to take an interest in them, to pray for them, to set them an example.

It is a remarkable thing that the old grandmother's name is recorded in Scripture. She was just a private Christian – nobody in the eyes of the world. It would never have entered her head that two thousand years later people would still be reading and hearing about her – when Julius Caesar and Augustus and Hercules and Alexander the Great are almost forgotten.

It is an interesting thing that Timothy's real coming to faith in Jesus was not through his mother Eunice, nor his grandmother Lois, but through the Apostle Paul. Paul emphasises that Timothy was his son in the faith. That means that he was the one who was blessed by the Spirit of God to bring Timothy to a real, vital knowledge of the truth. That

honour was given to him. Whether Lois ever lived to see it we do not know.

But the seeds of grace were there in Timothy's heart, planted by the Spirit of God from childhood days. So there is real encouragement here for godly mothers and grandmothers and Sabbath school teachers. Eunice and Lois did the sowing, and then later Paul reaped the harvest.

"In due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6. 9).

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccl. 11. 1).

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### BELIEVERS PARDONED, YET CHASTISED

*Sermon preached by John Hill (1711-1746)*

*John Hill was an Independent minister in London. Born in Hitchin, he joined the Independent church there (in Back Street, now Queen Street). Dying on a visit to Hitchin at the early age of 34, he was buried in the graveyard adjoining the Independent meeting house (no longer there).*

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**Text:** "Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions" (Psa. 99. 8).

The design of this Psalm is to beget in His saints an awful sense and reverence of God's holiness in all their worship and their walk before Him. His name is holy (verse. 3), His ordinances holy (verse 5), His dispensations holy (verse 9). Carnal boldness, in a customary performance of holy duties, without regard had to the majesty and glory of God and to our own vileness and distance from Him, can never be warranted by covenant relation. God looks upon sin with another eye than men do; nor will He spare it, though it be found in His choicest favourites and friends. Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name, must be called to account when they dare turn aside from God. They called upon the Lord (verse 6). They kept His testimonies and the ordinances which He gave them (verse 7). These are evidences of their faith and of their holiness; but they had some inventions, some works or deeds of their own, for which they must smart, though a pardoned and beloved people.

Dr. Hammond and some others think these words refer to the children of Israel, to whom God was gracious or propitious for Moses' sake: "Thou answeredst them," i.e. Moses and Aaron; and forgavest (not *to them*, as it is in the *Hebrew*, but) *for them*, i.e. at their entreaty and interposition; because they stood in the gap, to turn away God's anger from a sinning nation; which is all one as to pardon for their sakes. This

seems to be a going off from the main intendment of the Psalm; which is to show, as in a glass, what are the dispensations of God's providence towards His own people, who are, as to the general course of their lives, faithful and obedient, though in some things they come short. Towards their persons God acts in a way of goodness and grace; answering their prayers, and forgiving their trespasses: to their sins, in a way of holy justice and severity.

"Though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions." The word is, *practices*, which are justly called here and elsewhere, *inventions*, because they are of man's own contrivance and seeking out; they are not commanded of God, but devised of man. All sins are of a man's own finding out, be they acts of omission or commission, because hereby he seeks happiness in another way than God has appointed. It must be confessed, that the word *vengeance* sounds harsh, when at the same time we hear of *pardon*: but it must be understood with a mixture of favour. Whatever the vengeance be, it cannot hinder or lessen the blessing of forgiveness; sentence of pardon once passed will never be revoked. God neither punishes to the extremity of the desert of any sin, nor does He bear an hatred to the person sinning: "Thine anger is turned away" (Isa. 12. 1).

The only meaning of the expression is this: God's dispensations towards His people carry a great deal of terror in them. They are so awful and affecting, that bystanders see nothing in them but displeasure and wrath. Yea, believers themselves, were they not on other grounds assured of pardon, could think no otherwise than that God was coming out against them to execute judgment. Moses, after all his desires and entreaties, must die in the wilderness, and not go over Jordan, because he sanctified not the Lord at the waters of strife. Samuel was partial towards his sons, whom he appointed judges over Israel, so that to him the people were obliged to sue for a king to reign over them in his lifetime. Aaron, the saint of the Lord, joined with Miriam in murmuring and unbelief; and for fear of the people committed a trespass against God. God took vengeance on the sin, though He forgave their persons. In the words there are three propositions.

*Proposition 1.* Those who are most faithful to God have some sins and misdoings attending them, which need His pardon.

*Proposition 2.* Notwithstanding the sins of His people, God is a God of grace towards them; hearing their requests, and forgiving them, when they pray unto Him.

*Proposition 3.* Although God answers and forgives His people, He may see it necessary to take vengeance on their inventions: publicly to testify His displeasure against those sins, which yet unto themselves He has forgiven.

The method I shall take in handling the words shall be (as God shall help):

I. To show what are those inventions of His own people for which He takes vengeance.

II. Why it is necessary for God to take vengeance on their inventions, whose persons He accepts, and whose prayers He hears.

III. Whence it is that God answers and forgives His people with a *notwithstanding* to all their sins, and to that displeasure which He is obliged to discover against sin. And so apply.

I. What are those inventions, or evil practices, of His own people, of which God takes vengeance? I answer, All sin is an offence to God; He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." Whatever is contrary to His will is provoking to His jealousy; but there are some sins in His own people which He shows a particular displeasure against. Such are:

1. Those sins which concern the *worship and the order of His house*. This was Aaron's sin, for which God was angry with him, to have destroyed him, had not Moses made intercession for him (Deut. 9. 20). "A jealous God," is the title God first gave Himself with respect to instituted worship (Ex. 20. 5). Jealousy works indignation and revenge; it is the rage of a man, arising from an apprehension or fear lest any other should possess that which they think peculiar to themselves. God can bear no partner with Himself, in prescribing what shall be the outward form of worship, or with what affections, and with the exercise of what graces, He will be worshipped. Uzzah does but put forth his hand to touch the ark of God, and perishes in his error (2 Sam. 6. 6).

Our God will be worshipped after the manner He has appointed. Holy things require holy frames. If we are not graceless in our persons, yet if we are devoid of reverence and godly fear in our duties, God will deal with us as with them that worship Him after their own hearts' devisings. "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 29). No combustible matter can stand before devouring fire. "The fear of the Lord" is ever an attendant of the "comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9. 31). Alas! what have the best of saints to fear, should God punish us in this case as our inventions deserve? With what wanderings, misapprehensions, unspirituality and presumption do we often wait upon God! How is the closet, how are public ordinances, filled therewith!

2. A secret *neglect of the honour and glory of God* in our behaviour towards men, is another of those sins which God visits in His own people. It will be hard to find wherein Moses' failing was, for the sake whereof he could not see the finishing of his work in leading the children of Israel into Canaan, if it lay not in this (Num. 20. 10): "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" This God calls (verse 12) a not sanctifying of Him in the eyes of the children of Israel. There

was a sinful distrust, and a secret uncertainty in his and Aaron's breast, whether water should issue forth out of the rock or not at their speaking. Dr. Lightfoot's notion of their unbelief is that they doubted whether now at last, when the forty years were expired, they should enter Canaan; and whether they must not, for the murmuring of the people, be condemned to another like fatigue, because a new rock was now opened for their supply, which they took for an indication of their longer stay; therefore God punishes them by keeping them out of the land, when the rest of the people entered in.

As for others, God deals with them visibly according to their outward actions; but in His own He takes notice of the springs of their actings: of their inward fears, their jealousies, their unbelief, their self-seekings, how utterly contradictory are these to the many sweet manifestations which God has given them of His wisdom, power, love and grace in a time of need. God has secret provocations from His choicest saints, which He will not pass over without some tokens of His fatherly displeasure, and the grief of His Holy Spirit thereby.

God's glory is very dear to Him; it is the end of all His purposes, and of all His dispensations. He will be honoured, as well as loved, as a Father. "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is Mine honour? If I be a master, where is My fear?" (Mal. 1. 6). In every duty believers perform, love should be the principle of their obedience; herein they are sons. Yet should they look upon themselves as servants in respect of strict obligation to duty, and fear to offend. Love and fear should season every duty; the Lord is high, though He has a regard to the lowly. Thou art great, therefore greatly to be feared (Psa. 89. 7). Set God before thee in all thou doest, and in all thou desirest. We are afraid in this and the other duty and dispensation, not that God's name, but ours, shall suffer reproach. It is a very great attainment, and what few arrive at, to say continually, Let God be magnified.

3. *Unhumbledness for the sins of an unregenerate estate* is another of those misdoings, for which God afflicts His people. When with Jeshurun we wax fat, we are ready to kick (Deut. 32. 15), to take pride in our graces, instead of blushing and being ashamed because of our sins.

Corruption within takes occasion from our very mercies to make us heedless, proud and unthankful. Prosperity makes forgetful. It is said of Uzziah, "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (2 Chron. 26. 16). David prays, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions," and flies to sovereign mercy for pardon, even when he can call God the God of his salvation (Psa. 25. 5, 6, 7). Any sin, unsearched to the bottom, be it before conversion or since, will spoil all a believer's consolation. Hence Job complains against himself

(chapter 13. 26): “Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.” The sins of youth will be the sufferings of age, if they are not brought forth often and confessed before God. A gracious soul hath then the sweetest joys, when it hath the deepest wounds. Believer, ever art thou most humbled, when thou art most exalted. Sin and grace, under all thy sufferings and in all thy joys, should never be out of thine eye. God’s covenant takes away the guilt of every sin, but not the remembrance of any. God will take vengeance for an unhumbledness on the account of the sins of unregeneracy.

4. Another sin, for which God visits His people in a way of outward displeasure is *partiality toward other men’s sins*. Samuel was faithful to God himself, but too indulgent and favourable to his sons (1 Sam. 8. 3): “His sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.” As the administration of justice was in his hands, he had the same power to turn out as he had to put in. It becomes such as profess godliness themselves to wink at no sin in others. Jealousy for God’s holy and reverend name should overcome all respects, which are easily shown to the persons and circumstances of men. It is Levi’s commendation, when acting in the cause of his God (Deut. 33. 9), that he “said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children.” God takes notice of every bow to Rimmon, and every knee to Baal. Not to reprove sin faithfully and conscientiously, as for God, is to have fellowship with it; and sooner or later, in a way little thought of by us, God will take vengeance on such inventions. But so much for our first general.

II. Why does God take vengeance of His people’s inventions, though He accepts their persons and hears their prayers? I answer:

1. That He may *prevent the abuse of His covenant mercy*. The price of redemption and pardon cost God dear, and He will not have the blessing of it esteemed common. There is, in the best of saints, that corruption of nature which without the power of divine restraints would discover itself in the worst of sins. Samson went out to shake himself as at other times, relying upon God’s promise, when he had profaned His ordinance. Peter presumed upon safety from temptation, though he went into the way of temptation. The tenor of the promise is, He will “keep thee in all thy ways.”

Abounding grace has given occasion to some to have light thoughts of great sins. That freedom of access which believers have to God, through Christ, has not always been kept from degenerating into a presumptuous boldness. Therefore God so deals with His own people, as that their own wickedness shall correct them, and their own backslidings shall reprove them (Jer. 2. 19). Samson falls into the hands



of his enemies. Peter, instead of owning Him to the death, denies his Lord with oaths and cursing. If we are conformists to the world, we must take the world's lot. The punishment shall show what the sin is for which God takes vengeance. A holy covenant obliges to a holy conversation. If the people of God, like the men of Bethshemesh, look into the ark with an unwarrantable curiosity and presumption, they must pay for their rashness. Vengeance is taken of the inventions of God's own people, to prevent the abuse of covenant mercy.

2. To discover the *holiness of God's nature and of His law*. "The Lord our God is holy" (verse 9). There are some things becoming God, viz. that He secures His own glory in all that He does; that He dishonours not Himself in any of His acts of mercy; that what He professes Himself to be, He makes appear, that He is a God of righteousness, holiness and truth, before the whole world. Men see our sins, but they see not our humiliations, repentings, pardon. They see God dishonoured and His law broken; but how this law is repaired by the obedience of Christ, or how the saints have interest in it, they see not. Therefore God testifies His displeasure against the sin, which is public, although He forgives the person, which is a more private and secret thing. Reproach must be rolled off from His own name, though it abides upon thine. Hence says God to David (2 Sam. 12. 14), "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." God's awful dispensations, though to the saints they are no other than fatherly chastisements, are a public vindication of His holiness and justice before the world. By the vengeance which God takes of His people's inventions, He discovers the holiness of His own nature and law.

3. This He does, to beget *watchfulness and circumspection* in all their walk before Him. Sins which God condemns in the life lead to a narrow search and examination into the sins of the heart. Job was falsely accused of his friends, but righteously corrected of God: "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore Thou contendest with me" (Job 10. 2). The very life of a believer lies in heart-holiness, and in an aim after conformity to Christ in every duty. "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" (Psa. 19. 12). Those vain imaginations of the mind, such as no eye sees but God's, and those corrupt desires and affections which proceed from thence, pressing upon the will continually, resolutely: these are the things which cast the soul into a dead, lifeless, carnal, loose frame. By these God is grieved. And here begins a believer's humiliation, watchfulness and cares. If thou canst but walk humbly with God, no doubt but thou wilt walk honourably before men. God punishes sin in thee, some sins unknown to others, that He may bring thee into a closer walk, and more humbled frame and fellowship with Himself.

4. God takes vengeance of the inventions of His own people, for the *reproof and warning of impenitent sinners*. “If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” (Luke 23. 31). Cannot God endure provocations in His own, without testifying His displeasure against them? Surely, then, impenitent, hardened sinners shall not go always unpunished. If the inventions of His own people call for stripes, what wounds will fall upon the head of the wicked? If the son be scourged, the servant shall be turned out of doors. God’s patience and longsuffering shall not last alway. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way.”

III. I am to show whence it is that God answers and forgives His people, with a *notwithstanding* to all their sins, and to that displeasure which He is obliged to discover against sin.

1. From the *relation* God stands in unto them; they are His own. “Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God.” He loved and chose them from eternity; and if there be any blessing more than ordinarily sweet, it shall be bestowed on the men of His love. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant.” If He rebukes, He loves. The covenant subsists firm and invariable, when the dispensations of it change. Clouds and darkness may be before Him now, but they will blow over in a little time. Thy God puts a sweetness into every dispensation. The everlasting covenant runs through life, and through death. He hath said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” God will suffer thee to talk with Him of His judgments, though He does not remove them; ply the throne of grace, and He will reconcile thee to them. Whatever becomes of himself, every believer is jealous of God’s honour. “I will,” says the church, “bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me” (Mic. 7. 9). Moses was answered in his prayer, though not in the very blessing he asked for; God took him to heaven, instead of leading him into Canaan. Our God has better things for us than the utmost of what we can ask or desire here. Communion, near and intimate fellowship with God, will make amends for the loss of any mercy. God will answer and forgive His people, though He takes vengeance on their inventions, because of the relation He stands in unto them as their covenant God.

2. Because He hath received a *ransom* for them from the hands of their Surety, their persons and their mercies are bought out of the hands of justice; and if a price be paid, it is unjust to detain the goods for which it is paid. God corrects His people, not for the satisfaction of His justice: the chastisement of our peace was upon Another, by way of satisfaction. Christ hath borne the burden of every sin. All God’s corrections are for the display of His holiness, and that we might be purified and made holy

thereby. Moses, Aaron and Samuel were a people near unto God, even when corrected and reproved by Him. Love to a believer's person is well consistent with indignation against his sin. So long as there is virtue in Christ's blood, and acceptableness in His Person and work, as our Advocate before the throne, so long fear not, soul, the continuance of God's favour as a pardoning and answering God. There is worthiness in the Lamb that was slain, though there be new guilt and defilement from day to day in thee. God has found and accepted a ransom, therefore He will hear and pardon thee. Christ has more to say for His saints before God than all their sins have to say against them.

3. God answers and forgives His people because it is one of *His titles* that so He will do. "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come" (Psa. 65. 2). And (Neh. 9. 17): "Thou art a God ready to pardon." Though He be a just God, He is also a Saviour. One part of God's name casts no reproach or dishonour upon another. If He prepares the heart to seek, will He not prepare His ear to hear? When He visits most sorely, on the account of sin, His visitations are all in mercy. Love lies at the bottom of all His dealings with His saints, and there are comforts prepared for the most afflicted state any of His saints can be in; God will not be called the God of all comfort in vain. If Moses dies upon the mount, he shall have comfort in dying and honour afterwards. Some render those words which speak of his departure: "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, upon the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 34. 5), intimating that when God had showed him all the good land, his holy soul was resigned to God's will, who with a kiss of love separated the soul from the body, and he departed. The light of God's countenance and the love of His heart are two things; one may be wanting, but He never denies the other.

4. Should God mark iniquities, and not forgive sin, there could be none among the children of men to serve Him: "All we like sheep have gone astray." There is dross mixed with our finest gold, and some weeds to spoil the smell of our sweetest flowers. The Canaanite is left in the land to prove, but not to destroy us. There is corruption in the best of His saints to humble, but not to condemn. Grace and mercy are promised for a time of need. God would never be spoken of in our text as answering His saints, were it not that they might from hence have encouragement to seek it. "Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God."

Some uses shall close all.

USE 1. Shall we marvel or murmur at any of our trials? Look inward, and you may see the cause of all. If sin be regarded in the heart, vengeance must follow in the life. God will not have Agag spared, though he be clothed delicately. *Secret* provocations His eye is most upon. Are our hearts so full of them? our duties and dependencies so

full? and yet shall we wonder when God visits for them? Consider who God is, and what sin deserves; then whatever be thy affliction, distress or sorrow, thou wilt be dumb and not open thy mouth, because God hath done it.

USE 2. Does God answer and forgive, and yet take vengeance? Labour to have your affections suited to providential dispensations. The view of mercy is sweet. In prosperity rejoice; the appearance of judgment strikes terror. "Let them praise Thy great and terrible name; for it is holy" (verse 3). This should lead to deep humiliation and mourning. It is a beautiful frame of soul to be in, when all the affections are in exercise at once; a side wind fills all the sails; that providence which does this, for the *present*, may appear *awful*, but it will ever be found, in the *end*, to be *advantageous*. Thou speakest, as David did, *in haste*, when thou concludest that all these things are against thee. Labour for answerableness of spirit to providential dispensations.

USE 3. Bless God for Christ, whatever mercy thou wantest. There would be no pardon without a sacrifice; no person accepted, but through Christ's righteousness imputed; no pardon given, but what comes through His hands; no prayer heard, save in the virtue of His intercession.

USE 4. Admire God's patience. So many inventions, and no more vengeance; O! amazing. It is well for us God does not take vengeance for every sin. Set God as an holy God before thee daily. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

USE 5. Woe to such as were never interested in God's forgiveness. "The wages of sin is death." Without interest in God, as a covenant God, there can be no pardon, no hope; no heaven. This is by Christ, in whom whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

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## THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S LOVE

*By James Durham (1622-1658)*

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Seeing our Lord Jesus was put to such sore soul-travail, surely it lays a great obligation on them for whom He suffered to endeavour to make some suitable and grateful return. Seeing therefore we are so much in His debt, we should give Him a friendly meeting in these four, which this calls for: 1. It calls for love to Him that vented such love to us. 2. It calls for faith that, seeing He gave such a price for us, we should trust our souls to Him. 3. It calls for holiness and obedience, even living to Him, and to the glorifying of Him that has bought us. This argument will surely weigh with you, who on solid grounds lay claim to His purchase. 4. It calls for thankfulness and praise, in magnifying His grace and love, that has so loved us. And are not all these very suitable and becoming,

that sinners should love Him; and that those who love Him not should be *Anathema Maranatha*, accursed to the coming of the Lord; that sinners should believe on Him and to be obedient to Him and thankful?

If you believe this truth, this comfortable and soul-ravishing truth, let me exhort you, and be exhorted and prevailed with, to love our Lord Jesus Christ, and to give Him that answerable respect, meeting and welcome that becomes [is fitting]; if we may plead for anything from you, surely we may plead for this. If it be true that He engaged in such a bargain in which, if He had not engaged Himself, we had inevitably gone to the pit, and if He has actually paid the price which He undertook to pay, let your consciences speak if it should not melt the hearts of such with love to Him, to whom the benefit of this is given. And if you have the faith of the doctrine, can you deny but this obligation is upon you?

Look in on your consciences and hearts and see if you be able to shift it. And if you had suitable palaces for entertaining Him in, if you be not bound to open to Him and give Him patent entry to them. And if your eyes were fountains of tears, if it would not become you to wash His feet with them and to wipe them with the hair of your head (Luke 7. 38)? Would to God that you were under the suitable impression of this, and that you were by the gospel, and the privileges you have by it, constrained to love the Lord Jesus Christ!

It may be some of you think, "If this be all that is called for, He shall not lack it." We assure you it *is* called for. "My son," He says, "give Me thine heart" (Prov. 23. 26). But we are afraid that though you will confess that this is your duty, and that you should have love to Him, yet the most part of you lack it. For when we speak of love to Christ, it is not an apprehension of love that will be taken for love; but such love as has these qualifications:

*First*, if Christ be loved, He will be esteemed of as the most excellent Thing, or Person, the most excellent Bargain, the most kind Friend, the most loving Husband, and as the most full, complete and absolute sufficiency, or sufficient One; as He is spoken of, and esteemed of by the spouse (Song 5. 15, 16): "His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely." The heart is brought to esteem of Him, and to prefer Him beyond all that it can set the eye upon.

It were indeed somewhat if you were brought under a conviction and thorough persuasion of this, that Jesus Christ is the incomparably best Thing to which a sinner can have a title. But alas! "He is despised and rejected of men," though He be the "Chiefest among ten thousand" (Song 5. 10); and men play the fool egregiously in preferring other things to Him, who is infinitely worthy of the preference unto and of the pre-eminency above them all.

A *second* evidence of love is the heart's longing and panting after the enjoyment of Him, and after the enjoyment of Him as the most excellent Object, quite surpassing all other objects. And when the thirst and longing of the soul is so carried out after Him, as it cannot be satisfied without Him, which is to be "sick of love" for Him (as it is, Song 2. 5 and 5. 8), to be in a manner swooning and fainting because of His absence and even longing (to speak so) for His presence; to have the bent of the soul's designs and desires towards making of that glorious conquest, whereof the apostle speaks (Phil. 3. 8), even to count all things to be but loss and dung; and to cast all things as it were overboard, to win Him and to be found in Him; to count of Him as the Pearl of great price, and as the treasure hid in the field (Matt. 13. 44, 46), for the sake of which you would strip yourselves to the skin and sell all that you have to buy it.

*Thirdly*, this love to Christ Jesus has in it a satisfying delight in Him, and the soul's blessing of itself in Him, its contenting itself with Him, and its rejoicing in that sweetness which it finds to be in Him, as being the only attractive Object that has such a loveliness in it as breeds satisfaction; which satisfaction begets a kindly warmth in the heart to Him again, even till the soul be put in a holy love or flame of love to Him. More of this love would make Christ and the gospel much more sweet, and would make every one of these words that expresses His love in His sufferings to be like marrow and fatness, and would also make the promises to be like breasts full of consolation. It would withal cause that there would not be such mistakes of Christ, nor such gaddings and whorings from Him, and such preferring of idols to Him, as alas there are! Where this love is not, there can be no other thing that will be acceptable.

We shall say no more for the time, but only this, that we do appeal to your consciences, if there be not here an excellent and nonesuch [incomparable] Object of love, and if there be not here much reason to be in love with that Object? A very heathen will return love for love; and should not we much more do so in this case? God Himself kindle this love in us, and make us know more the great advantages of it.

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O sweet Jesus, pierce the marrow of my soul with the shafts of Thy love, that it may burn and melt, and languish with the only desire of Thee. Let it always desire Thee, and seek Thee, and find Thee, and sweetly rest in Thee. Be Thou in all my thoughts, in all my words, in all my actions; that both my thoughts, my words and my actions being sanctified by Thee here, I may be glorified by Thee hereafter.

*Francis Quarles*

## ALL IN JESUS

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Very dear Mrs. E. M.,

I cannot but again enquire, Is it still well with you? Has Israel's God proved faithful in your time of need? Have you had strength as your day? and can you now say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted"? The cloud of affliction or trial often looks very dark at first. "Men see not the bright light which is in the clouds, but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them" (Job 37. 21). The Holy Spirit by His divine exercising comes with the affliction, and then is discovered some light of instruction, and the dark cloud is found to be full of mercy, and "breaks with blessings on your head." Earnestly do I hope this is the case with yourself and your husband. I desire mercies of the God of heaven for you, my beloved, that when you come to the tribulated waters, they may either divide, that you may go over dryshod, or if they overflow, that their depths may only prove to you the deeps of God's mercy, faithfulness and love. May you feel the Rock firm beneath while the billows roll over your head, and may you be brought up again with a new song of praise, even "salvation is of the Lord."

Our God is a Refuge for us. Our Rock will stand the storm. Our Guide may be safely trusted, though we see neither sun nor stars for many days. He sees us when we can see nothing but gloom and cannot see Him at all, when we have not a glimpse of the King in His beauty. He hears us when we cannot hear Him, for He seems to answer us never a word, but many an answer of peace is prepared while the poor petitioner is suffered long to go on pleading in sackcloth and ashes. (Dan. 9. 3, 23). Our God is wonderful in His way of working, and, for myself, I must confess that He generally deals very contrary to my expectations, but "He doeth all things well." It is,

"Sweet to lie passive in His hands,  
And know no will but His."

I have proved my own strength to be perfect weakness, my own wisdom consummate folly, and my own righteousness filthy rags. What a mercy, then, to be stripped of all, and have Christ for wisdom, Christ for righteousness, Christ for strength, Christ for purity, Christ for power, Christ for beauty, Christ for holiness, Christ for acceptance above, Christ for our daily walk, Christ for rest, Christ for food, Christ for medicine, yea, to know nothing among men or before God, but Jesus crucified and glorified!

But say you, I cannot make so free with Christ, I dare not claim Him for everything. Perhaps not, and we read that Ruth felt no claim upon the mighty man of wealth when she fell at his feet to thank him for a few

handfuls of corn (Ruth 2. 10) and a morsel at mealtime. But there was the secret of relationship behind, and she afterwards found a claim and made it, nor did she do so in vain, for she obtained not only her hands full and her veil full, but also the lord of the harvest himself. I trust ere long you will be thus led on by the Spirit from gleaning ears of mercy or pardon, to say, "Spread Thy skirt over me, for Thou art a near kinsman." He will then acknowledge relationship, and give you that freedom of love which may now appear almost presumptuous, though indeed it is not so. Where Christ is thus revealed in the soul in His fulness, He is to be to us instead of ourselves, and all besides, as Rutherford says, "Not myself but Christ, not my ease but Christ, not my honour but Christ." O blessed are they that can deny themselves, and put Christ in the room of themselves. Ah, indeed, this is the true starvation of the flesh, and the true strengthening of that inner man, the life of which is Christ.

Well-beloved friend, if you have not yet full possession, I hope you are Christ-hungry and Christ-thirsty. Then I am sure you will not die for want, for such are blessed and shall be filled. Take encouragement. May the Lord give it, and make your soul as a watered garden, for He shall come down as the rain, as showers that water the earth.

All this is from one who has had an exchange of hearts with Jesus, and therefore He is the never-tiring theme. That He should be the constant subject needs no apology, but only that He is not more worthy spoken of. Ah, indeed, of all words and similes, we may say,

"All are too mean to speak His worth,  
To set Immanuel's glories forth."

To His loving heart and powerful arm I again commend you for all you need, and may you both receive of His fulness, and grace for grace.

Yours affectionately,

December 1850

Ruth Bryan

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A "PRECIOUS" AND A "VILE" EXPERIENCE

My dear friend,

I consider it the part of a friend to act as you have done in asking me for an explanation of what you consider me to err in, instead of following the multitude to do evil in spreading my supposed errors behind my back and concealing them to my face.

I am glad you have asked me for an explanation of my meaning, as it allows me to clear up a point on which I think you misunderstand me. What were my words? "There are but two healthy states of the soul –



hungering and feeding, etc. All other states are maladies and sicknesses." Is this new or strange doctrine? My friend, what are we by nature but one mass of malady and disease? But this malady and disease are not seen nor felt but by the entrance of divine light and life into the soul. The entrance of these heavenly blessings brings what I may call a principle of health into the soul, which, as Hart sweetly says, "lives and labours under load." And it is the working of this healthy principle, this new and heavenly nature, under the blessed Spirit's operations, in which the greater part of experience exists.

Darkness, deadness, aversion to all good, headlong proneness to all evil, pride, unbelief, infidelity, lust, covetousness, enmity to God and godliness, what are those but maladies and diseases? Sorrow of heart for sin, breathings after God, hatred of self, living desires towards the Lord of life and glory, separation of spirit from the things of time and sense, faith in exercise, hope casting forth its anchor, love drawing forth the affections; these, when felt, are states of health, that is, the healthy man of grace seems for a while (alas! for how short a while!) lifting up his head amidst diseases and sickness.

Is this inconsistent with sound doctrine or sound experience? You and I would often much sooner read the *Examiner* than the Bible, and would sooner talk on indifferent subjects with our wives than seek the Lord's face. Is this deadness and coldness, and miserable aversion to all good, health or sickness? I feel it to be my malady, not my health. But again I feel what a base wretch I am. I hate myself for my base lusts; I sigh after the Lord to come down and visit my soul; I feel a little spirituality of mind, and taste a sweetness in the Word of God. Is this a sick or healthy state of soul? I call my soul sick when sin reigns and rules; I call it healthy when grace more or less predominates. I may use wrong expressions, but you are not one who would make a man an offender for a word.

Now let us come to experimental preaching. Does he preach experimentally who traces out the workings of corruption, or he who traces out the workings of grace in and under corruptions? I believe the latter. You know much of the workings of pride, lust and covetousness; and you know something of godly fear, self-loathing and contrition under them. Which am I to enter into? You are dead, cold and lifeless. Am I to describe deadness, or trace out life working under deadness? Am I to describe pride, or the self-loathing of the soul when pride is discovered? Am I to say to my hearers, "You are cold, dead, hardened, unbelieving, proud, lustful, covetous. All these are marks and tokens of life"? Or am I to say, "Life struggling against death, godly fear leading to self-abhorrence, groans and sighs under a guilty conscience, cries for deliverance, pantings after God, and so on, are marks of life"?

There is a precious experience and there is a vile experience, and he that would be God's mouth must take the one from the other. I believe that to preach the corruptions of our nature apart from the workings of grace in them and under them is to build up bastards. One is preaching the remedy without ever entering into the malady, thus bolstering up hypocrites and making the heart of the righteous sad. The other is this – to set forth corruption in all its workings towards evil, and leave out the workings of godly fear, in and under corruption. If I feel dissatisfied, burdened, grieved for my wicked and wayward heart and life, the very feeling marks the existence of life. But is a minister to build me up in this, that I am to take deadness as an evidence? Let him tell me to feel and hate myself, for it is a mark of life, and I may get some encouragement. But to tell me that deadness (that is, deadness unfelt) is a mark of life, is a pulpit lie fit only for the twice dead.

You might write to me that you are quite tired of all religion, that you hate going to chapel, that you rarely pray, scarcely ever read the Scriptures, never feel a sigh or a groan, nor any pantings after Christ. Well, I should answer, I know what you mean, for I am too like you. But do you mean to bring this forward as Christian experience? If you do, you are deceived. For if it be experience, the more of it the better, for we can never have too much experience, and to find it in its perfection I must go to the dead Pharisee or the twice dead professor. But tell me of some revival, of some brokenness, of contrition, of some glimpses of mercy, of some workings of life within, and I will say this is experience, and the more we have the better.

I find the experience of the Scriptures that of mourning, complaint, sorrow of heart, pantings after God, hoping and trusting in His mercy. David in Psalm 51 does not describe the workings of his lust towards Bathsheba, but cries and groans, "Cast me not away from Thy presence," etc. If the experience of corruption be good, why should not the practice of it be good too? If to have eyes full of adultery be experience, that is, Christian experience, why should not hands full of adultery be Christian practice? But, on the other hand, if to sigh and cry to be kept from evil is Christian experience, then to be kept from it is Christian practice.

What I call experimental cant is this. Professors without life say, "I am so dead, I am so dark, I am so unbelieving." "Are you ever otherwise? Are you resting upon that as an evidence? Is that your state for months together?" I would answer, "Then it is to be feared that you are a bastard and not a son."

I once heard a person give a long description of what a proud, covetous, lustful, slothful, rebellious heart he had. Among other things, he said that he never saw a farm or a nice field, but he coveted it, or a carriage in the streets that he did not want to possess it. This I suppose

he called experience. I do not; for if it be, Nabal and the rich fool are the most experimental saints in the Bible. Suppose I coveted Woburn Abbey, and the titles, estates and power of the Duke of Bedford, would you call this Christian experience? If so, there must be a throng of experimental saints every day in the week that the abbey is shown. But suppose I were to walk in the park and feel that I would sooner have Christ in my heart than a thousand dukedoms; suppose under that feeling I panted after Christ as the hart after the water brooks, and suppose that I dropped a penitential tear over my proud, covetous heart that ever coveted such toys, I might call that Christian experience.

If pride, lust and covetousness are experience, then the greatest sinner is the greatest Christian. See, my friend, to what error in this momentous matter leads. Had this person told us of his covetousness, and the checks, the sighs, the deliverances he experienced out of it, I should have called it experience; but to set forth corruption separated from the workings of grace under it, I call a mistake altogether. Who paints corruption like Hart? But who paints more strongly the working of grace in corruption? I believe the malady is to be described, but never apart from the strivings of godly fear, faith, etc., under it. Why do we preach experimentally? To find out the feelings of living souls and cut off dead professors. But to trace out sin without godly sorrow, guilt, or condemnation under sin, is to preach the experience of the dead, not of the living.

I meant no more than this, and if you have understood me otherwise, it must arise from my want of expressing myself clearly. I believe I have advanced nothing here in which you will not agree. If there be, I shall be glad to explain myself more fully, either by word when we meet, or by letter. Remember me affectionately to Smart, who, I suppose, is with you. I hope he and you will not set me down as wavering from the truth.

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

Stamford, April 1840

J.C. Philpot

To Mr. Fowler of Woburn (*not* the Mr. Fowler the minister at Gower Street).

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All my hope, as to freedom from that darkness which is my burden, is from Christ's prophetic office; and my hope of freedom from the guilt, pollution and power of sin and of acceptance with God arises from His priestly and kingly offices. In one word, I have no hopes of any mercy in time or eternity but only through Him. 'Tis through Him I expect all, from the least drop of water to the immense riches of glory.

*Halyburton*

## THE PATH OF FAITH

*By F.W. Krummacher (1796-1868)*

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It is really so, my friends; the way to life is a path of affliction, a thorny road. The Scriptures by no means conceal this from us. The Saviour Himself said to one who was eager to follow Him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." And what is Paul's inscription on the standard of Israel? "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Let no one, however, be deterred by this from joining us on our march. It is nevertheless a glorious, wonderful and blissful road which leads to Jerusalem, except that what the prophet says has also reference to it: "Upon all the glory there shall be a covering" (Luther's version). When the covering is at length removed, we shall experience a joyful surprise.

The path of a child of God is glorious, even from his cradle. Certainly, when first it sees the light, there is apparently nothing very particular in the babe – a naked worm lies before us, which has been conceived in sin, a child as other children are. But we lift the veil, and behold – what? an Esau? No, a Jacob. A Cain? No, an Abel, a Jedidiah. Smiling angels stand around the young stranger, and a voice whispers at his cradle, the same which was heard at Solomon's, saying, "I have loved thee!" And if we listen more attentively, it is added, "with an everlasting love," and a blessing is pronounced upon the child, a blessing which extends itself even into eternity.... All the blessings and privileges of the new covenant are solemnly promised to the new-born babe, without any provision or conditions. Its name is written in indelible characters in the heavenly book, and its blessed mother rocks the son of a King, a joint-heir with Christ, upon her arm.

When the highly-favoured infant grows up, there is again nothing uncommon discoverable in its exterior. It acts as other children do. But looking at it with a spiritual eye, what dost thou perceive? A wondrous plan of heavenly wisdom and love overruling the life of the child, and a tender, divine and parental hand manifested in all its training and guidance. Everything is so regulated in the existence of the individual, as shall best promote his salvation. Everything occurs just as it ought; and this afterwards becomes sufficiently apparent. Even as the Lord said unto Moses, "I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts."

The blessed citizen of the heavenly kingdom does not yet bear the signature of his high rank upon his forehead. He still belongs to the sheep which are not of the good Shepherd's fold, but must first be brought into it. The hour arrives when he wakes to newness of life.

What dost thou now see? Anything particular? By no means. Thou seest a weeping individual, a sighing creature, one that languishes after grace and mercy. But remove the veil. What appears now? The Holy Spirit is seen personally taking up His abode in the dark world of the poor sinner's heart, selecting the sphere of His operations, calling a new life and being into existence; and the angels of God are seen tuning their harps, and there is joy in heaven over the penitent, and a garden of God springs up in his soul.

The man now walks the narrow path, and again he seems to be walking only like a thousand others, except that his road appears more solitary and gloomy – nay, often like the path of one that is forsaken and proscribed. But I remove the dark envelopment, and consider with the eye of faith the mean-looking pilgrim and his path. What wonders, what glories present themselves to my view! I find the solitary traveller in the most delightful society. About him, wherever he goes, the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Above him, like an inextinguishable star, the paternal eye of Deity, full of tenderness and faithfulness. Beneath him, eagles' wings and angels' hands, bearing up through life the apparently tottering mortal, lest he dash his foot against a stone.

I do not see him take a single step in his wanderings, without being drawn by the cords of eternal love. If his way leads him through the waters, Jesus is the Pilot of his vessel, and the dove sits on the mast with the olive-branch of comfort. If his path conducts him through the fires, the spectacle of the burning fiery furnace is only again renewed; the flames do not kindle upon him, for God is with him. If he falls into distress and embarrassment, a host of angels immediately stand before the face of the Eternal, and enquire, saying, "Father, in what way shall he be delivered?" If he slumbers, wings of mercy gently overshadow him. If he wakes, many gracious eyes wake with him. If he weeps, his tears are numbered in heaven, and are collected into an urn. If he prays, his ejaculations soar through the clouds; and how welcome are they in the courts above, how gladly seen! If he fights, not only do invisible hands wipe the perspiration from his forehead in the conflict, but likewise strive for him, that he may be able to keep the field.

And when at length he dies, nothing, according to human appearance, happens to him differing from that which befalls others. A dark cloud envelops his departing hour. He lies struggling with death on his solitary couch. But we draw aside the veil, and what a scene presents itself to our view! A brilliant circle of heavenly guests surround the dying bed, and He Himself with a friendly hand assumes the office of the angel of death, who once said with a consoling voice to His disciples, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive

you unto Myself, that where I am, ye may be also.”

Such, my friends, is *something* of the hidden glory of the narrow way; but only something. Who is able to declare all its wonders? Whatever there may be to renounce, to suffer, and to mortify upon this path, it bears no comparison with the thousand-fold incomparable recompense which is given to you in its place. This way, with all its inconveniences, is notwithstanding a gracious way, a way of peace. Though storms may overtake us upon it, what need we care? It is provided in every direction with accessible resting-places and pleasant retreats. If the view of thy sins renders thee anxious, flee with thy soul into the wounds of thy Surety. Who will there condemn thee? If cares approach thee, the bright and cheerful mansions of the divine promises open themselves to thee in every direction, in order to receive thee into their spacious and festive saloons. If thy spring of susceptibility, power and unction dries up, let thine eye feast itself upon the wondrous robe of salvation, wrought by thy Surety and vicarious Sacrifice, which is thine, and shall never be taken from thee. If it grows dark about thee, and solitary and sorrowful here below, ascend the fiery chariot of hope, and soar aloft in spirit to brighter and more blissful shores.

And what shall I say further of the loveliness of this path, of the joys, the intercourse with the Saviour, the sweetness, the fellowship of the saints, which it daily presents to us? O join yourselves to us, and experience in what a rich measure we are rewarded, even here below, for having chosen that path, of which Solomon says, “The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.”

“Happy the man, whose hopes rely  
On Israel’s God, He made the sky.  
And earth and seas, with all their train;  
And none shall find His promise vain.”

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### THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

*By Thomas Boston (1676-1732)*

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Our Lord Jesus Christ comes, by His messengers, into the bride’s mother’s house (the public ordinances), and courts her consent. But words alone will never prevail in that case; He comes forward, by His Spirit, into the inner chamber of her heart, and there proposeth the marriage-treaty, and brings it to a happy issue. We may take up this in three things:

1. Christ, by His Spirit, enters the inner room of the heart, with the fiery law going before Him as His harbinger; and so terrible is the sight that the sinner begins exceedingly to fear and quake, but yet has no

kindness for the Bridegroom, no heart to the match. So a tribunal is erected within his own breast; he is accused, convicted and condemned as a breaker of the law, and then beholds his absolute need of a Saviour (Acts 16. 29, 30).

2. God reveals His Son in the broken, bruised, sensible sinner, by the light of the gospel shining into his heart (Gal. 1. 16). The royal Bridegroom is manifested unto the soul in His glorious excellencies and absolute suitableness to its case; and withal, in His willingness to betroth the wretched creature to Himself.

3. The Spirit of Christ powerfully touches the heart of the sinner, who is thereby made willing to embrace Christ and join hands with Him in the marriage covenant (Psa. 110. 3). Thus the treaty of espousals comes to be concluded, which we may sum up in these three particulars:

I. The parties are pleased with one another; Christ is pleased with the sinner, and the sinner is pleased with Him. And then the language of the bride's heart is, First, I am pleased with His Person. I have been long seeking a match for this soul of mine, a rest to this restless heart; but whatever I cast mine eyes upon, I still perceived something about it that was shocking; something it had, I could never love; something it lacked, which I wanted. But here is a covering of mine eyes. "He is altogether lovely" (Song 5. 16).

Secondly, I am pleased with all His offices. There is a glorious suitableness in each of them to my case (1 Cor. 1. 24, 30). I am weak, foolish and ignorant; it is good He is a Prophet. I am laden with guilt, I cannot remove it; it is good He is a Priest: the sight of His precious blood revives my fainting soul. My lusts are strong, too strong for me; it is good He is a King mighty in battle (Psa. 24. 8).

Thirdly, I am pleased with the marriage covenant; it is well drawn; there is nothing to be added to it, nothing to be altered in it (2 Sam. 23. 5).

Fourthly, I am pleased with the marriage duties; the laws of the royal Bridegroom (Psa. 119. 128).

Lastly, I am pleased with the cross, content to take part with Him in all conditions, to cleave to Him for better and worse (Luke 14. 26).

II. As Christ left His Father's house for her, she gives up with her own people and her father's house for Him. Her heart parts with all other lovers that she may be His only. She renounceth the first husband, namely, the law, as a covenant of works, never to look for her living by it, nor her comfort from it any more (Rom. 7. 4). She renounceth all her lusts and idols, gives up with them for ever; and sets a particular mark of disgrace on the beloved lust she had a particular fondness for (Job 34. 32).

III. The glorious Bridegroom's consent to be her Head and Husband she finds in the Word, which the Spirit applies to her, and she by faith

applies to herself. Her soul consents to take Him as He gives Himself. So Christ gives Himself to her, she receives Him, and gives herself to Him (John 1. 12; 2 Cor. 8. 5), and from that blessed moment she may say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His” (Song 2. 16).

Thus she is united to Christ, joined unto the Lord, and made one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6. 17). And from this union results a communion betwixt the parties, agreeable to the nature of the spiritual marriage.

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## THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT

*By Thomas Boston (1676-1732)*

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QUESTION. What need is there of a seal to the Lord’s covenant?

ANSWER. God’s naked word is as good security as His writ, and His writ as good as His seal; but the difficulty sinners find in believing requires them all. Therefore the Lord has graciously condescended to give us all we could require of the most faithless man on earth, that we may believe Him, His Word, His writ, His seal, yea, and His oath too (Heb. 6. 17, 18).

Some of you find no difficulty in believing the covenant and your welcome to Christ. I dare not commend unbelief, or the least doubt of God’s Word; it is very dishonouring to God, though Christ’s spouse is often found slow of heart to believe. But I fear the unacquaintedness of many with the difficulty of believing the covenant, and their welcome to Christ, proceeds rather from a spirit of pride and blindness, than from the spirit of faith. The marriage covenant betwixt the Son of God and a vile, unworthy, sinful creature is such a great thing, so very unlike to our condition, that it is a great matter to believe it. And truly nothing but the testimony of God Himself, and “the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead,” will make a sensible sinner really believe it (Eph. 1. 19, 20).

If a prince should send a writ to a beggar woman, wherein, having heard of her miserable condition, he appoints her a free house and a few pence weekly, to maintain her while she lives, there would be no great difficulty in believing this, it is so like her condition, being but a small thing. But suppose him to send an ambassador to espouse her unto him; in this case, if she were so frantic and mad as to believe her lodge to be a palace, her nasty covering a cloth of gold, and her rags precious jewels, it is likely she would have little or no difficulty to believe the reality of the great proposal made to her. But if she were truly sober, she would hang down her head, and say, Do not mock a poor woman. And if, upon the producing the marriage contract, confirmed with the prince’s oath and seal, she began to believe it, and rose up to subscribe it, it would be no



great marvel if, looking to her rags and nastiness, she suddenly halted, and said, I am a fool to believe this – till considering the words of grace in the marriage contract, the nature of the prince's oath and seal, her heart were overcome into a belief of it.

The application is easy. There is great need of the seal of the marriage covenant betwixt Christ and sinners, and it is ready for you.

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### A WARNING TO YOUNG MINISTERS

*A parting address given by John Brown of Haddington (1722-1787) to his students as they left to become ministers.*

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Thinking this morning on your departure, two passages of Scripture came to my mind, and you would do well to take them into your serious consideration: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" One may be called to special service, may fill a public station in the church, may be a preacher, may go abroad into the world and address people on things of deep and everlasting importance, and yet be a devil; may be under the power of Satan, in a state of enmity against God, may be a traitor at heart, and act the part of an open traitor at last; may betray the Master he professed to serve, and come to shame and disgrace. Jesus knoweth all things; He "searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men." What state you are in, what are the reigning principles in your breasts, what are the motives by which you are influenced, and what the ends you have in view, whether you are, indeed, what you profess, and what your outward appearance would indicate, all is known to Him. To commend a Saviour for whom one has no love, to preach a gospel which one does not believe, to point out the way to heaven and never to have taken one step in that way, to enforce a saving acquaintance with religion and to be an entire stranger to it one's self – how sad, how preposterous! Tremble, O my soul, at the thought, still more at the thing! Better follow the meanest occupation than enter into the holy ministry solely or chiefly for some secular or selfish design. While I would be far from setting limits to the divine sovereignty, I am afraid it but seldom happens that a person is converted after he becomes a preacher. Was there a Judas, a devil among the twelve? What if there shall be one for every twelve among you? "Lord, is it I? – Is it I? – Is it I?"

The other passage comes more closely home, and is still more alarming: "And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." Is it only one-half of the number here present who are wise, who are truly serious, prudent and thoughtful, wise unto salvation; who are savingly instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom, in whom Christ is found, and in whose

hearts He dwells by faith; who have felt His gospel to be the power of God and the wisdom of God; who have taken Him for their only Lord and King, and have given themselves unto Him? Are there so many of an opposite character – foolish, mere nominal Christians, in the same state in which they were born – who, whatever light you may have in your heads, have no saving grace in your hearts? And is the Bridegroom coming? Will He come quickly, come at an hour that ye think not? And shall they that are ready enter in, and the door be shut, and you stand without and cry for admittance, but cry in vain? How dreadful the thought, how fearful the issue! I would be far, very far from judging uncharitably of you; but I know the deceitfulness of the human heart. Surely they who propose to undertake an office, the design of which is to win souls, had need to be convinced, deeply convinced about their own souls.

*From The Life of John Brown, with select writings (see Book Review, March Gospel Standard, page 95).*

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## LET THEM DECLARE HIS PRAISE IN THE ISLANDS

*The life and poetry of Hallgrímur Pétursson*

*By Dr. I.A Sadler*

*(Continued from page 225)*

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### Part 2

In the previous article we briefly introduced the life of Hallgrímur Pétursson, showing the extraordinary dealings of the Lord. We now seek to write more about his “Hymns of the Passion,” at the same time tracing out the dying love of the Lord Jesus, beginning with His entry into Gethsemane. May the Holy Spirit be pleased to grant that same blessing to the present-day reader as has been manifested in the lives of Icelandic believers in centuries past.

After partaking of the last supper with His disciples, the Lord said, “I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee” (Mark 14. 25-28). Until the blessed Spirit had been given, the disciples understood not these things.

After the Lord’s entry into Gethsemane, the Scriptures record that the awful load of the sins of the elect were laid upon the blessed Redeemer. “And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He

taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death" (Mark 14. 32-34). Let us first consider that the very name "Gethsemane" is most expressive, being translated "Olive Press." Hallgrímur Pétursson writes of this:

Into the garden Jesus came,  
Gethsemane its pregnant name  
Which signifies an olive press.  
Ah! There began His soul's distress,  
Salvation's oil extracted thus  
Brings health and life and joy to us!  
(Hymn 2, v. 1)

How beautiful it is to consider the blessings that flow from the Lord's passion, when revealed by the Holy Spirit! Under the law of Moses the children of Israel were commanded to bring unto the Lord for the light of the tabernacle "pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually" (Lev. 24. 2). This not only speaks in type of the spotless and holy purity of the Lord Jesus, but the oil flowing from the bruising of the olive signifies the blessings bestowed by the Holy Spirit to the church of God on account of Jesus' atoning sufferings. The very name "Christ" means the "anointed One," anointed to be King and the High Priest of His beloved people. By virtue of the Lord's anointing and His precious atonement, each one of His beloved people receive in their souls "an unction from the Holy One" (1 John 2. 20). As the tabernacle was lit by the oil of the olive, so the Lord gloriously fulfils this type. Jesus spake, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8. 12). The dim light of the candlestick in the earthly tabernacle is replaced by the divine radiance and glory. The Apostle John saw this in his vision of the new Jerusalem: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21. 23).

The sins of the elect being now imputed to the Lord Jesus, the Lord bowed down beneath that awful enormity, the sins of every vessel of mercy from Adam until the Lord's second coming. Hallgrímur Pétursson meditates most profitably upon these truths.

With sorrow's load His soul was bowed  
Beneath the awful judgment cloud,  
His human nature, sore distressed,  
No solace found, no peace, no rest.  
"Even to death My soul," He said,  
"Is crushed by sorrow's burden dread."

He went from them a little space,  
Then, faltering, fell upon His face.

His agony like ocean wave  
 Swept o'er Him, my vile soul to save.  
 No tongue can tell, nor mind assess  
 The measure of His soul's distress.

My conscience smites me with the thought  
 That hereby was my freedom bought.  
 'Twas sin of mine that tortured Thee,  
 All this Thy suffering was for me!  
 O how I grieve that deeds of mine  
 Should fill with gall that cup of Thine!

My sin, it seems, has greater weight  
 Than all my Lord did e'er create;  
 He, by the Word of His great power  
 Upholds creation to this hour,  
 Yet, bearing all my sin's disgrace,  
 He sank in horror on His face.

What confidence, what joy of heart,  
 These truths sublime to me impart –  
 The ransom paid for me was worth  
 More than the wealth of heaven and earth!  
 His depth of grief, the pains He bore,  
 Absolve my soul for evermore.

(Hymn 2, vv. 11-15)

In the midst of our Lord's agony, we read of the failure of all His disciples, for they could not watch and pray. This is typical of every believer by nature. But behold the fruits of the Holy Spirit that flow to the church on account of His agony and crucifixion. In our own strength we can do nothing, but when powerfully wrought upon by the Holy Spirit we can do all things. The tears, distress and agony of the Lord Jesus when bearing His people's sins have brought His church joy and peace unspeakable.

Again, my soul, we here discern  
 A blessed truth for thee to learn:  
 The fires of wrath and judgment's fears,  
 Were quenched by our blest Saviour's tears.  
 His soul's distress and agony  
 Bring life and joy and peace to thee!

E'en unto death His soul was bowed  
 When prostrate 'neath that awful cloud.  
 My death-bed thus is rayed with light  
 When run the race and fought the fight.  
 Now are the powers of ill undone,  
 Death is defeated, Christ has won!

Such were the powers of death and hell  
 That on that holy Victim fell,  
 His form was bathed with blood-like sweat,  
 Wrung from Him thus to pay my debt.  
 It fell upon the sin-cursed earth,  
 A ransom of unmeasured worth.

When in my death-sweat cold I lie,  
 Draw Thou, my blessed Saviour, nigh,  
 And let the memory of Thy pains  
 Loosen from me my guilty chains.  
 Let not the awful judgment flame  
 My spirit for perdition claim.

(Hymn 3, vv. 6, 8, 9, 11)

It was at the arrest of Jesus that His divine nature as God the Son shone forth openly. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18. 4-6). Although the hearts of Judas and the band of men from the chief priests were so hardened as not to perceive any blessing in those words, "I am He," Hallgrímur Pétursson expresses the comfort that these words convey to God's chosen and beloved people.

Our Lord made answer: "I am He!"  
 (Judas was near, His power to see)  
 And at His mighty accents' sound  
 They all fell prostrate to the ground.  
 The very thing that caused their fear  
 Is to my soul the greatest cheer,  
 And wipes away the falling tear.

When sore oppressed by Satan's snares,  
 By conscience' sting and inward cares,  
 'Tis then my Saviour's voice I hear,  
 'Tis then I know that He is near,  
 For "I am He!" I hear Him say,  
 "Who all thy sins have borne away."  
 His precious words my fears allay.

(Hymn 5, vv. 5,7)

Then in the final verse of this hymn, Hallgrímur Pétursson writes of the holy and blessed communion between the Redeemer and the redeemed soul, of which we read in the Scripture: "My Beloved is mine, and I am His" (Song 2. 16). Sadly, the English edition is marred at this point by an excessive and rather Arminian paraphrase. The original Icelandic verse reads in translation (without any paraphrase to fit the poetic metre):

I say in return: "I am he,  
 Jesus, who loves Thee from the heart."  
 Let Thy word be so to me:  
 "I love," say Thou, "also thee."  
 Eternal may this our conversation be  
 Commenced here upon the earth.  
 Amen, I pray, so let it be.

(Hymn 5, v. 10)

This expresses that holy intercourse, quite removed from any "free-will" teaching. These verses are the gracious fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in the ministry of Hallgrímur Pétursson. How we desire that the Holy Spirit would reveal more of these precious blessings in our own soul!

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.... He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22. 17, 20).

*(To be continued)*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Great is Thy Faithfulness: 200 years of God's Goodness at Chippenham;** compiled by G.D. Buss; paperback; 123 pages; published by The Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham; obtainable free of charge from Mr. S.D. Hope, Little Acre, High Street, Wedhampton, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 3QE. (We suggest that at least postage should be sent.)

It is a wonderful thing for any church to be maintained in the truth for two hundred years. Also, we feel how good it is when such occasions are recognised. Joshua was divinely commanded to erect a memorial when Jordan was crossed that future generations might ask, "What mean these stones?"

The present book has been lovingly compiled by the pastor, Mr. G.D. Buss, giving the history of the church and short accounts of the various pastors, and also some of the deacons and church members. Remarkably, the beginnings of the witness to the truth in Chippenham can be traced to the preaching of George Whitefield – a beautiful link! Whitefield's preaching led to the foundation of the Independent church in Chippenham, from which the Old Baptist church sprang.

The book is interesting, well-researched and well-written. The desire of the present pastor and church is, as expressed in the apostle's words: "That the truth of the gospel might continue."

We are glad to see another chapel history appearing.

**A Commentary on the Song of Solomon,** by Robert Hawker; hardback; 148 pages; price £10.00 including postage (till the end of the year); published by The Huntingtonian Press, and obtainable from 72a Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hants., SO30 4EB.

In his day Dr. Hawker's works were very popular, and it is an interesting and encouraging thing that once again there is a demand for them. His *Morning and Evening Portions* have recently been republished, and at the present time his *Poor Man's Commentary* is about to appear.

Robert Hawker (1753-1827) was a Church of England clergyman, Vicar of Charles Church, Plymouth. The word that has most often been used to describe his preaching is *sweetness*. Even those who have been critical of his High Calvinism have felt compelled to mention the sweet savour of Christ in his works. It has been said that whilst some cannot see Christ anywhere, Dr. Hawker found Him in every text! Truly he followed the advice of an old minister to a young preacher: "In ancient times there was a saying that 'all roads lead to Rome.' Always find the shortest road from your text to Christ."

This marked feature of Dr. Hawker's ministry eminently fits him to write on the Song of Solomon. Added to this he gloried in the covenant of grace. (John Kent, one of his hearers, reflects this in his beautiful hymns.) The Song of Solomon begins with the sweetness: "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments Thy name is as ointment poured forth," and proceeds to unfold the covenant union between Christ and His church.

Last month we included a beautiful extract from this book – on verse 7: "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth," etc.

This commentary is different from many commentaries. There is not so much of (what is popularly called) *exegesis*; rather beautiful comments on the glorious truths contained in this sacred book. Thus Dr. Hawker's work is very different from those by Durham, Burrowes and Moody Stuart.

An interesting introduction contains reference to the contacts Dr. Hawker had with William Gadsby and Henry Fowler.

The edition from which this reprint is taken was compiled in the nineteenth century by the London Independent minister, Frederick Silver, well-known in the days of Philpot and Kershaw. Mr. Silver contributes a few notes, "by Dr. Gill, Calner, Durham, and others."

We are pleased Huntingtonian Press has published such a lovely book, and hope God's blessing will rest upon it.

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## THE SINNER'S JUDGMENT AND ACQUITTAL

*"Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psa. 143. 2)*

	Jesus.	Justice.	Sinner.
<i>Jesus</i>	Bring forth the sinner, Justice.		
<i>Justice</i>	Thy commands are done, just Judge. See here the prisoner stands.		
<i>Jesus</i>	What has the prisoner done? Say, what's the cause Of his commitments?		
<i>Justice</i>	He hath broke the laws Of his too gracious God; conspired the death Of that great Majesty that gave him breath; And heaps transgression, Lord, upon transgression.		

*Jesus* How knowest this?  
*Justice* E'en by his own confession!  
 His sins are crying; they cried aloud;  
 They cried to heaven, they cried to heaven for blood.  
*Jesus* What sayest thou, sinner? hast thou ought to plead  
 That sentence should not pass? Hold up thy head,  
 And show thy brazen, thy rebellious face.  
*Sinner* Ah me! I dare not, I'm too vile and base,  
 To tread upon Thy earth, much more to lift  
 Mine eyes to heaven! I need no other shrift  
 Than mine own conscience! Lord, I must confess  
 I am no more than dust, and no whit less  
 Than my indictment styles me. Ah! if Thou  
 Search too severe, with too severe a brow,  
 What flesh can stand? I have transgressed Thy laws.  
 My merit pleads Thy vengeance, not my cause.  
*Justice* Lord, shall I strike the blow?  
*Jesus* Hold, Justice, stay.  
*Sinner* Vile as I am, and of myself abhorred,  
 I am Thy handiwork, Thy creature, Lord,  
 Stamped with Thy glorious image, and at first  
 Most like to Thee, though now a poor accurst,  
 Convicted caitiff, and degenerate creature,  
 Here trembling at Thy bar.  
*Justice* Thy fault's the greater.  
 Lord, shall I strike the blow?  
*Jesus* Hold, Justice, stay;  
 Speak, sinner, hast thou nothing more to say?  
*Sinner* Nothing but mercy, mercy; Lord, my state  
 Is miserably poor and desperate;  
 I quite renounce myself, the world, and flee  
 From Lord to Jesus, from Thyself to Thee.  
*Justice* Cease thy vain hopes; my angry God has vowed,  
 Abused mercy must have blood for blood.  
 Shall I yet strike the blow?  
*Jesus* Stay, Justice, hold,  
 My bowels yearn, My fainting blood grows cold,  
 To view the trembling wretch; methinks I spy  
 My Father's image in the prisoner's eye.  
*Justice* I cannot hold.  
*Jesus* Then turn thy thirsty blade  
 Into My side, let there the wound be made;  
 Cheer up, dear soul; redeem thy life with Mine;  
 My soul shall smart, My heart shall bleed for thine.  
*Sinner* O groundless deep! O love beyond degree!  
 The Offended dies to set the offender free.

Francis Quarles (1592-1644)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
SEPTEMBER 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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THE HEAVENLY RACE

*Sermon preached by J.C. Philpot at North Street Chapel, Stamford,  
on May 1st, 1859*

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**Text:** “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12. 1, 2).

When the peculiar and discriminating doctrines of the gospel are proclaimed for the first time in a town or village, an immediate and universal outcry is almost invariably raised against them. Whatever divisions of opinion, whatever variety of sect or sentiment may have before existed, all as with one consent take up arms against doctrines which they consider so novel, so dreadful and so dangerous. You may plead, but you plead in vain, that they are doctrines according to godliness; that they are written as with a ray of light in the inspired Scriptures; that they were held by all our Reformers and are embodied in the articles, creeds and confessions which they drew up; that they have been the consolation and support of thousands and tens of thousands of the most godly men who have ever trod this vale of tears; that they have been sealed by the blood of martyrs at the stake; and that God has honoured them over and over again both in the life and in the death of those who have most adorned their profession by their conduct and conversation. But prejudice is not so easily overcome, nor the carnal mind so easily silenced. Men will still persevere in believing that the doctrines of grace are doctrines of a licentious and dangerous tendency, and even the immoral as well as the moral, as if unanimously fired with holy indignation, will lift up their voices against them almost as if they had issued from the very portals of hell.

But, apart from this real or assumed dread of their dangerous tendency, what chiefly stirs up the enmity of the human heart is their apparent novelty, and the reflection that they seem to cast upon departed friends and relatives. “What?” say they to the man who introduces these doctrines, “are you the only person who knows what religion is? Where are our fathers gone who knew nothing of these new-fangled doctrines of yours? Were they not loyal citizens, pious Christians, devout communicants, irreproachable husbands, parents and friends, and have

they not, having fulfilled a course of piety, uprightness and honesty, laid their bones in the churchyard, where we hope to rest by their side?"

Say, then, what you may in its favour, plead however strongly you may of its perfect harmony with the Word of God, you cannot break through the invincible prejudice that the mind of man has against the doctrine of sovereign, discriminating grace. Thus, strange to say, instead of receiving the gospel as a message of mercy, men rather view it as bringing tidings of gloom; instead of hailing it as an embassy of peace, they rather view it as a declaration of war; and instead of inhaling it as breathing a spiritual fragrance from heaven, they rather revile it as bearing on its wings noxious blasts from hell.

But this opposition to the doctrine of discriminating grace, and to the experience and power of it in the heart, is no novelty; nor are these men singular in their enmity and opposition to it. When the Lord Himself and His apostles preached the glorious truths that we now read as embodied in the inspired Scriptures of the New Testament, they had to encounter the same prejudice; they had the same opposition to meet; and they had to overcome the same desperate enmity of the carnal mind arrayed in arms against them.

These thoughts may be a clue to the intention of the apostle in dwelling at so great a length on the faith of the Old Testament saints in Hebrews 11. He had to meet the same charge as we – the charge of preaching new instead of old doctrines and introducing a religion unknown to their fathers. To meet this accusation, he defines to them the nature of the faith which he preached, and then goes on to show in the most plain and clear manner that it was no novelty; that he was not introducing to them some new kind of religion with which their fathers were unacquainted; but that the faith which he preached, and on which he insisted as that whereby the sinner was justified, was the same faith as had full root in the bosom of all the godly men of old, of all the Old Testament saints, of all the ancient martyrs who had sealed the truth of their profession by their blood. He begins with righteous Abel, and naming one by one the most venerated patriarchs, such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and all those Old Testament worthies of which the world itself was not worthy, he shows that they all without exception professed and evidenced the possession of the same faith which he preached; yet that the gospel unfolded and revealed greater blessings than ever they had enjoyed or experienced. "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11. 40).

Having thus dwelt upon the faith of all the Old Testament saints, he goes on in the words of our text to drop in our ears a word of admonition and exhortation: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with

so great a cloud of witnesses” – that is, witnesses to the faith we preach; witnesses to the gospel which we lay before you – “let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.”

In endeavouring, with God’s blessing, to open up and explain these words, I shall –

I. *First*, direct your mind to *the race* that is spoken of as *set before us*.

II. *Secondly*, to *the way* in which this race is to be run, which is by “*laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,*” and “*with patience.*”

III. *Thirdly*, the *Object* of the race, and the *supplies of strength* given whereby we are enabled to run it, “*looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.*”

IV. *Fourthly*, the *encouragement* which is derived, enabling us to run so as to obtain, seeing that we are “*compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.*”

I. You will observe, with regard to the figures which are used in the Scripture as emblematical of the experience and power of religion in the soul, that *exertion* is stamped upon them all. For instance, sometimes religion, in its experience and in its attendant conflicts, is compared to a wrestling match. “We wrestle,” says the apostle, “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6. 12). Now in a wrestling match, each antagonist does his utmost to throw his adversary. He bends every muscle, he plies all his bodily strength, he uses the most undaunted, unwearied exertion to prove himself the conqueror, and carry off the prize of victory. Sometimes the Christian’s course is compared to a battle, and he is bidden as a soldier of Jesus Christ, to endure hardness, and “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6. 12; 2 Tim. 2. 3). Now in a battle we know that the warrior’s garments are often rolled in blood, that every muscle and nerve is at full stretch, that cruel wounds are given and inflicted, and that nothing is thought of on either side but to gain the victory, even at the expense of life. Sometimes, as here, religion in the power of it in the heart and life is compared to running a foot race, which tasks the strength of the runner to the utmost, which requires most intense exertion of every muscle of the body, and demands for a successful issue not merely the swiftest agility of foot, but the greatest vigour of limb and the strongest powers of bodily endurance.

Now if the Word of God has used those three figures to set forth what religion is as wrought by a divine power in the soul, and as

manifested in the daily experience of it in the heart and in the life, we may be certain that there is a battle to be fought, a race to be run, that will task our energies to the utmost; that religion is not a thing to be lightly taken up and as lightly laid down; that if a man is to be saved, there is something to be wrought in his soul and experienced in his heart that shall at least meet the scriptural idea of a wrestling match, in which he is to prove conqueror; of a battle, in which he is to gain the victory; and of a race, in which he is so to run as to win the prize.

Looking at most men, can we say that they are carrying out any or all of these scriptural figures as actual combatants? Are not most but spectators, idle, unconcerned lookers on, if even so much as that? They take no interest whatever in the wrestling match, in the battle, or in the race, as if they were personally concerned, or as if the struggle were to them a matter of life or death. The farm, the shop, the business, the profession, the family, if not things worse (for what I have named must be attended to), occupy all their thoughts. Religion is with them a secondary matter. "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" is uppermost in their mind. As to the poor soul, what matters that? Are its concerns, its interests, its happiness or misery, its salvation or destruction, worth a moment's thought compared with dress and amusement, with mirth and feasting and jollity? "Eternity: what is that compared with time? Hell, heaven; an eternal state of enduring happiness, or an eternal state of enduring misery: what are all these trifles compared with a few more sovereigns, a few finer clothes, a few better meals, a few handsomer tables, chairs and carpets, or a few more enjoyments of the pleasures of sin? Therefore, let these dreams of a future state, these shadows of another world all go. This pleasant world is ours for present use and enjoyment, and we want to think no more about such gloomy themes as eternity and death. Let us pursue the solid realities of time, and let those who will think about eternity."

Is not this the spirit and feeling, if not the very language of the atheistic world: the very breathings, if not the exact words, of man's infidel heart? Am I wrong, then, in saying that the great mass of men take no interest whatever in the race – not even so much as to become spectators of it, or even admire those who are bending every sinew to win the prize?

But again: there are those who do run, yet never win the prize. As the apostle says, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Cor. 9. 24.). Many run, but few obtain; many seek, but few find; many are called, but few are chosen; many are religious, but few are saved; many have their thoughts exercised more or less with eternal objects, who will prove to

come short of winning the glorious crown.

But turning our eyes away from these, let us fix them on the race itself. It is said in the text to be "*set before us.*" If, then, we are to be runners in this race, we must run it as God has laid it down by the blessed Spirit. And we may briefly say that He has set it before us in three different ways.

1. First, it is set before us in the *unerring Word of truth*. In all contests of strength or skill, certain rules are laid down which must be rigorously observed – what are usually called the laws of the game; and if these rules are not observed, no prize is awarded to the successful party. This is true in grace as in nature, in the heavenly as well as the earthly race. If, then, the rules laid down in the Word of truth are broken, a man may run, as he thinks, the heavenly race; but no prize crowns the exertion, for he has not run according to the rules which the sovereign Arbiter of the race has laid down. This may seem hard, but it is not my doctrine but the apostle's: "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2. 5); that is, according to the laws laid down of the contest.

It is not, then, the mere running which secures the prize, but it is whether you run the race set before you as God would have you run. You may choose your own course; you may mark out your own lists; you may select your own pace; you may fix your own time or your own rules. But even if you come in first, will the Lord award you the prize? No. He says, "I have fixed in My own mind a certain race to be run, and I have laid down the rules of it in My inspired Word. If then you run, you must run the race just as I have set it before you, or you will not obtain the prize and receive the crown." If, then, a man is not enlightened by divine teaching to see what the race is, as laid down by God Himself, he has not yet put his feet into the course.

The first requisite, then, to running the race is to see it with an enlightened eye as set before us in the Scriptures of truth. To do this requires divine light. But as we all are dead by nature, we need divine life and power not only to see it, but to run it when seen.

2. But this race is set before us also in *the example of the Lord Jesus Christ*, who, when here below, ran a race that God had appointed Him, for He had a work to perform which His Father gave Him, and which He finished to the uttermost; whereby we can see in the example of that most blessed Lord, if we are to follow in His footsteps, that there is a work to be done also by us, not indeed like His, meritorious and justifying, but an exercise of those Christian graces which shone forth so conspicuously in Him. Thus we see in His holy example that there is a faith, a hope, a love, a patience, a submission to God's will, a glorifying Him in heart, lip and life, by the exercise of which we follow in His

steps; and we may be assured that only so far as we follow in some measure in the footsteps of Jesus do we run the race set before us.

3. *The saints of God*, too, who have lived and died before us, have left us the pattern of their faith and obedience for us to follow. We see it in all the Bible saints, whose experience is left upon record, that we might compare the work upon our heart with what we read was wrought upon theirs, and not their experience only of God's goodness and mercy, but their trials, temptations and sufferings, with their faith and obedience. This made the apostle say, "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13. 7). And he proposes himself as their pattern: "Be ye followers of me even as I am also of Christ Jesus." Thus James also bids us take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction and of patience (James 5. 10); and the church is bidden to go her way forth by the footsteps of the flock (Song 1. 8). None can run this race but the saints of God, for the ground itself is holy ground, of which we read that "no unclean beast is to be found therein." None but the redeemed walk there; and none have ever won the prize but those who have run this heavenly race as redeemed by precious blood.

Bear in mind, then, that the first thing is *to see* the course marked out before our eyes as set before us in the Scriptures of truth, in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the experience of the saints.

Now no sooner do we see by faith the race set before us than we begin to run; and, like Christian in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, we run from the City of Destruction, our steps being winged with fear and apprehension. All this, especially in the outset, implies energy, movement, activity, pressing forward; running as it were for our life; escaping, as Lot, to the mountain; fleeing, as the prophet speaks, "like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah" (Zech. 14. 5); or as the manslayer fled to the city of refuge from the avenger of blood.

As then the runner stretches forward hands and feet and head, intent on being first to reach the goal, so in the spiritual race there is a stretching forth of the faculties of the new-born soul to win the heavenly prize. There is a stretching forth of the spiritual *understanding* to become possessed of clear views of heavenly truth. There is a stretching forth of the *desires* of the heart to experience the love of God; to feel acceptance with Him through the blood of sprinkling; to know the way of salvation for ourselves and to have clear evidences that our feet are in it; to receive tokens for good and manifestations of the pardoning love of God; to walk in His fear, live to His praise, and enjoy union and communion with the blessed Lord. And there is a stretching forth of the *affections* of the heart after Jesus and the truth as it is in Jesus, with many longings, breathings, earnest cries and fervent wrestlings at the throne of

grace, that we may know the truth and by the truth be sanctified and made free.

So that when you look at the word "race" as emblematic of a Christian's path, you see that it is not any movement of the body, what the apostle calls "bodily exercise," that is intended, but an inward movement of the soul, or rather of the grace that God has lodged in your bosom, and to which are communicated spiritual faculties, whereby it moves forward in the ways of God, under the influences of the blessed Spirit. "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart" (Psa. 119. 32). Then every fervent desire of your soul after the Lord Jesus Christ; every inward movement of faith and hope and love toward His blessed name; every sense of your misery and danger as a poor, guilty, lost, condemned sinner, whereby you flee from the wrath to come; every escaping out of the world and out of sin for your very life, with every breathing of your heart into the bosom of God that He would have mercy upon you and bless you; all these inward acts of the believing heart in its striving after salvation as a felt, enjoyed reality, as the prize of our high calling, are pointed out by the emblem, "running the race set before us."

The Christian sees and feels that there is a prize to be obtained, which is eternal life; a victory to be gained, which is victory over death and hell; and he sees the certain consequences if this prize is not obtained, this victory not won – an eternity of misery. He sees, therefore, let others think and say what they may, he must run if all stand still, he must fight if all are overcome. Thus as the blessed Spirit works with a divine power upon his heart, he gives as if new wings to his feet and fresh desires to his mind, and from time to time rekindles those apprehensions of the wrath of God, those desires to be right, those fears to be wrong, that dread of hypocrisy and self-deception, that longing after Christ, His blood and love, whereby he is urged on again and again to run the race set before him. And if sometimes he feel weary in running, if sometimes he be inclined to sit down by the way, to fall out of the course, and to give up heart and hope, fresh energy comes from above, fresh strength is communicated to his soul, and again, in the earnest breathings of his renewed spirit and the desires of his mind, he runs the race set before him.

But to do this or any part of this a man must have the life of God in his soul. To begin to run is of divine grace and power; to keep on, he must have continual supplies communicated out of the fulness of a covenant Head; and to be enabled to persevere to the end so as to win the prize, he must have the strength of Christ continually made perfect in his weakness. But he does win; he is made more than conqueror through Him who loved him. Jesus has engaged that he shall not be defeated; for

the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but the lame take the prey; and not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

II. But this leads me to show *how the race is to be run*. There are three things the apostle speaks of as being necessary to run the race aright. The first is, to "*lay aside every weight*"; the second, to lay aside "*the sin which doth so easily beset us*"; and the third, to "*run with patience*."

1. If a man were engaged to run a race, and that not for a temporal crown, not for a poor, mercenary reward, but to run for his life; to run as the man ran who had killed his neighbour unawares, and at whose heels the avenger of blood was; surely he would not load himself with many weights. He would not wear an extra quantity of clothes; he would not put on a thick pair of shoes, or even carry a heavy purse of gold in his pocket. But he would rather strip himself, as far as he could, of all unnecessary clothing; and if on his starting he still wore a certain quantity, as he found they encumbered him and that at every step he became in consequence weaker and weaker, he would throw off garment after garment that he might not be overpowered by their weight.

Thus it is in running the spiritual race. Before we make the first start we are already loaded with weights; there is every difficulty and obstacle in the way at the very outset, and these so great that many who seem to desire to run never overcome them. And this seems to be more especially the case with the child of God. How continually, when the grace of God first touches the sinner's heart, difficulties which seem insurmountable, and which indeed but for divine grace would not only seem but actually be insurmountable, stand before him in the road! The opposition of relations, perhaps of a father, who would sooner follow him to his grave than see him what is called a saint; it may be the persecution of the partner of his bosom; the hostility and undisguised contempt of his own children; his situation in life, with all its prospects; his business or occupation, which may be of that peculiar nature that the very profession of godliness will seriously endanger his worldly welfare and bring himself and his family to poverty – what difficulties of this kind often stare a man in the face when he first begins to have some desire after the things of God! And the higher the station in life the greater the difficulties. The poor have their difficulties and sometimes their persecutions in the first outset, but nothing like those who occupy a higher position in the social scale. This made the Lord say that "it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

But whether rich or poor, every runner has his peculiar weights which he has to lay aside; and unless grace be in his heart, he cannot do



so. Many have desired to be what is called "religious" and have made a few feeble, oft-repeated and as oft-defeated attempts to come out of the world and seek the salvation of their souls, but they have been appalled by the difficulties in the way. They have not had strength or resolution to begin because they found at the very outset, at the very entrance in the race, there were such pressing difficulties to be encountered. They had relations who frowned; their worldly circumstances were imperilled; they had to face the frowns of a world whose frown they feared and whose smile they loved; and thus at the very outset they gave up, because they could not lay aside every weight.

But grace in a child of God overcomes these obstacles. It plants in his conscience those deep convictions and it sets before his eyes such a sense of his lost, ruined condition; he is so stung by guilt, pierced by the arrows of the law, condemned by his own conscience, and has such a view of death and judgment and what awaits those who live and die unpardoned, that he breaks through every obstacle. However weighty, however numerous, he bursts through them all. He says, "My soul is at stake. What are relations to me, if to serve them I am imperiling my soul? What is father; what is wife; what are children; what are house or land; what is everything or anything of an earthly, perishing nature, if I am to die under the wrath of God?" Therefore he breaks through them all; and he finds it easy to do so, for at best these difficulties and obstacles are but cobwebs when met by a firm resolution. In fact, they are difficulties only to cowards; obstacles only to those who were but too willing they should be such, who only wanted an excuse not to run. When, then, grace enables a man to break through them, he finds them as Samson found the withs and bands that bound him. Grace in the heart enables a man to set his face against all opposing obstacles: he breaks through them all, finding them no barriers to his making the start; and laying aside the weights, he begins the race set before him. Like a runner beginning a race, he is at first all ardour, full of strength and energy, his eye bent upon the crown, his feet unencumbered; and he runs eagerly on.

But after a time, he begins to find that he has not yet laid aside every weight; and as his strength begins to fail, the weights he carries make themselves manifest as encumbrances. He has not yet got thoroughly rid of the world. He may have thrown off the world without, but there is the world within of which he cannot so easily divest himself. He has thrown aside outward sins that once pressed him down to earth and were clogs and fetters to his labouring feet; but he begins to find that his sins within he cannot so easily lay aside; that if enabled by grace to break off commission of sin outwardly, there is still an evil heart that is ever bringing forth fresh occasions and fresh temptations to evil. He finds also that it is only by grace he can lay aside these weights; that everything

that is not grace is weight; everything that does not help, hinders; and everything that does not urge forward, keeps back.

Thus he finds that he has to lay aside many things which at first he did not feel to be weights; to give up many practices, principles and dearly cherished idols, for he finds that now, unless he lays them aside, he is so clogged and impeded by them that he is sure he shall never come off conqueror. He begins to find that not only sin of every shape and name that is in the heart, as it rises to view and demands gratification, becomes a weight that clogs his feet, but his own strength, wisdom and righteousness; his own resolutions, vows and promises; his own fleshly piety and creature holiness are also encumbering weights which he must lay aside.

How, then, shall he so run as to obtain, when instead of getting stronger he becomes weaker, and instead of gathering fresh courage with every step, feels himself more and more faint and more and more feeble as the race is prolonged? If the Lord, then, were not with him in the race, he must sink; if He who is the strength of His people did not give fresh strength to his feet; if He who teaches the hands to war and the fingers to fight did not make his feet to be as hinds' feet, they would fail him in this race for life or death. But the Lord, by His Spirit and grace, keeps giving him fresh strength and power; sets before him fresh motives to run; urges him forward sometimes by terror, and draws him forward sometimes by love. Thus receiving mercy, he faints not, but holds out and holds on. This in fact is the grand secret of the successful runner. Thus Paul ran. "I therefore so run; not as uncertainly." What then makes the difference between the runners who fail and the runners who win, but that the one runs in his own strength and the other in the Lord's; that the one runs by works and the other by faith; that the one runs by free will and the other by free grace?

2. But after a time he finds that there is a sin which doth very easily beset him; and if enabled to lay aside the various weights which I have named, he cannot with equal facility lay aside this peculiar sin. But what is this besetting sin which the apostle here bids us lay aside? It is not as many interpret the words, that sin to which this or that person is peculiarly addicted, such as pride, covetousness, sensuality. It is perfectly true that we all have our peculiar besetments, but it is not of those that the apostle here speaks; for the sin which all that run are to lay aside besets all runners alike, which would not be the case with each man's peculiar temptation. But *the* sin which doth so easily beset us all is the *sin of unbelief*. It is in the original a very expressive word, for it means a garment which hangs loosely about the feet and, as the runner presses forward, throws him down. We may picture before our eyes a runner thus dressed, and we should soon see that finding this loose

flowing garment continually impeding his movements, and that he is thereby prevented from running actively on, he would throw it aside that he might have full scope to run without its impeding hindrance.

But how truly and vividly does this figure represent the nature of unbelief! What spiritual runner does not find, as he runs the race, that unbelief is this besetting sin which more than any other entangles his steps and twines itself round every limb? It is a sin that of all other sins cleaves most closely and most continually impedes every spiritual movement. If you are seeking the Lord with some earnestness in your soul, how suddenly, how quickly unbelief comes in as a chilling blast, and how almost instantaneously, like the east winds which we are now experiencing, it nips and chills the tender buds of spiritual desire and the opening life of the soul! How even sometimes it casts a black frost over the blossoms of hope in which the early life of the soul had, as a tree in spring, become clothed, and how in consequence they drop off blighted and withered! But where unbelief is not permitted for a time, as in Job's and Jeremiah's case, to blight hope, how, to revert to the metaphor of the test, it hinders and impedes the steps of the heavenly runner! And the reason is because it is the grand antagonist to that faith whereby alone we are enabled to run at all. This seems evident from the very nature of the race itself. For if faith be the grand influencing motive, enabling us to run, what can hinder the race so much as unbelief, its opposite? How it hindered the children of Israel in running their race to the promised land, so that "they could not enter in because of unbelief."

How it hindered Abraham when he denied his wife; Sarah when she put Hagar into a wrong position; Isaac when he secretly preferred Esau to Jacob; Rebekah when she procured by deceit the blessing; Job and Jeremiah when they cursed the day of their birth; David when he numbered the people; Jonah when he fled to Tarshish; and Peter when he denied his Lord and Master. And I may appeal to the experience of every saint of God who is running the race, whether he does not find unbelief to be that sin which causes him the greatest amount of hindrance. Then he must lay it aside, or he cannot run so as to obtain.

But you may ask, how does he lay it aside? Can he without special help? No, assuredly not. To say that he could, would be to give strength to the creature; would be to pluck the crown of grace from the Redeemer's brow and put it upon the head of man. The same grace then that first opened his eyes to see the race set before him, that put his feet into the strait and narrow path; the same grace in blessed exercise enables him by an act of faith to "lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us."

But there is this difference between the heavenly race and the earthly; that in the earthly race, the weight once abandoned is no more felt; the garment laid aside is no more taken up. But not so in the

heavenly race. The weights, or at least many of them, return, or new ones come in their place; and if the sin which so easily beset us is laid aside, our heart again gathers it up, for unbelief is deeply seated in our very nature, and is continually springing up out of the depths of our carnal mind. If, therefore, we are enabled one day to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, on the next the weights may be as heavy as ever, and unbelief may beset us with still greater power and still greater violence. Yet run we must, and run we shall as helped by the grace of God; and every step we put forward is attained only by laying aside the weights and the sin which doth so easily beset us.

3. But there is another qualification necessary, and that is *patience*, or as the word means, *endurance*. This is the grand requisite of the runner naturally, if the foot race be of unusual length. He cannot possibly win the prize unless, besides mere fleetness of limb, he possess great endurance of bodily strength and above all, that force and energy of resolution whereby he is determined not to give up, not to give out, but to hold on even to the very last. This tasks all his power; for a race of any length is not won by sheer agility, by lightness of foot and nimbleness of limb, but by bodily endurance, by strength of lung and power of muscle, and above all by high courage and determination not to be beaten. So in running the heavenly race. It must be run with endurance. It is not to be won by stepping nimbly forward at first and then, scant of breath and worn out with fatigue, to fall flat upon the course or drop out as unable to proceed further. The heavenly race is not like a foot race in the meadows – a ten minutes' spurt – but a race for life; a race ever renewing and never ending till the immortal crown is won. It will task, then, every gracious energy, and can only be won by the most patient endurance of every spiritual faculty.

We shall soon see this if we look at the hindrances and difficulties which meet the runner at well-nigh every step. Look at our own faintness, if we have run long; at our own doubting, misgiving hearts; our own feeble faith, scanty hope and wavering love. Everything naturally out of us, everything naturally in us, calls out for ease, rest and standing still. To be ever watching, ever praying, ever reading and hearing; ever resisting sin and Satan, denying self and crucifying the flesh; to be ever tempted, tried and exercised; to be ever under some affliction of mind or body, of family or circumstances; to be plagued all the day long and chastened every morning; how all this daily experience needs patient endurance! Here all fail but the family of God. As then the soul finds more and more of its weakness and helplessness, produced by these painful trials and exercises, it feels more the need of patient endurance

that it may hold out to the end; for only those who endure to the end shall be saved.

Many run well for a time. Many seem as though by their earnestness and activity, their zeal and ardour, they would snatch the prize by a few onward footsteps – as though they would gain the victory by the exertion of a day, or win heaven by the earnestness of an hour. But these are the first to give out; the first, like the children of Ephraim, to turn their back in the day of battle; the first to yield to the foe when sharply pressed. Many run but few obtain. Sin ruins some; error blights others; the world damps this man's zeal, and prosperity withers that man's ardour, till the course is strewn with the fallen, and a few only struggle on to the end.

Grace alone secures the prize; and the reason is because the grace of God in the heart is of an enduring nature, and therefore abides when all else is lost. Natural faith soon dies out; creature hope gives up the ghost; and fleshly zeal and earnestness are speedily quenched to the last spark. But grace is of an enduring nature, as being from a divine fountain. "The righteous holds on his way," because "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life." Therefore those who are possessed of grace will hold out to the end; they will not only run the race, but win the prize. It will be true of them all what Paul said of himself: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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" (2 Tim. 4. 7, 8).

*(To be concluded)*

## THE ETERNITY OF THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

*By Thomas Boston (1676-1732)*

We proceed now to speak of the perpetuity and everlastingness of this marriage covenant. And here I shall only enquire, in what respects the espousals betwixt Christ and the soul are for ever.

First, they are for ever in design.

Secondly, they are for ever in fact.

FIRST, they are for ever in the design of parties. In espousals amongst men it is not so: the design is only for term of life; for the parties know one another to be mortal, and that death will separate them. But in the spiritual espousals the parties join hands never to part; they both look upon it as a contract for eternity.

First, Christ takes the sinner with a design to be that sinner's Husband from the moment of the espousals for ever, and His designs are immoveable as mountains of brass; they cannot be broken. He knows perfectly before the espousals whatsoever will fall out betwixt Him and His spouse in the course of the marriage; and with a full view of all future events, He takes her for ever with a fixed purpose. First, never to put her away while she desires to abide with Him. Nay, Secondly, never to part with her, though she should desire to go away; never to put her away, never to let her go (Jer. 32. 40): "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me."

SECONDLY, the soul consenting to the espousals, takes Christ, with a design to be His spouse for ever, never to separate. Howsoever hypocrites deal with Him, whatsoever secret reserves they have in their pretended embracing of the marriage covenant, the believer takes Christ with a sincere purpose never to leave Him, never to part with Him.

1. The believer takes Christ with a sincere purpose never to leave Him, nor go away from Him, whatsoever hardships he may meet with in the world for cleaving to Him, and following of Him: his resolution is, "So will not we go back from Thee" (Psa. 80. 18). He may indeed fear that he will leave Christ; nevertheless he can appeal to God's omniscience, he has no such design, but his soul loathes it. He has counted the cost, he has weighed in the balance father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also; and finds that the royal Bridegroom downweighs them all. They are all light in comparison with Christ; and therefore he is peremptorily resolved, whatever becomes of them, he will never leave Him (Luke 14. 26).

2. The believer takes Christ with a sincere purpose, never to part with Him, nor to be put away, howsoever unkindly his Lord may seem to carry Himself towards him: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13. 15). This is his design, although he may be very hardly bestead in keeping his ground in a time of trial; but in the day of espousals, the soul sees there is no help in any other, therefore says, "Lord, to whom shall I go," but unto Thee? and resolves, that if it die, it shall die at His door.

And thus, in the spiritual espousals, the voice of the bride, like an echo, sweetly answers the voice of the Bridegroom: "I will betroth thee," saith He, "unto Me for ever." "Amen," says the bride, "for ever, ever, ever."



## THE BLESSED SIGN

*By F.W. Krummacher (1796-1868)*

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That which troubles us the most in life is the anxiety we feel respecting what may occur on the morrow and the day after. Perambulate the cottages of the dejected and the oppressed, and you will in general perceive that the cause of their anxiety is not an immediate necessity, but one which may be expected in the sequel. If the bitter fountain of their apprehensions could be stopped up, and a bright ray of hope be shed upon the foreground of their life, lamentation would be immediately turned into rejoicing, and a clear sunshine, instead of gloomy and tempestuous clouds, surround their brow.

Hence there has ever been amongst mankind a looking out for a sign, as a token for good, for a favourable prognostic respecting the future, and for something on which they might firmly establish the hope that no misfortune would befall them, but that on the contrary, blessings and benefits would attend them. Attention was directed to the constellations in the firmament; predictions were procured from oracles and the artifices of the priests; much was inferred from dreams and visions; and even birds that build their nests upon or under the roof were obliged to act the part of Noah's dove with the olive leaf. These things indeed have lost their credit in the present day; but the desire for favourable signs and propitious omens is not on that account by any means extinguished among mankind. How greatly are people inclined, for instance, on taking some important step or undertaking in life, such as marriage, journeys, and the like, to spy out intimations in everything that occurs on such occasions! The smallest and most trifling circumstance is then frequently sufficient suddenly to call forth the most decided disturbance, and even to spread a mourning veil over a whole festival, as well as to excite the utmost joy in the minds of the people, and to complete their happiness, according as they think they perceive a good or evil omen in it.

There is, however, little dependance to be placed upon such auguries. And yet there *is* a blissful sign which never deceives. Let him to whom it is given rejoice, and cast all care away. But let no one deceive himself. The mark is not for everyone. Is money or wealth the sign you mean? By no means! Remember the barn-builder. Is it honour and celebrity? This the bay tree in Psalm 37 possessed; yet in a short time it stood withered by the wayside. Is it understanding or talent? Understanding is no security against distress and death, and the judgments of divine wrath. Is the sign to be found in meritorious actions for the service of society? I tell you that these merits are of no avail before Him, who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Nor is integrity

the sign. It proves no defence where the holiness of God sits in judgment. And equally as little is religious knowledge the sign. Judas possessed it, and yet destruction followed at his heels.

The sign, the propitious sign which we mean, is of a very different kind. It is that which is alluded to in Psalm 86. 17, where it is said, "Shew me a token for good." It is not anything of an outward nature; it is in the individual. It may, however, be seen glimmering through him. No one has it by nature. Divine grace must bestow it upon us. The sign is, first of all, *a wound*. What, a wound? Yes, a wound in the heart. It is inflicted as the result of self-knowledge, and is a wound which no plant, no balm from the field of this earth can heal. The publican had the sign when he smote upon his breast. The malefactor had it when he said, "Lord, remember me." Mary Magdalene had it when she sat at the Master's feet and washed them with her tears. Take it for granted also, that whoever prospered in time and eternity possessed it, and that those who had it have also fared well, although we may not have witnessed it. The wound is, therefore, the consciousness of being a poor sinner! Yes, my brethren; the profound and contrite feeling that we are condemned in ourselves, and execrable in the sight of God, is the wound I mean. Certainly an inconsiderable sign, but a sign of unspeakable value; a sign little attended to by the world, but the only one which betokens salvation. The Word of God is witness.

But this wound is not the entire sign. Something else is connected with it. The mark which the Lord caused to be set on the foreheads of the people that they might escape destruction (Ezek. 9. 4), "Set a mark upon the foreheads," says He to the angel – a Tau, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet upon their foreheads. But this letter was in the form of a cross, as it is also still evident in the Greek and Latin T, which was formed after it. You now know, therefore, what is implied in the propitious sign. It is a cross – not painted upon the lip, not deposited in words, not portrayed in the idea, but deeply and vividly engraved and branded by the Holy Ghost upon the heart and the vitals; so that the individual regards the cross of Christ as the most pleasing object of vision in the horizon of heaven and earth, and his inmost love springs up from this bloody tree, and firmly twines around it; and thus on this one nail, he hangs all his hope and all his salvation, and is constrained to say with Paul, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

Now, where these two are found together – the wound and the cross – the poor sinner and faith in the Lamb – the broken heart, which at the same time rests firmly on the atoning sacrifice – there is the propitious sign; but only there, and nowhere else. It does not sparkle indeed, like the golden chains, the stars and orders of this world; but how will the



brightness of the latter eventually fade before that of the former! In the world, indeed, no high value is put upon it, nor does it assume a rank in civil society; but the angels of God see this sign, and stand joyfully, and reverentially salute him who wears it, and know that they have orders to minister to him. Thank God! there are probably many amongst us, who are decorated with this sign in the heart, although the mantle of infirmity may be wound around it. The sign attests their nobility, and proves their adoption. They have no need to inquire further respecting any other favourable omen. This single one – the wound and the cross – is a sufficient pledge to them that it shall be well with them in time and eternity.

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### LIFE'S JOURNEY

*An address to aged readers by Ashton Oxenden (1808-1892)*

*The son of a baronet, Ashton Oxenden was educated at Harrow, and Oxford University, and for over twenty years was Rector of Pluckley, Kent. Emigrating to Canada, he ministered in Montreal for a time before returning to Kent, where he died.*

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What is our life? It is a journey that is soon ended; a tale that is quickly told; a day whose hours roll by apace. It is a vapour which rises for a while and then vanishes; a flame that burns for a moment or two, and then flickers in the socket and presently goes out. Our little lifetime, O how short it is!

And what are your thoughts, my aged friend, about this journey of life? Once you looked upon it as a very different thing from what it appears to you now. Once it seemed to you as if the days of your childhood would never pass away. You longed for manhood or womanhood, but it came very slowly. The early stages of your journey seemed almost endless. And if it had been possible, you would willingly have taken a spring, and jumped into middle life with a bound. But now you look back and wonder how quickly your life has passed. It seems but yesterday you were a child. Old age has crept on, almost without your knowing it.

Truly the longest life is but a little while when compared with eternity. It is but a tiny drop in the wide ocean, but as a grain of sand on the boundless shore, "so soon passeth it away, and we are gone." And when we look forward, how soon shall we be in our graves! A few more days and we shall come to the end of our span. Very soon "the silver cord" will be "loosed," "the golden bowl" will be "broken," "the pitcher" will be fairly worn out, "the wheel" will make its last turn; and then we

shall “go to our long home, and the mourners go about the streets” (Eccl. 12. 5, 6).

I want you to open your Bible and turn to the ninetieth Psalm. Take it and ponder it over in your heart; and I think you will find it very profitable sometimes *to use it as a prayer for yourself*. The writer of that Psalm must, I think, have written it as an old man; and he must have written it on purpose for those of his brethren who are going down the hill of life.

I once heard of an aged Christian who used to be very fond of applying the ninety-first Psalm to himself. He loved to think how truly it set forth the faithfulness of God to him during his long life. When he was on his deathbed, he exclaimed, in the words of the last verse: “With long life has He satisfied me, and now I am going to enjoy the only portion which I could not fully have in this life – He is going to show me His salvation.”

Perhaps, dear reader, you are drawing to the close of a long life. It may be that your thoughts have long been turned heavenwards. And if so, I know that a word of counsel will be welcome to you. But if, on the other hand, you have been thoughtless hitherto, I will try and make you thoughtful now. Whatever has been your past history, I want to give you a few hints as to how, with God’s help, you may turn to the best account the time that still remains to you. I want to do you some good. I want to make your last days the best and happiest of all your life.

I observe that old persons are in some respects much alike, but in other respects are very different.

They are alike in their infirmities. Their limbs shake and totter. Their bodies have grown weak. The clay house they dwell in is the worse for wear. Their minds, too, have lost their former strength. Memory fails them. They can recollect what happened years and years ago, but what happened yesterday is gone – all is as a blank.

They are also alike in their sorrows. They have known what affliction is. Some have had to mourn over thoughtless, undutiful and rebellious children. Some have had to weep over many an open grave. Some have found from sad experience that the world is but a sorry house to live in. In these respects old people are much alike.

But in other respects, how different they are! Some are rich, while others are poor. Some have but few cares and troubles in their declining years, while others are burdened with anxieties. Some again have many friends around them, who show them kindness, while others are left alone with no one to care for them.

But there is a still greater difference between those who are far advanced in years. Here is one stooping and groaning under his heavy burden, vexed with all around him, full of complainings, discontented

with his lot, having no pleasure in life and yet clinging to it as a drowning man grasps at the only plank that is left – tired of this world and yet having no hope beyond it.

We see another with the same grey head and the same bent body; but there is a beam that lights up his aged countenance. He is thankful, contented, peaceful. All goes well with him. He is willing, cheerfully willing, to bear all that God lays upon him. Not a murmur escapes his lips, not a distrustful feeling dwells within. There is a calm tide of joy flowing through his soul.

How is this? What makes all this difference? It is God's grace alone. This fills the heart with peace. This gives comfort and rest now, and awakens in the soul a sweet and blessed hope of joys to come.

Such an old age as this is most desirable, is it not? And such an old age, dear reader, is just what I desire for you. May it be your portion.

I once heard of an old man who was brought to God late in life. He desired that, when he died, these words might be written on his tombstone: "Here lies an old man of *seven* years of age." And why so? The truth was, that all the past years of his long life he counted as no life at all, for his soul was dead. It was only during the last few years he had *really* lived, for he had then lived to God.

You are now grown old. The shades of evening are growing thick around you. You are come to the last stage of life's journey. Your state is something like that of Moses, when he had travelled for forty years through the wilderness and was now come to his journey's end. The Lord announces to him that his death is near. But before he departs, He bids him go up to the top of Pisgah. There he was able to look back on the path along which he had been brought, and look forward to the land of promise.

It must have been very good for him to take a survey of that winding path along which God had led him; to cast his eye back upon the many spots where mercy had been shown him; to call to mind all the difficulties and dangers he had passed through and the gracious manner in which his God had borne with him, notwithstanding his many sins.

Now, this is just the survey which you should take, my aged friend. Get a quiet half-hour now and then and look back into the past, seeking God to help you. It will be good for you, I am sure, and I counsel you to try it.

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The anger of God for sin hath spent itself upon the Person of Christ; and having so spent itself, there remains none of it to light upon the person of a believer.

*Tobias Crisp*

## THE GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST 38th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Report of the Meeting held at Hope Chapel, Blackboys on  
Saturday afternoon, May 15th, 2004*

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The meeting began with hymn 285 and Mr. T.W. Hope (Pastor, Ripley) sought the Lord's blessing. The Chairman, Mr. G.D. Buss, then read from Nehemiah chapter 2, verses 1 to 11, and made a few remarks. Nehemiah had heard of the low state of Zion and was very grieved, and the King saw this. King Artaxerxes had an unwise law that in his presence no man should appear sad. Nehemiah's position was perilous but he had a cause which he laid before the King. The King asked his request. Before Nehemiah replied to the earthly king he spoke to his heavenly King and all the gates opened for him. Why? "*The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we, his servants, will arise and build.*" How we need in our day the grace of Nehemiah!

The Chairman then called on the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. D.J. Playfoot, to introduce the Annual Report for 2003. The Secretary emphasised that the Trust is, by its objects, to assist the churches and trustees and to support denominational charities, and we try to do what we can to help. In his report he dealt first with the finances. The incoming resources totalled £346,395 compared with resources expended of £94,576, a surplus of over £251,000. The total held in cash balances was £674,000, and we watch to see what the Lord's will is concerning these funds. The main item of income was £282,801 from the trustees of Ebenezer Chapel, Hertford. The power of applying the proceeds was given to the Baptist Building Fund under the chapel trust deed of 1842. For some years this chapel had been associated with the Gospel Standard Baptists and so the Baptist Building Fund kindly agreed that one-half of the proceeds should go to the Trust to assist other Gospel Standard chapels.

We have a heritage in our chapel buildings which we seek to preserve. We were pleased to provide £18,230 in grants for chapels and grounds compared with £129,293 in the previous year. In addition, we provide interest free loans where appropriate. Chapels are held under trust and the deeds specify the doctrines. Some deeds include the full 35 Gospel Standard Articles. It is the duty of trustees to ensure that use is in accordance with the deed doctrines and here is another area of preservation. Sometimes we may have to attend meetings dealing with doctrinal matters. Another problem concerns the use of chapel houses, which should be in accordance with the trust deed and if let, the Charities Act 1993 lays down certain requirements.

The Secretary then moved on to the promotion of the gospel of our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by our publications fund. The year 2003 was perhaps the heaviest there had been for printing. The Committee and membership is heavily indebted to our publications manager for his labours. For example, in the early part of this year there was a large order from the Dutch Tract Reformed Society of Holland for 1,900 books to be sent to their missionaries in Ghana. This required 60 mail bags. We were very pleased to publish Mr. Ramsbottom's long-awaited biography of William Gadsby. William Gadsby was one of the founders of the Gospel Standard denomination and as Mr. Ramsbottom wrote in his history of the Gospel Standard Magazine, this people is "*a people who could not be satisfied with light or formal things. They wanted divine realities.*" The book has sold well and up to April 20th this year the total was over 1,200. The book *Morning Readings* by James Bourne was also published last year and has been appreciated by several readers. So far over 200 copies have been sold. In the same line, *In All Their Affliction* by Murdoch Campbell sells steadily, a further 84 copies having been sold last year.

The Miracles series and Bible Doctrines continue to form the lion's share of sales, being 46% by volume in 2003. Nevertheless there is a steady sale of many other books. The Committee has authorised the publication of *The Miracles of Jesus* series in Swahili for a Tanzanian group, subject to satisfactory checks being carried out. Other languages are mentioned from time to time such as *Bible Doctrines* in French. *Gadsby's Hymns* are much appreciated in America. The Secretary also mentioned the wealth of material in the library and the new catalogue which is now available.

There were no questions for the Secretary and the Annual Report and Accounts were received by the members. The committee members retiring by rotation, Messrs. J.F. Ashby, S.A. Hyde and J.A. Kingham were re-elected and the auditors Mazars were also re-elected.

Hymn 380 was then sung and Mr. C.A. Wood (Pastor, Tamworth Road, Croydon) addressed the meeting. He spoke from Exodus 26, verse 15: "And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood standing up." The details of the tabernacle cover many chapters and set forth the preciousness of Christ. His desire was for the Lord to open our eyes to reveal gospel truths and apply those blessings in our souls.

These boards were taken from the shittim tree, common in the wilderness, which had to be cut down. These boards speak of believers found in the wilderness and cut down. He remembered his pastor speaking of a case of a young man who determined to get away from chapel, and did. One Sunday night, going out with his so-called friends, one just casually said, "Where are we going?" God used that as the arrow of conviction and stopped him. The case of Saul of Tarsus and the

Philippian jailor also came to his mind. The work of cutting down sometimes is gentle. It was so in his case, and such who are being dealt with in this way are often sorely tried. The boards needed to be prepared and shaped, and he saw in this the hand of his loving heavenly Father who will lead us in the paths of tribulation to prepare us finally for heaven itself.

The boards then needed a foundation so that they would stand up. That foundation was silver sockets made from the silver given by the males over twenty years old as a token of the need of redemption. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Silver here sets forth redemption, something weighty and solid. Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. How were the boards to fit into the sockets? We read that there were two tenons on each board. He suggested the tenons would look like little hands which would fit into those silver sockets. What do we see here? First, the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary's cross, the blood shed, the fountain opened, and then a risen Christ. The Apostle Paul as he writes to the church at Corinth sets this forth: "Moreover, brethren I declare unto you the gospel which I preach unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand." What a provision for our faith there is in all that Christ has done! A poor sinner who is perishing has something for his faith to hang on to, to reach forth to, to believe, trust and hope in, and to lay hold upon redemption, salvation and the precious blood.

How he emphasised that there is a laying hold upon the hem of His garment, and virtue which comes forth from the dear Saviour! "Thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace." As he grew older Mr. Wood felt more than ever his need to hold on. We have to learn that it is, "Nothing in my hand I bring." The tenon did not have anything attached to it. So we have to come with nothing of ourselves except all our sin.

He saw also in these tenons the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A word came to his mind, Paul writing to the church at Rome when he is speaking of these things. "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe," that is the hand of faith isn't it? God-given faith, not just up here in the head but from the heart, powerful moving is this faith, "if we believe on him that raised up," this is the mark of the resurrection, "Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Now the boards had been cut out and prepared with the silver slabs and the sockets therein and then the tenons of the boards. Stood up in their place, those boards would not be kept close together; there would still be movement. So there were five bars running through those boards, two at the top, two at the bottom and one hidden in the centre. He just ventured this thought: the apostles and the prophets could represent those

two at the top and bottom, but the centre one, the hidden one, he believed set forth the full, vital, powerful need of the Holy Spirit of God. How absolutely vital it is for that secret work of the Holy Spirit in our prayers, our preaching, our reading and our meditation!

Finally, Mr. Wood dealt with the overlay of gold which he felt spoke of that best robe. Who was it for? It was for that son who ran away, determined to go his own way and spend his substance in riotous living. But he was brought to nothing, brought to himself. Wouldn't it be wonderful if there were more people brought to themselves, to see themselves lost, and turned about face and brought back to their father's house? The father will not turn such away. This is our heavenly Father that saw him a great way off and ran, fell on his neck and kissed him. That is the gospel, that is the love of the Father. "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." This is that glorious dress, the robe of His righteousness, righteousness imputed.

The meeting concluded with the singing of hymn 564 and the benediction.

D.J.P.

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### AN AGED MINISTER'S FAREWELL

*By William Kiffin (1616-1701)*

*A message for his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren at the end of his own account of his life.*

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I have tasted of the goodness of God and His favour towards me from my youth, it being now sixty years since it pleased the Lord to give me a taste of His rich grace and mercy in Jesus Christ to my soul. Although my unprofitableness under these mercies and providences that have attended me hath been very great, they are not to be looked upon as products of chance (as many do serve experiences and deliverances, which they receive from God in the course of their lives) but as fruits of the care and goodness which God is pleased to show His poor people, while they are in in this world; as there is no desire hatched against them for their ruin but they are rescued from them by the special care and providence of God. And truly I may say by experience, "If the Lord had not been my help, they would many a time have swallowed me up quick."

I leave these few instances of the divine care to you my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, that you may remember them with thankful hearts as they must prove to the praise of God on my account. I leave them, also, desiring the Lord to bless them to you, above all praying for you that you might in a special manner look after the

concerns of your souls. To know God and Jesus Christ is eternal life. Endeavour to be diligent, to enquire after and to be established in the great doctrines of the gospel, which is of absolute necessity to salvation.

I must every day expect to leave the world having lived in it much longer than I expected, yet I know not what my eyes may see before my change. The world is full of confusion. The last times are upon us. The signs are very visible. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many in religion waxes cold. God is by His providence shaking the earth under our feet. *There is no sure foundation of rest and peace but only in Jesus Christ.* To His grace I commend you. Amen.

*Stranger Than Fiction*, the life of William Kiffin, is available from Gospel Standard Trust Publications.

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## LET THEM DECLARE HIS PRAISE IN THE ISLANDS

*The life and poetry of Hallgrímur Pétursson*

*By Dr. I.A Sadler*

*(Continued from page 262)*

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### Part 3

In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus voluntarily gave Himself to be bound and taken captive. His subsequent mockery, cruel sufferings upon the cross and glorious resurrection were to set free His beloved people from the condemnation justly due to them on account of their sins. Thus the Lord Jesus procured for each believer a perfect liberty in union with Him. In the previous article we quoted from Hallgrímur Pétursson's poetry on the agony of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. In this article we will proceed with the events of that awesome night, quoting further from the "Hymns of the Passion."

From Gethsemane Jesus was taken to the high priest and set before the Council. When many false accusations were laid against Him, we read that Jesus "held His peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands" (Mark 14. 61-65).

Hallgrímur Pétursson meditates thus upon the cruel mockery which the blessed Redeemer endured at the hands of the high priest's servants.



One of the high priest's craven band  
Smote the Redeemer with his hand,  
So runs the record holy.  
Meekly the Saviour made reply,  
And thou, my soul, must learn thereby  
To speak in measures lowly.

My blessed Lord, to Thee I raise  
Full measure of my heart's deep praise  
That this my shame Thou borest.  
O, in the riches of Thy grace  
Touch with Thy hand my blushing face,  
As Thou my state restorest.

(Hymn 10, vv. 15, 17)

As these terrible deeds were being carried out, Peter followed at a distance into the palace. It was here that Peter was challenged by those who warmed themselves around the fire. "And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilaean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22. 58-62). Hallgrímur Pétursson writes beautifully about that gracious look from the Lord Jesus that broke Peter's heart and gave repentance.

Sadly sat Peter still  
Close by the fire.  
Twice had the cock's crow shrill  
Proved him a liar.

Thrice he disowned his Lord –  
Conscience was hardened:  
Could he now be restored,  
Comforted, pardoned?

"Jesus then turned His face"  
(Thus it is written),  
And by His glance of grace  
Peter was smitten.

Back to the garden scene  
Conscience then took him;  
Memory's torments keen  
Tore him and shook him.

Bowing his head with shame,  
Peter came creeping

'Way from the mocking flame  
Bitterly weeping.

(Hymn 12, vv. 1-5)

Behold, how a view of the smitten face of the Lord Jesus broke Peter's heart! What need we have to view the Lord Jesus by faith, that we be given "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6). Under the old dispensation of the law, no one might see the face of God and live. But in the gospel "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3. 18). May the Holy Spirit reveal unto us more of these soul-refreshing views of the loving Saviour and Mediator, whose smitten face, when seen by faith, brings forth repentance mingled with love and peace in believing.

After the Lord Jesus had been brought before Pilate, who found no fault in Him, He was sent to Herod. After questioning Jesus, "Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves" (Luke 23. 11, 12). Hallgrímur Pétursson writes of the gorgeous robe and considers the glorious robe of righteousness in which the Lord's beloved people are arrayed by virtue of Christ's suffering atonement. Hallgrímur Pétursson's thoughts notice the reconciliation between Pilate and Herod, and from that he is then drawn to meditate upon the infinitely more glorious and eternal reconciliation between God and the sinner, effected by the intercession of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God.

In shining robe Thine enemies  
Thy holy form invested.  
A parable their action is,  
For Thou hast manifested  
Thy grace to such an one as me,  
It covers my transgression ....

Then grant that I, my Saviour dear,  
In garments of salvation,  
May in Thy pathways persevere,  
In prayer and supplication.  
A robe of righteousness, I pray,  
In Thy divine forbearing  
For me preparing,  
Fit me for that divine array,  
Thy glory ever sharing.

Two enemies were reconciled  
The day they stood before Thee.

Grant also to Thy wayward child  
 Thy pardon, I implore Thee.  
 'Twixt God and me my Saviour goes,  
 In mercy for me pleading,  
 And interceding,  
 And thus the enmity o'erthrows,  
 In grace all grace exceeding.  
 (Hymn 21, vv. 9-12)

*(To be continued)*

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## OBITUARY

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**Ruth Maud Fay**, member of the church at Zoar Chapel, Norwich, for almost 46 years, entered her eternal rest on January 1st, 2004, aged 84.

Our dear friend was born in Guildford of godly parents and moved to Norwich in 1936 when her father took up the pastorate at Zoar Chapel. As she grew up, she longed to get away from parental restraint and was glad to join the services. However, the Lord in His own time and way mercifully called her by His grace and gave her a concern for eternal matters and a longing to return to attending Zoar with her family.

Over the ensuing months and years, she was brought to know much of her old nature, and the temptations of Satan. She could undoubtedly echo the language of the poet: "My doubts and fears alternate rise."

About this time she commenced keeping a diary, and some of the particulars which follow have been taken from it.

Leading up to her baptism in November 1958, the Lord so exercised her soul, through the ministry of her father, concerning the ordinances of His house, and it was about that time, whilst at her work, that the dear Lord Jesus drew near. "Sitting alone on duty in the office this afternoon, the dear Lord Jesus suddenly broke into my soul so filling my poor heart with His love, setting my soul at sweet gospel liberty, that I could only say over and over:

'Why me, why me, O blessed Lord,  
 Why such a wretch as me?'"

Our friend had a deep love for the cause at Zoar, which the Lord made to her her spiritual home for the many long years of her membership. She carried the cause as a burden upon her heart and watched over it prayerfully. She was a true "mother in Israel." Her love and loyalty to the three pastors who were undershepherds during her lifetime was a mark of the grace of God upon her spirit. There were marked times when she rejoiced with those that rejoiced, as she saw her prayers being answered.

She often wrote in her diary about the various trials she encountered, giving no personal details of what they were or how they came about, but wrote of the deliverances from them, giving all the honour and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some visits are recorded, and one such was at the Lord's table the first Sunday in March 1999 when singing hymn 170 verse 5:

“Sinner, thou hast done the deed;  
Thou hast made the Saviour bleed!” etc.

This was followed within two days by the felt presence of Christ in her own home, speaking to her the words, “No condemnation.” She said, “What followed was between my dear Saviour and my soul.”

Her exercise every morning before breakfast was to read both Philpot’s portions and the scripture from where the portion came. It was at these devotions that the dear Lord often drew near with a token of His love.

It was apparent in the last few years of her life that the Lord was preparing her for heaven and Himself. Her last Sunday on earth was spent as usual in the Lord’s house and at the close of the evening service she said to the friends, “It’s been all for me. I have all I want.”

She came to her end “in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.” Her passing brought deep sorrow and a keen sense of loss to us at Zoar and to many friends from other causes of truth. This was apparent by the chapel being almost full at the funeral service where the text preached from was very descriptive of the spiritual path of our late dear friend: “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Tim. 1. 12).

P.B.P.

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### “NOTHING TO PAY”

(*Luke 7. 42*)

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My debt is huge beyond record,  
And causes deep dismay,  
Yet, though it be so vast, O Lord,  
I’ve nought wherewith to pay!

My constant sins enhance the debt,  
The sum, from day to day,  
Swells and appals me much, and yet  
I’ve nought wherewith to pay!

But hear the voice of covenant grace  
In pity to thee say,  
Thy Saviour undertook thy case,  
There’s nought for thee to pay!

Since thou the debt dost freely own  
And loud for mercy pray,  
I frankly every mite condone –  
There’s nought for thee to pay!

Thy Surety suffered in thy place  
Thy debt to put away,  
Did sin of every name erase –  
There’s nought for thee to pay!

Nothing is wanting, all is done,  
 “‘Tis finished!” hear Him say –  
 The dying words of God the Son –  
 There’s nought for thee to pay!

He was made sin that thou might’st be  
 Righteous in Him – the Way –  
 From law-charge and from curse made free –  
 There’s nought for thee to pay!

Just art thou in His righteousness,  
 Perfect in this array,  
 Sin hurled into forgetfulness –  
 There’s nought for thee to pay!

Sin’s nauseous bitters thou wilt taste  
 Daily, throughout the way,  
 That pride be crushed and self abased,  
 But still, there’s nought to pay!

Vast gratitude this pardon draws,  
 And does my spirit lay  
*Far deeper still in debt*, because  
 There’s nought for me to pay!

O Holy Spirit, mighty God!  
 To contrite souls convey  
 Thy power to sing, through Jesus’ blood,  
 There nothing is to pay!

Leicester

J. Dulley (from an old magazine)

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**The Path of True Godliness**, by Willem Teellinck; paperback; 300 pages; special price \$11.50, normal \$19.99; published and obtainable from Reformation Heritage Books, 2919 Leonard St. N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49525, U.S.A.

This book of Willem Teellinck (1579-1629) is the fourth in a series of eight volumes of works of the Dutch Second Reformation (Nadere Reformatie) being launched in English by Baker Academic U.S.A., in conjunction with The Dutch Reformed Translation Society, under the title *Classics of Reformed Spirituality*. Already available in English from Reformation Heritage Books are *The Distinguishing Marks of God’s Children* (Jean Taffin, 1529-1602) \$9, *The Duties of Parents* (Jacobus Koelmann, 1632-1695) \$9, and *Spiritual Desertion* (Gisbertius Voetius, 1589-1676 and Johannes Hoornbeek, 1617-1666) \$9. Due for publication in 2004 are *A Short and Clear Explanation of the Song of Solomon* (Godefridus Udemans, 1581-1649), and *Essential Truths in the Heart of a Christian* (Wilhelmus Schortinghuis, 1700-1750), and in 2005 *Nine Sermons* (Jadocus van Lodensteyn, 1620-1677), and *The Steps of Spiritual Life* (Theodore à Brakel, 1608-1669).

While many English Puritan works have been republished and sold worldwide by the Banner of Truth, the books of the Dutch Second Reformation, which ran parallel with English Puritanism, have largely remained inaccessible to the English-speaking world. Books of the Second Reformation already available in English include the four volume set of à Brakel's work, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, (Reformation Heritage, U.S.A.) and in this country *The ABC of Faith* by Alexander Comrie, *Redeeming the Time* by Willem Teellinck and *The Publican's Prayer* by Theodore van der Groe (all from Zoar Publications, translated by Marcus Banfield).

It is clear that the Dutch Second Reformation was greatly influenced by the English Puritan movement. William Teellinck, who is regarded as the father of the Second Reformation, was in England several times and came under the influence of the English Puritans, John Dod and Arthur Hildersam. He married an English wife, preached often to a group of English exiles at Middleburg in The Netherlands, and translated the works of the English Puritans, William Whately and William Perkins, into Dutch.

While Teellinck was a powerful preacher, his greatest influence has lain in his writings. This book, *The Path of True Godliness (Nord-Sterre, aanwijzende de juiste van de ware godzalighed* [North Star, Showing the Right Direction of True Godliness]) is Teellinck's major work on sanctification. At times it sounds somewhat legalistic, yet at root it cannot say too much to us about God-given separation from worldliness in this age in the churches of spiritual decline. He shows clearly that true godliness consists in the walk and life and conduct of a true believer for "faith without works is dead." He had clear views of fallen human nature and the power and subtlety of Satan. He says about the practice of godliness, "We must begin to practise this, not in our own strength, which means absolutely nothing, but in the power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the strength of our life and by whom we can do all things" (p. 39). His emphasis was, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." In the 18th century, in the days of Alexander Comrie and Theodore van der Groe, his influence waned as more emphasis was placed in the ministry on the inward work of grace in the heart and less on what the old Puritans called the 'practick' part. Both are necessary in the preaching of the gospel.

J.R.B.

**Is It Nothing To You?** by Frederick S. Leahy; paperback; 134 pages; price £5.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

The author is a retired minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, writing this book, we are told in the Foreword, as an octogenarian. With one exception, the chapters were originally sermons, now somewhat enlarged. The sub-title of the book is *The Unchanging Significance of the Cross*.

The early chapters liken the shameful and outright rejection of Zechariah the prophet, the value of thirty pieces of silver being put upon his ministry, to the rejection of Christ and His ministry, which the prophecy foreshadows in a remarkable manner. Later chapters deal with the transient interest in and adulation of the ministry of Christ, the choice of Jesus or Barabbas, an examination of the character of Pilate, and the significance of the letters of

Hebrew, Greek and Latin in the title on the cross. Of particular interest is the carefully reasoned discourse upon the Lord's dying prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." How are we to understand this prayer for the non-elect? The full wrath of God withheld for a time, solely because the Seed of the woman would one day crush the serpent's head. Solemnly, the author reminds us that the sun will soon go down on the day of grace. Perhaps the best chapter is that devoted to looking on the One "whom they have pierced."

In the main, quotations are from the English Standard Version, occasionally from the Authorised Version – how much happier we should have been to read the familiar texts we so much love! A few present-day incidents, and quotations from secular poets, do not enhance the book and occasionally lower its dignity. An unhappy expression appears on page 115: "Never have you had a greater opportunity to possess eternal life." Nevertheless, there is much thought-provoking material, written in a conversational and easily read style. The concluding chapter is a short epilogue, in which the author states, rightly, that the title of the book is a question that may be asked of all who hear the gospel, "Is it nothing *to you?*"

T.H.W.S.

**Old Testament Sermons;** hardback; 192 pages; price £13.95; **New Testament Sermons;** hardback; 336 pages; price £15.50; **Sermons on Hebrews;** hardback; 208 pages; price £13.95; all by Robert Murray M'Cheyne; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

No minister was more highly esteemed in his day than the godly young Scottish minister, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, who died in 1840 at the early age of 29. He was minister at St. Peter's Church, Dundee, in the Church of Scotland. This was before the great Disruption of 1843, but he was closely associated with those who separated to form the Free Church.

M'Cheyne was as much respected for the sanctity of his life as his successful pulpit labours. After his death his elders would show visitors the place where their late pastor used to weep over his congregation. Such was the awe in the services that as he ascended the pulpit steps, the congregation would begin silently to weep; they were conscious of the solemn presence of the Almighty among them.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne is best remembered now through the well-known biography by Andrew Bonar, and through the beautiful poem he wrote, "When this passing world is done," with the ending to each verse:

"Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe,"

closing with the verse:

"Chosen not for good in me,  
Wakened up from wrath to flee,  
Hidden in the Saviour's side,  
By the Spirit sanctified;  
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,  
By my love, how much I owe."

These books of sermons are transcribed from a box of old papers, sold sixty years after the preacher's death, containing his notebooks. The sermons are

exceedingly solemn and full of Christ. Obviously they suffer from not being complete sermons – it might be said, “Some of the flesh missing from the bones.” Also, they cannot possibly convey either the earnestness or the sweet savour of when they were first delivered. The publishers speak of them as preached being “fragrant with the sweetness of Him whose name is as ointment poured forth.”

There is a beautiful and orderly opening of the text. A number on the high priesthood of Christ appear to be continuous lectures, and there are twenty-seven consecutive sermons on Peter’s First Epistle. The clear teaching on the Sabbath is much needed today.

Sadly, we do have to speak of “flies in the ointment.” We have never come across a preacher with whom the free offer of the gospel, with which we do not agree, is so extreme. Sometimes it does not seem consistent with the doctrines of free grace. Concerning the Erskines and the free offer, J.C. Philpot commented about the flies in the ointment but felt the ointment was sweet. J.H. Gosden stated he was “perplexed, but not offended” by the free offer in Bunyan. The profit and enjoyment of these sermons will be markedly influenced by how much M’Cheyne’s free offer affects the reader.

**John Owen on the Lord’s Supper**, by Jon D. Payne; hardback; 256 pages; price £15.95; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This is a book of two distinct parts. In the first 88 pages Dr. Payne gives a learned, well-researched and profitable thesis on Dr. Owen’s teaching on the Lord’s Supper. Dr. Owen lays great emphasis on the value and profit of the Lord’s Supper. Utterly repudiating both the Romanist and Lutheran view of a real bodily presence in the Supper, he equally rejects the Zwinglian view that it is only a memorial. He strongly believes there is a real blessing in the bread and the wine to worthy communicants when received by faith. Dr. Owen would have been shocked by the present day attitude of so many, even in our congregations. He felt the Supper is a wonderful blessing and most gracious gift from the Lord Jesus for the help, comfort and sanctification of His church.

The second (and greater) part of the book contains twenty-five communion addresses given by Dr. Owen. These are printed as originally given, and we cannot commend them too highly. Over the years several of them have appeared in the *Gospel Standard*.

These communion addresses are beautiful. If Owen is the best of the Puritans, we believe this is the best of Owen! Why do we say this? For two reasons.

1. There can be no subject more sacred, more blessed, than the sin-atonement sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus. This is the theme of all these addresses.

2. Dr. Owen was a great man, preacher and theologian – and only one criticism ever seems to be levelled at him. That he is too long. But this disappears in these short addresses given at the Lord’s table.

We are delighted that The Banner of Truth Trust has reprinted Owen’s Communion Addresses so soon after Krummacher’s *The Suffering Saviour*.

An eminent minister once wrote that there was nothing nearer to heaven on earth (outside Scripture) than Rutherford’s Letters. Perhaps he had never read the communion addresses of Dr. Owen!



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
OCTOBER 2004

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**PREDESTINATION AND FATALISM**

The Articles of our national church declare that the doctrine of predestination “is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort.” Yet few believe it. Many oppose it or deny it. And even those who do believe it often confuse it with fatalism.

Then what is predestination? And what is fatalism? And what is the difference?

In its narrower sense predestination means that those whom God has eternally chosen must in time be called by God’s grace and at last reach His eternal glory because He has ordained it so (Rom. 8. 29, 30). In its broader sense predestination means that God has infallibly determined all that shall ever take place, without in any way being the author of sin.

This truth is clearly taught in Scripture. It is said that one of William III’s ministers expressed surprise that his monarch should believe in predestination. The royal Calvinist replied, “What would you think of your king if he went into battle without a plan?”

If God is God, then we *must* believe in predestination; otherwise things are taking place day by day which God did not know would take place, and which He cannot stop taking place.

This is the “unspeakable comfort” of predestination, that God has a plan. He is in control, not Satan. Things do not happen by chance or accident. His plan is all-wise and all-gracious, and will certainly be accomplished. All things are in God’s hands. All is for the honour and glory of God, and for His people’s good.

This truth has given courage to God’s people in adversity. Our martyrs believed it. Our Reformers believed it. The Huguenots believed it. The Scottish Covenanters believed it. The godly Puritans believed it. And so in all their deep sorrows, persecutions and trials, it was a help to them – as we in a later day sing:

“All must come, and last, and end,  
As shall please my heavenly Friend.”

So Paul, when everything seemed to be going wrong, could testify: “I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.”

But is not this fatalism, that “whatever will be will be”? What is the

difference? So many things seem to be the same.

1. Fatalism is evil. God is not in it. There is no purpose, no point, no religion, no end, no wisdom, no love, no God! In a word – it is atheism. It is blind fate that rules.

2. Fatalism omits one vital point – that the *means* are ordained as well as the *end*. Let us explain. God has predestinated His people to heaven; but He has also predestinated them to repentance and faith in Jesus. God has predestinated His people to heaven, but He has also predestinated that they shall persevere in the truth to the end. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

One of the clearest illustrations of this is the account of Paul’s shipwreck in Acts 27. Paul clearly affirmed that of all the 276 souls aboard the ship, not one would perish. God had told him so. “There shall be no loss of any man’s life among you” (verse 22). But when some of the crew were trying to escape, Paul cried, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved” (verse 31). In other words the *means* is just as much predestinated as the *end*.\*

One of the best illustrations we have ever heard of this was when in boyhood days we were listening to an old Yorkshire preacher. He said, “You all know that I come from Halifax. In Halifax there is a very steep hill” (and he named it). “Now,” he said, “if I were sitting in a bus at the top of the hill and before it started knew that it would crash at the bottom: if I believed in predestination I should jump off! If I were a fatalist I should stay on!” We feel there is a depth of divinity in this quaint explanation.

3. Predestination is not the *only* truth taught in the Bible. It is taught, very clearly, but there are many more things beside.

We do not know who or what is predestinated and who or what is not. The gospel is to be preached to all, and those whom God has predestinated He will infallibly call out. And though God has infallibly ordained all that will take place, we do not know *what* He has ordained. *Really, no one is a logical fatalist!* If he were he would never get up, never go to dinner, never do anything.

God has said, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” – in that order. Those whom God elects He calls. We cannot ascend to heaven to see whose names are in the Book of Life. But we know that those who are called by God’s grace, and blessed with faith and repentance, are called *because* their names are in the Book of Life.

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\* One of the greatest champions for the truth of predestination was Augustus Toplady – but he was terrified of riding on a horse. His enemies taunted him with this. How did it fit in with his belief in divine sovereignty? Toplady’s reply was: “I have often wondered if my terror of riding on a horse is the God-ordained means of preserving my life.” And this was not mere casuistry!

Similarly, “All that the Father giveth Me” – in eternity – “shall come to Me” – in time.

We turn from fatalism as a God-dishonouring thing. But, sadly, at times it is as a dark shadow over those who believe in God’s eternal predestination, and always has been.

“Why pray?” says Satan. “If all is infallibly ordained, what is the use of prayer?” Who does not know this temptation of the evil one? What is our answer? That He who ordained all things is the One who bids us pray. No one knew the truths of God’s eternal decrees like the Lord Jesus, but it was He who said, “Ask, and ye shall receive,” and who gave such gracious encouragement to pray. As it fits in with the doctrine: God has graciously ordained that many of His purposes shall be fulfilled in answer to His people’s prayers.

In Ezekiel 36 God tells what He has infallibly decreed, but then adds: “I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.”

Again, how Satan tempts godly parents that it is no use praying for their children, because if they are not among the elect they cannot be saved. But this is the logic of the devil! It is our God-given privilege to pray for our children and grandchildren, and in praying for them, above all to seek the blessing of the Lord which makes eternally rich.

May the Lord deliver His church from the dark cloud of God-dishonouring fatalism but also make the truth of predestination precious to our souls.

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## ARTICLE 17 OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Of Predestination and Election

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Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God’s purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort to godly

persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture; and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

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### **AN AFFLICTED MINISTER TO HIS FLOCK**

*An address by Richard Maydwell to his flock at Pulverbach,  
Shropshire, December 28th, 1852*

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My dear brethren in our one common Lord and Saviour,

As I am unable, as you know, from illness to meet you at this time at our usual monthly meeting, I wish to send you a few lines which may be read should you meet together at Miss Gilpin's or, if not, may be seen by each individually at your own houses, as a token of my sincere love and affection and the concern I feel for your souls; for indeed you are much in my heart, and I daily think of you, and remember you in my prayers at a throne of grace, for I daily long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ, that your profiting may yet more and more appear.

It has been my desire and prayer that my present affliction may turn out rather to the furtherance of the gospel of Christ among you, being sanctified by the Lord's rich grace, both to myself and also to the church of God committed to my charge; for I know He can make my temporary separation from you, or even my death itself, more profitable to you than my continuance amongst you. I have indeed desired to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, feeling that He has taken possession of my whole heart, yet I hope I am made willing to abide still a little longer in the flesh, if it be for His glory and your good. But indeed He does not need so poor and wretched an instrument as myself, but can carry on His own work by whomsoever He please.

I hope you will join with me in blessing and magnifying the God of all grace for His rich and abounding mercy towards your unworthy

minister in this present affliction. He has indeed made my bed in my sickness and from the affliction taken the curse. I cannot possibly express to you how kind and tender He has been, and how He has endeared Himself to my soul. I feel that He has done me great good by this dispensation, for which I shall have reason to bless Him for ever; and I can say with all my heart with Hezekiah, "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live." It is exactly so that I have found it. The Lord has in this furnace sweetly and powerfully renewed my spiritual life, which before was languishing, so that my youth has been renewed like the eagle's. Therefore I must say with David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." O how He has made my soul to hang upon Him, and to wait upon Him every day and all day long, to be fed with that hidden manna which cometh down from heaven! And I have been so taken up with this heavenly food that the world and everything else has been a blank to me, and I have longed to depart that I might more fully enjoy it at the fountain Head.

Now, my dear friends, if some of you knew a little more of this heavenly enjoyment, you would not be so much taken up with the poor and perishing things of time and sense, which will be no help to you, but only a piercing thorn when you come, like me, on the bed of affliction. Some of you are and have been a source of much comfort to me, being enabled by the Lord's grace to walk closely with Him, and in a tender spirit of humility and godly fear. The Lord bless you, my dear brethren, and enable you to increase more and more, and remember that the secret of all fruitfulness is in cleaving close to our great Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and living daily and hourly by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us; and continually receiving out of His fulness grace for grace. This will keep the soul low at His feet, humbled, emptied of self, and under an abiding feeling of poverty, want and entire dependence on Him for all things.

How I desire that the Lord's great goodness to me in this affliction may encourage you and strengthen your hands in still waiting upon Him, perceiving how rich in mercy He is to all who call upon Him in sincerity and truth! You know He says, "Open thy mouth *wide*, and I will fill it." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." I am a witness that the Lord can make a bed of sickness and suffering a little heaven to the soul; and I believe no trouble can overtake us, but the sensible presence of the Lord really enjoyed in the soul will be sufficient to carry us safely, profitably and even comfortably through all; yea, death itself will be stripped of all its terrors if Jesus be but there to smooth the dying

pillow and enable us to rest on His loving breast.

And let me give you this counsel: to be more engaged in all your difficulties and troubles in making the Lord your refuge, and wrestling with Him in the prayer of faith, than in filling a fellow-creature's ear with the sad tale of all your trials in order to gain his pity. You will find it to be much more to the glory of God, your own profit and that of others to tread thus in the steps of our forefather Jacob, who in his trouble was found wrestling with the Lord, and saying to Him, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." O! let it be seen that you have more of this spirit in you, and therefore are entitled to be called the true "Israel of God," that is, *prevailers with Him*. For you know God Himself gave Jacob that name, because "as a prince," said He, "hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

And remember our divine Lord's words, "Enter into thy closet, and ... pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." What is this open reward? Surely it is the Lord's appearing for us in all our troubles and difficulties, both outward and inward, and thus making it fully manifest to all that we are the people whom the Lord hath blessed. Wherefore give the Lord no rest till He make you a praise in the earth; and be sure you pay particular attention to the state of your hearts, and the frame of your minds towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beware of that cooling of the affections towards Him, which is but too common and which is greatly to His dishonour. Remember how He warned the church of Ephesus of old on this very account, for though there were things in them which He commends, yet He takes especial notice of this one point in a way of reproof that they had left their first love. "Remember therefore," says He, "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."

The Lord has threatened this often amongst ourselves, and who can tell how soon it may be fulfilled? and of all judgments this is the sorest. It may be well that you should each ask yourselves how far you feel it to be so. Surely if the Lord Jesus has indeed bought us and redeemed us from sin, death and hell at the price of His own precious blood, He well deserves the whole of our heart and best affections; and we do not consider how great a sin it is, and how highly provoking to Him, that any of the paltry things of this life – be they what they may, whether the creature, or the business of this world with all its gains and profits, or whatever else – should take up that place in our hearts which is due only to Him. It is this sin in His people which brings down upon them so many heavy blows. "My people," He says, "have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out

cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

O my dear friends, you little know what you lose by living at a distance from Jesus Christ! O there are unsearchable treasures to be found in Him, something of which I have been made to see and feel in this affliction to that degree that I have been lost and dead to everything else, and have been swallowed up, as it were, in the charms of His divine beauty and excellency, and it would be quite impossible to describe at those times how my heart has yearned, as it were, over Him with unutterable love and affection! and never in my whole life have I been brought, I think, before to so near and close a union and communion with Him, and I am sure they who have tasted anything of this will be longing to know yet more of Him, for there is nothing in this whole world to be compared to this.

Wherefore do not rest satisfied with merely a slight acquaintance with Him, but seek to dig deep into this heavenly mine. There is untold wealth to be found in it, which will amply repay all your toil. Let this mind be in you, which was in the Apostle Paul, whose one desire was this: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained ... but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” O that it could be said that we were indeed all walking in the footsteps of this man of God; but alas! I fear this cannot be said to be the case. O how far must those be from it who are found walking in the spirit of this world, entangled by slothfulness, carnal ease, pride and enmity, and manifesting continually the sad evils of their natural temper and disposition, pettish, fretful, and irritable, so as to bring a scandal and reproach upon their profession!

These things, I assure you, give your afflicted minister often a heavy and aching heart, for I know how greatly these things provoke and dishonour the Lord, and what a load of dreadful trouble they must one day bring upon such. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,” and that it is not a small thing to bring down His anger upon us, I would persuade and entreat you to lay these things deeply to heart, for be assured that “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”; and you will find it a terrible thing if in the day of your calamity the Lord should frown upon you, and visit you in wrath, when you most stand in need of His divine support. When I look at some, the hardness of their spirit and the untenderness of their walk, I have many fears as to what their end will be, and God grant that they may be made to fear for themselves, and to give the Lord no rest until He appear for

them and bring them out of so dreadful a condition.

And now, my dear friends, what shall I more say? O that it might please God that this address from your afflicted minister in his sick chamber might be made to reach your hearts and consciences, for indeed it has been written under a deep feeling of the exceeding seriousness and weightiness of the things he has advanced; and he has found in his present illness how unspeakable a mercy it is to have the Lord for a refuge in the day of trouble. "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

I have never been more at a point that I have not followed a cunningly-devised fable when I have made known to you in my ministry the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, though I now see how feebly it has been set forth in anything that I have said, and I must say with the queen of Sheba when she beheld the glory of Solomon, "The half of it has not been told you." May you be persuaded and stirred up to go like her, that you may get a sight spiritually of this greater than Solomon, and I am sure that, like her, there will be no more spirit left in you, or relish for anything else; to live thus is "to be spiritually minded," which "is life and peace," whereas "to be carnally minded is death." O that the Lord would make us all to abound more and more in these things!

And now, brethren, I would ask both your prayers and praises to the Lord for all His goodness to your unworthy minister. The Lord unite you in love one to another and the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

This address can be obtained as a pamphlet (45p plus postage) from Mr. John Crowter, Haystacks, Green Lane, Potter Heigham, Norfolk, NR29 5LP.

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## DIVINE JUSTICE SATISFIED

*By James Durham (1622-1658)*

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"By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53. 11).

There are two things of great concernment for men to know, for sinful men to know (if anything be of concernment). The one is: how the justice of God that is provoked may be satisfied? Or what it is by which provoked justice is satisfied? And the other is: what the way is, how we come to get that satisfaction applied to us? Or, what is the way to get the benefit of it made ours? And both of them are answered in this verse clearly and shortly. The first is held out in the first part of the verse to



be the *travail of Christ's soul*, which has a special look to the covenant of redemption, and to the condition on which it is accomplished and performed, that is, His *soul-travail*, under which all His sufferings are comprehended. The other is in the latter part of the verse: "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." This holds forth in short the gospel way, how a sinner may be brought to get the benefit of Christ's satisfaction; these two being the sum of the gospel, to wit, Christ's purchase, and the application of it to sinners.

In this last part of the verse, we have these five things to be considered, which express this:

1. The great benefit that flows from Christ's sufferings, and it is *justification*; which in a word is this much, to be absolved, acquitted and set free from the guilt of sin and from the curse of God; *justifying* here being opposed to *condemning*. So that when it is said, "They shall be justified," the meaning is that these that were before obnoxious to the curse, and that were by the law to be condemned (according to that word, Gal. 3. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"), shall now, through the benefit of Christ's sufferings, be declared free, and set at liberty, even as a debtor is set free by the intervening of a responsible cautioner.

2. The parties made partakers of the benefit, and they are called, *many*; though they are few, being compared with the world, yet in themselves they are many. "They shall come," or many shall come, "from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south and shall sit down" with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob "in the kingdom of heaven" (see Luke 13. 28, 29). And, comparing this word with the last words of the verse it says, that they are as many as these are whose iniquities He bare, and the payment of whose debt He undertook. It is not to be taken universally for all, but for some singular, selected persons, whose iniquities He bore.

3. The fountain from which, or from whom this benefit flows to many. It is the Lord's *righteous Servant*, *He shall justify many*; where the effect is attributed alone to Him.

4. The way in which Christ justifies. It is not simply by forgiving (as He indeed has power to forgive sins), but *meritoriously*, to wit, by His satisfying for them. Therefore it is added, "For He shall bear their iniquities." He shall take on their sins and pay their debt. And therefore, when they come before the tribunal of God, the guilt of their sins is taken off them through His merit.

5. The great means by which this benefit is derived to these many. It is *by His knowledge*; which is not to be taken *subjectively*, for the knowledge that He has, but *objectively*. That is, He, by making Himself

known by believing. Or, it is “by His knowledge,” not *actively*, but *passively* taken; not His knowledge, whereby He does know, but that whereby He is known. It is in a word, by faith, according to that, Phil. 3. 8-10: “I count all things” (says the apostle there) “but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,” etc. And he expounds what that is in the next words: “That I may ... be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.”

There is here then a brief compend of the gospel, and of the way of sinners’ reconciliation with God; so that if you would know:

1. How a sinner is justified, or wherein it consists? Here it is: it consists not in the infusing of grace, nor in the sanctifying, or making of a profane person holy, though that does accompany always and follow justification; but in the absolving of a sinner from the guilt of sin, or in acquitting the guilty.

2. Would you know the ground on which this goes, or how it comes to pass, that the just God can justify an ungodly sinner? It is because of Christ’s righteousness, and of His satisfying justice, or paying of the sinner’s debt.

3. Would you know how it comes that this man, and not another, comes to get Christ’s satisfaction made his, and has his debt thereby taken off? It is by His knowledge, and by faith in Him (called *knowledge* here, because it necessarily presupposes the knowledge of Him). It is by acknowledging of Him in His offices, and by submitting and betaking of ourselves to Him by faith; because it is articulated in the covenant of redemption, that His righteousness shall be made forthcoming to all them that by faith betake themselves to Him for shelter. So that hereby the ungodly are declared righteous, because, through the Cautioner’s [Surety’s] payment and satisfaction, their sin is not imputed to them; and they are declared free, because of His paying of their debt for them.

4. Would you know the reason of this, how it comes that faith justifies in its resting on Christ? It is not because of any worth in itself, nor because of any account that is made of its worth, but because it rests on Christ’s righteousness, and takes hold of the benefit of Christ’s purchase. Therefore it is added, “For He shall bear their iniquities,” because by faith they take hold of His sufferings and satisfaction; whereby their sin is taken away, and God becomes well pleased with them for His sake. This then is a most material place of Scripture, and we had need, in entering upon it, to have an eye to this *righteous Servant*, that He would be pleased to make the meaning of it known to us, and to give us the right understanding of this great mystery.

## THE INWARD WITNESS TO FAITH

*A letter by John Newton*

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I readily offer you my thoughts on 1 John 5. 10: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself"; though, perhaps, you will think I am writing a sermon rather than a letter.

If we believe in the Son of God, whatever trials we may meet with in the present life, our best concerns are safe and our happiness is sure. If we do not, whatever else we have or seem to have, we are in a state of condemnation; and living and dying so, must perish. Thousands, it is to be feared, persuade themselves that they are believers, though they cannot stand the test of Scripture. And there are many real believers, who, through the prevalence of remaining unbelief and the temptations of Satan, form hard conclusions against themselves, though the Scriptures speak peace to them.

But how does this correspond with the passage before us, which asserts universally, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself"? For can a man have the witness in himself, and yet not know it? It may be answered: the evidence, in its own nature, is sufficient and infallible; but we are very apt, when we would form a judgment of ourselves, to superadd rules and marks of trial which are not given us (for that purpose) in the Bible. That the Word and Spirit of God do witness for His children is a point in which many are agreed, who are far from being agreed as to the nature and manner of that witness. It is, therefore, very desirable rightly to understand the evidence by which we are to judge whether we are believers or not.

The importance and truth of the gospel salvation is witnessed to in heaven by "the Father, the Word, and the Spirit." It is witnessed to on earth by "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood" (verses 7, 8). *The Spirit*, in verse 8 (I apprehend), denotes a divine light in the understanding, communicated by the Spirit of God, enabling the soul to perceive and approve the truth. *The Water* seems to intend the powerful influence of this knowledge and light in the work of sanctification. And *the Blood*, the application of the blood of Jesus to the conscience, relieving it from guilt and fear, and imparting a "peace which passeth all understanding." And he that believeth hath this united testimony of the Spirit, the water and the blood; not hearsay only, but in himself. According to the measure of his faith (for faith has various degrees), he has living proof that the witness is true, by the effects wrought in his own heart.

These things, which God has joined together, are too often attempted to be separated. Attempts of this kind have been a principle source and cause of most of the dangerous errors and mistakes which are

to be found amongst professors of religion. Some say much concerning the Spirit; and lay claim to an inward light, whereby they think they know the things of God. Others lay great stress upon the water, maintaining a regular conversation, abstaining from the defilements of the world, and aiming at a mastery over their natural desires and tempers. But neither the one nor the other appear to be duly sensible of the value of the blood of atonement, as the sole ground of their acceptance, and the spring of their life and strength. Others, again, are all for the blood; can speak much of Jesus and His blood and righteousness; though it does not appear that they are truly, spiritually enlightened to perceive the beauty and harmony of the gospel truths, or that they pay a due regard to that "holiness, without which no man can see the Lord."

But Jesus came, not by water only, or by blood only, but by water and blood; and the Spirit bears witness to both, because the Spirit is truth. The water alone affords but a cold, starched form of godliness, destitute of that enlivening power which is derived from a knowledge of the preciousness of Jesus, as the Lamb that was slain. And if any talk of the blood without the water, they do but turn the grace of God into licentiousness. So, likewise, to pretend to the Spirit, and at the same time to have low thoughts of Jesus, is a delusion and vanity; for the true Spirit testifies and takes of His glory, and presents it to the soul. But the real believer receives the united testimony, and has the witness in himself that he does so.

To have the witness in ourselves is to have the truths that are declared in the Scripture revealed in our hearts. This brings an experimental conviction, which may be safely depended on, "that we have received the grace of God in truth." A man born blind may believe that the sun is bright, upon the testimony of another; but if he should obtain his sight, he would have the witness in himself. Believing springs from a sense and perception of the truths of the gospel; and whoever hath this spiritual perception is a believer. He has the witness in himself. He has received the Spirit. His understanding is enlightened, whereby he sees things to be as they are described in the Word of God, respecting his own state by sin and the utter impossibility of his obtaining relief by any other means than those proposed in the gospel. These things are hidden from us by nature.

He has likewise received the blood. The knowledge of sin and its demerits, if alone, would drive us to despair; but by the same light of the Spirit, Jesus is apprehended as a suitable and all-sufficient Saviour. All that is declared concerning His Person, offices, love, sufferings and obedience is understood and approved. Here the wounded and weary souls find healing and rest. Then the apostle's language is adopted: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the

knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

He has likewise received the water, considered as the emblem of sanctification. To a believer, all that the Scripture teaches concerning the nature, beauty and necessity of holiness, as a living principle in the heart, carries conviction and evidence. A deliverance from the power, as well as from the guilt of sin, appears to be an important and essential part of salvation. He sees his original and his proper happiness, that nothing less than communion with God and conformity to Him is worth his pursuit. And therefore he can say, “My soul thirsteth for Thee: I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”

In a word, his judgment and his choice are formed upon a new spiritual taste, derived from the written Word, and correspondent with it, as the musical ear is adapted to relish harmony: so that what God has forbidden appears hateful; what He has commanded, necessary; what He has promised, desirable; and what He has revealed, glorious. Whoever has these perceptions has the witness in himself that he has been taught of God, and believes in His Son.

If you think this explanation is agreeable to the Scripture, you will be satisfied that the witness spoken of in this passage is very different from what some persons understand it to be. It is not an impulse, or strong persuasion, impressed upon us in a way of which we can give no account, that “we are the children of God,” and that our sins are freely forgiven; nor is the powerful application of a particular text of Scripture necessary to produce it; neither is it always connected with a lively, sensible comfort. These things, in some persons and instances, may accompany the witness or testimony we are speaking of, but do not properly belong to it; and they may be, and often have been, counterfeited. But what I have described is inimitable and infallible; it is indubitably, as the magicians confessed of the miracles of Moses, the finger of God; as certainly the effect of His power as the creation of the world.

It is true, many who have this witness walk in darkness, and are harassed with many doubts and perplexities concerning their state; but this is not because the witness is not sufficient to give them satisfaction, but because they do not account it so. Being misled by the influence of self-will and a legal spirit, they overlook this evidence as too simple, and expect something extraordinary; at least, they think they cannot be right unless they are led in the same way in which the Lord has been pleased to lead others with whom they may have conversed. But the Lord the Spirit is sovereign and free in His operations, and though He gives to all, who are the subjects of His grace, the same views of sin, of themselves, and of the Saviour, yet with respect to the circumstantialia of His work, there is, as in the features of our faces, such an amazing variety that

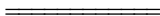
perhaps no two persons can be found whose experiences have been exactly alike; but as the apostle says that “he that believeth,” that is, whosoever believeth (without exception), “hath the witness in himself,” it must consequently arise from what is common to them all, and not from what is peculiar to a few.

Before I conclude, I would like to make two or three observations. In the first place, I think it is plain that the supposition of a real believer’s living in sin, or taking encouragement from the gospel to do so, is destitute of the least foundation in truth, and can proceed only from an ignorance of the subject. Sin is the burden under which he groans; and he would account nothing short of a deliverance from it worthy the name of salvation. A principle part of his evidence that he is a believer arises from that abhorrence of sin which he habitually feels. It is true, sin still dwells in him, but he loathes and resists it. Upon this account he is in a state of continual warfare; if he were not so, he could not have the witness in himself that he is born of God.

Again, from hence arises a solid evidence that the Scripture is indeed the Word of God, because it so exactly describes what is exemplified in the experience of all who are subjects of a work of grace. While we are in a natural state, it is to us as a sealed book, but when the mind is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the Scripture addresses us as it were by name, explains every difficulty under which we laboured, and proposes an adequate and effectual remedy for the relief of all our wants and fears.

Lastly, it follows that the hope of a believer is built upon a foundation that cannot be shaken, though it may and will be assaulted. It does not depend upon occasional and changeable frames, upon any that is precarious and questionable, but upon a correspondence and agreement with the written Word, and is self-evident to every person who has a real participation in the grace of God. By this the unlearned are enabled to know their election of God, and to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

May this inward witness preside with power in our hearts, to animate our hope, and to mortify our corruptions.



It seems as if we needed day by day to be taught over and over again our own sinfulness, weakness and helplessness, and that none but the blessed Lord can do us any real good. Religion is not like any art or science which, when once learnt, is learnt for ever; but is a thing which we are ever forgetting, and ever learning over and over again.

*J.C. Philpot*

## NOT THE RIGHTEOUS!

*By F.W. Krummacker (1796-1868)*

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You are acquainted with the words which are recorded in Mark 2. 17. You know also who uttered them and where they were spoken. The Lord is sitting at table with a publican, whose character is none of the best, and is surrounded by a number of individuals of a similar description. Consuming fire, however, does not proceed forth from the Holy One of Israel against these thorns and briers; on the contrary, it is only the lustre of His lovingkindness and benignity which He manifests to these sinners.

That this occasions no small offence to the fraternity of pious Pharisees may be easily supposed. These men of the law are almost excusable, if they lose all their faith in Him, and in their displeasure call Him a companion of publicans and sinners. Were He to manifest at least but a certain reserve, and magnanimously vouchsafe forgiveness only to those sinners who had given proofs of a real amendment, the thing would be perhaps tolerable. But that He confidentially mixes in their society before they have even manifested contrition, and given utterance to noble resolutions, is a mode of procedure which stands in diametrical opposition to all the principles of a rational method of salvation. These self-righteous individuals place themselves at the open window of the dining-room, and shake their heads in displeasure, and cannot avoid putting the sarcastic question to His disciples, "How is it that your Master eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?"

When Jesus hears this, He casts a significant look on these sneering legalists, and says to them with equal mildness and firmness, from the midst of the company of sinners, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick." And that they might have no doubt respecting the meaning of this figurative language, He adds in explanation, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Precious words! Admirable inscription over the gate of God's kingdom! But what do they imply? Who are the righteous? Are they the self-righteous? Impossible! If Jesus did not come to call the self-righteous to repentance, He calls no one to repentance; for we are all self-righteous from our very birth; and sinners, who are already conscious of their wretched state, need not first to be called to repentance. The latter is already produced in their hearts. It is therefore beyond a doubt, that the subject must be apprehended in another manner. The "righteous," in the words we have quoted, are those who have satisfied the demands of the divine law, and are actually righteous. By "sinners," we have, on the contrary, to understand those who, as debtors to the law, have fallen under the curse. "But," say you, "righteous

persons, of the description you mention, are not to be found upon earth." You are in the right, my friends; nor does Jesus think, in these words, of asserting the contrary. "But if such characters do not exist, why the superfluous assurance, that He came not on their account?" The matter, my friends, is as follows. The Lord intends to say to the Pharisees, "You are astonished at My conduct; and you would have had reason for being so, if I were come to seek out and reward virtue. But I came not for the sake of the righteous. My object is, fallen sinners. If you are those who can satisfy the law, you will be saved by your deeds. I let you alone, as people who do not require a Mediator. But why do such favoured persons as you are seek in your state of spiritual health to hinder Me from hastening with merciful aid to the poor sick souls, who cannot appeal, like you, to their own virtue? Suffer them therefore, also, to escape from death!"

Such is the meaning which the Lord is desirous of conveying to the irritated scribes; and you, doubtless, feel the powerful sting which accompanies the words. With this simple declaration He more than gained the victory over these fastidious judges. The dignified composure which He opposed to their displeasure struck them with admiration, and rendered them ashamed. The intimation, that if they were righteous, He would have nothing to do with them, closed their mouths, and awakened their consciences.

In our Lord's mode of behaviour, in the present instance, the most appropriate method of procedure against those who scoff at the gospel is afforded us. We cannot do better than likewise to say to them, "If ye are righteous as regards the law, we shall be far from troubling you with a call to repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But here are people of a different kind who, if you interrogate them, will freely confess that they do not join with you in boasting of their virtues, nor are able to do without grace and a Mediator. Why, therefore, we beseech you, will you be so cruel as not to suffer them to hear the glad tidings, without which they would fall a prey to despair and perdition?" Thus we address you, who are their enemies; and what reply will you make to us? Must not embarrassment and confusion render you silent?

Jesus, therefore, came into the world for the benefit of sinners. Hence it is by no means the worst lot that can befall us, to belong to this fraternity. If anyone had never sinned, the Saviour would not concern him, and his tears of gratitude would not eventually glitter as pearls in Jesus' regal diadem. He would be no member of Him who is the mighty Head; to him the eternal High Priest would be no intercessor, nor would he be arrayed in the costly robe of the Prince of Life Himself. A sinner who had obtained mercy would always have a mighty preference to such a one. Aye, and in the light of the precious and faithful words of which



we are speaking, the confession that we are sinners is no longer a subject of apprehension, but of consolation. If thou art a sinner, Jesus is well adapted for thee, and thou art well suited for Him.

But we hasten to prevent any possible misunderstanding; for many of you seem only too much inclined to misunderstand and even to pervert our words. It remains an eternal truth, that not the righteous, but sinners are permitted to boast that the Son came into the world for their sakes; but it continues no less incontestably sure, that the Son came not to leave them in their sins, but to create them anew, that they might dedicate themselves to God. If He is the Shepherd who seeks them that are lost, He seeks them in order to bring them back to the path of life. If He is the Saviour who interests Himself for sinners, He does so in order to call them to repentance, and render them inimical to sin. If He is the Physician who is in search of patients, for what other reason is He in search of them but in order to heal them? Forgiving grace is always at the same time regenerating grace.

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### THE HEAVENLY RACE

*Sermon preached by J.C. Philpot at North Street Chapel, Stamford,  
on May 1st, 1859  
(Concluded from page 277)*

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**Text:** "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12. 1, 2).

III. But it is time to pass on to our third point, which is the *Object toward which we are to look*, and the *supplies of grace and strength* which enable us to run. Let none of you think there is any strength or power in the creature to run the race, at least with any hope of winning the prize. A dead man might as soon be set to run with a living man as a dead soul to run a race which is wholly spiritual and divine. There must be divine life in a man's soul before he can even commence the race. Therefore let no one think that I ascribe any power to the creature, or would rob the blessed Redeemer of His crown to give His glory to another. If I did not see it in every page of God's truth, my own experience would give the lie to this.

No one can ever run the race set before him except by looking unto Jesus. He is at the head of the race; He stands at the goal, holding the crown of victory in His hand which He puts upon the head of the successful runner. Here again we see the necessity of a living faith, for

we can only run on as we view Jesus by the eye of faith at the right hand of the Father opening His blessed arms to receive us into His own bosom at the end of the race.

But if we look unto Jesus, it must be as the word implies in the original, by looking *off* everything else. To run successfully we must not look upon the ground to see where it is rough and rugged and where it is easy and smooth, that we may pick and choose our way; nor to the right or to the left, to see whether the bystanders condemn or approve, hiss or cheer; nor to our own strength or weakness of limb, and swiftness or slowness of foot; nor to the distance behind or the distance before; nor to our competitors to compare our running with theirs; nor to any object that may distract the eye from looking unto Jesus and to Him alone. Here all fail but the heaven-taught child of grace.

When we look out from off our watch tower, how we see professors of religion running in all directions. The religious world has its races as well as the profane, and there is no lack of entries, prizes or competitors. But where among them shall we find those who looking off every other object, look to Jesus alone? Nor indeed can anyone really look to Him but by the special gift and grace of God. He must be revealed to the soul by the power of God. We must behold His glorious Godhead and His suffering Manhood by the eye of faith; and we must view Him as the incarnate God, the only Mediator between God and man. We must see the efficacy of His atoning blood to purge a guilty conscience; the blessedness of His obedience to justify a needy, naked soul; the sweetness of His dying love as an inward balm and cordial against all the thousand ills and sorrows of life. We must see His glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; His suitability to every want and woe; His infinite compassion to the vilest and worst of sinners; His patient forbearance and wondrous longsuffering of our sins and backslidings; His unchanging love, stronger than death itself; His readiness to hear; His willingness to bless; and His ability to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

Thus the heavenly runner looks not to the course however long, nor to the ground however rough, nor to his own exertions however multiplied, nor to his own strength whether much or little; nor to applauding friends nor to condemning foes; but wholly and solely to the incarnate Son of God. Jesus draws him onward with His invincible grace; and as he runs and looks, and looks and runs, every fresh look gives renewed strength, and every time we view His beauty and glory we see more to believe, to admire and to love. Every glance of His beauteous Person renews the flame of holy love; every sight of His blood and righteousness kindles desires to experience more of their efficacy and blessedness; and every touch of His sacred finger melts the heart into

conformity to His suffering image.

This is the life of a Christian, day by day, to be running a race for eternity; and as speeding onward to a heavenly goal, to manifest his sincerity and earnestness by continually breathing forth the yearnings of his soul after divine realities, and to be pressing forward more and more toward the Lord Jesus Christ as giving him a heavenly crown when he has finished his course with joy. But as he runs, and just in proportion to his earnestness, he is bowed down with weights. Many trials and sorrows, many cares and wearying anxieties, many powerful temptations, many bosom sins, many inward idols, many doubts and fears, many sinkings and tremblings, many hindrances from his felt coldness, darkness and death, hang upon him and press him down, so that at times he is utterly unable to move a single foot forward. But in spite of all hindrances from without and within, every now and then he sees Jesus at the end of the race holding out the crown, and seeing Him he is encouraged and enabled once more to run looking unto Him, that he may derive strength and virtue out of His fulness.

But Jesus is spoken of in our text as "the Author and the Finisher of our faith." Let us see how this bears upon the experience of the heavenly runner. He looks to Him, then, as the Author of his faith. He feels it was He who gave him the first grain of grace; who communicated the first beam of light, and who raised up the first movement of faith towards His sacred Majesty; for He is the Author of the whole. His first desire to run, his power to move his feet forward, the faith that was given as the first dawn of eternal life, were all breathed into his soul by Jesus. He softened his heart to believe and quickened his soul to feel; and thus he feels that the first movement of faith in his soul, enabling him to run, was His divine gift and work.

And as Jesus is the Author, so He is the Finisher of faith; He carries on the work begun, and never leaves it unfulfilled or imperfect, but keeps supplying the spiritual runner with grace out of His own fulness. And thus as He is the Author by the first implantation of faith in the soul, so is He the Finisher by continually breathing upon His own work, watering it with His own dew, reviving it with His own rain, and making it spring up and grow under His own warming beams as the Sun of righteousness.

In this life faith can hardly be said to be ever finished. It is rather like the crops which whiten our harvest fields; when ripe they are fit to be garnered. So when faith is finished, heaven is at the door. When all its trials have been accomplished, all its sufferings undergone, all its battles fought and all its victories won, then faith may be said to be finished. Every member of the mystical body of Christ has his allotted measure of suffering, which is a filling up of that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in His flesh for His body's sake, that is, the church

(Col. 1. 24); and as this measure is filled up, the faith which sustained them is finished with them. When a dying believer can say, "I have run my race; I have finished my course," he can add, "Jesus was the Author and Jesus is the Finisher of my faith." With this life faith ends; it is turned into sight and is no longer needed when Jesus is seen as He is without a veil between.

Ever then bear this in mind, that Jesus is and ever must be to the heavenly runner the Author and Finisher of faith, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. Nor can he run the race with any hope of success but as he looks unto Jesus and derives supplies of strength and power out of His fulness. If he fail here, he fails everywhere; but if he thus run, he is sure to prove a conqueror. Does not He Himself say, "Without Me ye can do nothing"? Though faint, be still then pursuing. Run on and run through every difficulty. The blessed Jesus, who is drawing you on by looks of love, will never let you go, will never cease His gracious work upon your heart; He will maintain the faith and hope once given, will never leave you to fall out of the race, but will certainly bring you off winner and crown you with eternal victory.

IV. The last point we have to notice is *the encouragement* given to the runner to run the heavenly race, seeing that he is "*compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.*" This is an allusion to the spectators of the ancient games, who being gathered together from every part of Greece were so numerous in witnessing a race that, looked at from a distance, they were as a mighty cloud of forms and faces. So is there a mighty cloud of witnesses surrounding the runners of the heavenly race. These have already run the race and won the prize. The Old Testament saints; the noble army of martyrs; the thousands and tens of thousands who have run and won, fought and conquered, yet sorrowed and suffered, wept and mourned, sighed and groaned, cried and prayed when here below, but found Jesus to be the Finisher as well as the Author of their faith; all these celestial conquerors testify to the grace of God in having given them strength to run and having crowned them with victory.

Those witnesses surround Jesus as He sits upon His eternal throne, and they look down, as it were, over the battlements of heaven on the runners below and cheer them on. It is as though they said from their celestial seats, "Run on, brother, run on, sister; give not up the race. If faint and weary, if ready to sink, still run on; victory is sure. Be not discouraged. Lay aside every weight and the besetting sin of unbelief and run on with patience. Jesus can, Jesus will give you needful supplies of grace and strength. You shall not be overcome by any foe or overborne by your own weakness. Run on: it is only a little further. Heaven is at the end; immortal glory, eternal life. Run on, then; you are

sure to win the prize. We have run; we have won.” Thus all things in grace conspire to speed the Christian on; and he looks not only to Jesus, but to the crowd of witnesses of His faithfulness and truth, as numerous as drops of rain in a summer cloud, and he sees that all testify to His free and sufficient grace.

And not only all whose faith and patience are recorded in the Scriptures, but all departed believers whom *you* have personally known and loved, whose happy death you have witnessed, whose last words you remember, and who are embalmed in the warmest, tenderest affections of your heart; these too are witnesses, and every one of them seeks, so to speak, to encourage your soul. They all bear witness to the efficacy of the blood of Christ in cleansing from all sin, for it washed away theirs; to His dying love as a sweet, cheering cordial in every sorrow and trouble, for such they found it; to His faithfulness to His promises, for they proved it; to His power to save, for they experienced it; and to His presence on a dying bed, for they enjoyed it.

May we not therefore willingly run, seeing we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, and all bearing testimony for Christ and against our unbelieving hearts, all prompting us forward in spite of the temptations which make us hang back, all encouraging us to lay aside every weight, and to run on as they ran before, hoping in the same mercy, trusting to the same grace, looking to the same Jesus, and expecting the same blissful reward?

Are you one of these spiritual runners? If you are, you feel, it is true, the weights and the besetting sin; yet there are times and seasons when, in spite of them all, you run forward in the desires of your heart and the stretching forth, if I may use the expression, of the very neck of your soul. These desires, these breathings of your heart, are all so many speaking mouths in your bosom, a cloud of witnesses within re-echoing the cheering cry of the witnesses without, encouraging yourselves, encouraging others to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus. Nay, God Himself from heaven His dwelling place, His dear Son from the throne of His glory, the blessed Comforter, the holy angels, the glorified spirits of just men made perfect, are witnesses too. And what more shall I say? That the saints on earth, your brothers and sisters in the faith; nay, I may add that your enemies and the very devils themselves, are all witnesses to a Christian's career, and all are made in the end to acknowledge him victor.

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The singular pleasure that God the Father takes in the work of our redemption is a wonderful demonstration of His love and affection to us.

*Thomas Brooks*

## THE DAYS THAT ARE PAST

*An address to aged readers by Ashton Oxenden (1808-1892)*

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You remember that I spoke in my last article of what Moses did before he died. He was directed to go up on Mount Pisgah, and take a glimpse of that Promised Land which lay before him. But we can hardly imagine that this was all he did. It is more than likely that another purpose for which he ascended that high hill was that he might from thence take a survey of all the way that he had already travelled in his wilderness journey. And I said that it would be well for you now and then to look back on all the years that you have passed through. Let me now help you a little in doing this.

First, take a good searching look, and see what sins have marked your past life. And as you look back, you will feel, I dare say, that there is many an act which you would gladly blot out if you could. There are many days you would like to live over again in the hope that you would live them better; many words you would like to recall; many a deed which you would give worlds to undo; many a bad thought which you encouraged, and which has left a stain behind that even time cannot wear out.

I know it is very painful to be thinking about our past sins, but we must not shrink from it. It is folly to deceive ourselves, and imagine that they have not been committed. There they are, and God sees them, if we will not. His eye marked them at the time, and it marks them still. They may almost have faded away from our memory; but God remembers them: He forgets nothing.

Old people are very apt to think that what is past and forgotten by them is also blotted out of the book of God's remembrance. Often, for instance, when the sins and follies of their youth are spoken of, they just heave a passing sigh, and that is all. They think that such things are excusable in times of youth, and that God will not be extreme to mark what was done amiss in those days. They fancy that the distant past will not be laid to their charge, as they have since become wiser and more thoughtful.

But is it so? Is God such an one as ourselves? Can any length of time wear away our sins from His recollection? Is it not written that even "for every idle word that men shall speak they must give an account"?

I am sure it is very good for us all, and especially for those who are drawing near to the close of life, to look fairly at the sins that we have committed. It is folly to close our eyes to them and persuade ourselves they do not exist. Indeed, if we have any spiritual life in us, whatever else we forget, surely we shall never forget those hateful sins which have defiled our souls.

But it is not enough to look at them in a sort of general way. We must fix upon them one by one, and draw them forth from their hiding-places. There must be a close searching for them, as with a candle – an honest, hearty, diligent search, so that not one shall escape us.

“And what is the good of this?” you are perhaps ready to ask. “Is there any use in making ourselves unhappy? The thing is done: can it be undone?”

O surely it is far better to discover our sins now than to have them brought to light for the first time when we appear before God. It is far better to know how we stand with God now than to learn it in that world where there is no more hope for the sinner.

And what are we to do with our sins when we have found them out? Is there any way by which they can be got rid of? Or must they lie like dark spots on our souls, like unpaid debts, which can never be cancelled? No, dear friend, no. There is a way, one way only, by which every sin committed and every deed left undone can be blotted out for ever. Christ has paid the debt for His people. He has bled for sinners like you on the cross. He has died that sinners might live. And He is able, at this moment, not only to pardon your every sin, but to cover you with His perfect righteousness, and to make you His for ever; “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him” (Heb. 7. 25).

Go now to Jesus, and ask Him to give you repentance (Acts 5. 31). Ask Him by His Holy Spirit to touch your heart, and to make you hate your sins and mourn over them with godly sorrow. O it is good for us to feel grief for our sins. And depend upon it; we shall grieve over them if we are brought under the power of God’s grace.

But remember, sorrow and tears will not wash out the stain. They cannot remove one single atom of our guilt. No; it is only the sacrifice of Christ that can pay that debt. In Him alone forgiveness can be found. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1. 7).

Here then, my dear friend, is the good of finding out our many sins. It is that we may get every one of them pardoned; it is that we may be made happy in Christ our Saviour. He is all power and love. He is able and willing to save. He says, “Come unto Me ... and I will give you rest”; “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Matt. 11. 28; Isa. 1. 18).

But there is something more we should look back upon besides our sins; we should look back upon our many mercies (Psa. 103. 1-5).

Think of the numberless acts of love and kindness which God has shown you during the years that are past. Moses called to mind, I dare say, those forty years in which the Lord had so greatly blessed him. The

whole path which he had trodden was indeed strewn with mercies – mercies to himself, to his family, to his people. We are told that for forty years their “raiment waxed not old ... neither did [their] feet swell” (Deut. 8. 4). When they were thirsty, “He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers” (Ps. 78. 16). When they were hungry, He fed them with bread from heaven (Ex. 16. 4). He led them, not by the shortest road nor by the easiest path, but it was “by the right way,” to their promised land.

Has not the Lord dealt as graciously with you? Have not goodness and mercy followed you all your days? Think of your many deliverances from dangers. Think how you have been spared, while others have been cut off. Think of all the blessings which came to you when you so little deserved them. Think of God’s patience with you when you provoked His anger. Think how He made one thing and another work for your good. Many a time you said within yourself, “This trouble is all against me”; and perhaps that very thing turned out to be for your greatest good.

God’s past mercies should be a pledge to you of those that are to come. You may well plead with David, “O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth ... now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not” (Psa. 71. 17, 18). You may expect further trials as you reach the remaining stages of the wilderness. But you may be sure that the manna with which you have been fed will not fail, nor the cloud of protection which has sheltered you be withdrawn, till your wanderings are over. Be assured, God never yet forsook a worn-out pilgrim. He never yet neglected an aged servant. You know that He has promised you, “Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Isa. 46. 4). The last words of good old Dr. Guyse were, “O my God! Thou hast always been with me, and wilt not leave me now.”

Think of all this, and it will warm your cold heart. You will find some love kindling within you as you call to mind the goodness of that heavenly Friend who has watched over you so lovingly, and cared for you from your childhood until now.

And O, if you are a true servant of God, if you have been brought to know and love your Saviour, if the path of godliness has been your path, then is there not one mercy which exceeds every other in your case? Does not your heart throb with gratitude when you think of that grace which called you out of darkness into the blessed light of God’s truth, which turned your feet out of the path of sin and misery along which you were then hurrying, and brought you into the way of peace? Of all your mercies, there is none so great as that which led you to Christ and made you a partaker of His great salvation.

It is said of John Newton that although his memory failed him in his



old age, there were two things which he never forgot: one was that “he was a great sinner”; and the other was that “Jesus was a greater Saviour.”

Let me urge you then to take both a look back on your past sins and on your past mercies. This is especially needful for you who have lived many years in this world and whose hourglass has but a few grains yet to run out. Do so in a humble and thoughtful spirit, and I believe you will find that much good will come from it.

Take this, and any other counsels which I offer you, as coming from one who really cares for you. Yes, I feel for the aged. I know their trials, their infirmities and their difficulties. But I also know that the Saviour Himself cares for you.

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## LET THEM DECLARE HIS PRAISE IN THE ISLANDS

*The life and poetry of Hallgrímur Pétursson*

*By Dr. I.A Sadler*

*(Continued from page 291)*

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### Part 4

We now come in this series of articles about the Icelandic minister Hallgrímur Pétursson and his poetry in the “Hymns of the Passion” to the scourging and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sacred account in the Bible records the terrible sufferings and mockery inflicted upon the Lord Jesus by the soldiers, after the release of Barabbas. “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands” (John 19. 1-3).

Whilst the enemies of Jesus acted in spite, hatred and callous cruelty, the Lord’s people see by faith the fulfilment of prophecy and the precious shed blood that atones and redeems them from all sin. “But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9. 11-14).

Hallgrímur Pétursson writes thus about the scourging of the Lord Jesus.

Pilate then to scourging  
 Sentenced our blessed Lord.  
 There was He, without urging,  
 Bound to the stake with cord.  
 Behold that Holy One abused,  
 And, oh, my soul, consider:  
 'Twas for thy sins that He was bruised.

That precious blood was flowing  
 From out those sacred veins,  
 On me His grace bestowing,  
 To cleanse my guilty stains.  
 That tortured frame! Those wounds so sore!  
 Those awful woes, forsaken,  
 For sinful men He bore.

In sin's dark dungeon lying  
 A helpless captive I,  
 My conscience crucifying,  
 Heave sigh on weary sigh.  
 My mortal wound no balm can find,  
 No help I see around me,  
 Or solace for my mind.

The law with heavy lashes  
 Chastised me for my sin,  
 Brought me to dust and ashes  
 With cruel discipline.  
 No hope I saw; my case was lost,  
 My heart was bowed with sorrow;  
 My spirit tempest-tossed.

But Thou didst hear my groaning  
 And hasten to my aid,  
 For Thy poor child atoning  
 Thy sacrifice was made.  
 Thy spotless soul was chastened sore  
 That I should be delivered –  
 Reclaimed for evermore.

(Hymn 23, vv. 1, 3-6)

Again and again in his poetry Hallgrímur Pétursson brings out the tender compassion and love of the Lord Jesus for His elect people, notwithstanding all their vile sins and iniquity. Our case is hopeless when weighed against the holy and divine law; “But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ” (Eph. 2. 4, 5).

Hallgrímur Pétursson then continues in his meditations concerning the robe and crown of thorns that the soldiers placed upon the Lord Jesus.

Jesus was now to Pilate's hall  
By Roman soldiers taken.  
He stood there bare before them all,  
With courage still unshaken.  
A scarlet robe they clothed Him in,  
And mocked Him, high above the din –  
Thus was my Lord forsaken.

No robe I had to hide my shame,  
My soul stood all denuded.  
My sinful state from Adam came,  
From heaven I was excluded.  
Sin's scarlet robe I clothed me in,  
Shame and reproach I found therein,  
My heart and mind deluded.

But my dishonour passed away  
And my humiliation;  
He clothed my soul with bright array,  
The garments of salvation.  
Beneath His robe I refuge find  
And, in His righteousness enshrined,  
Eternal consolation.

For His fair brow they plaited thorn,  
With cruel violence pressing,  
Their godless hate and brutal scorn  
And hardened hearts expressing.  
His eyes thus dimmed, His visage marred,  
The streams of blood, the brow thus scarred,  
Brought to us boundless blessing.

Through Adam's disobedience  
The earth by curse was blighted;  
And now behold, in consequence,  
The world of men benighted.  
The curse's fruit, the crown of thorn,  
By our Redeemer now was worn,  
And our great debt requited.

But Jesus blessed this stricken earth  
By His complete submission,  
And spite of thorns and spite of dearth  
We see its blest fruition.  
For this His creatures all should raise  
To God a hymn of grateful praise  
That knows no intermission.

(Hymn 24, vv. 1-6)

From these scenes of mockery and insult, the Lord Jesus was taken to be crucified. "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right

hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 33, 34). Hallgrímur Pétursson writes of the glorious love of Jesus at Calvary.

Nailed to His cross the Saviour lay,  
Writhing in pain appalling  
(And here we see Love's great display),  
Never for vengeance calling.  
And as He gazes heavenward,  
He sees His God's uplifted sword  
On His soul, guiltless, falling.

He opes His bosom as a child  
To a loved Father turning;  
That we with God be reconciled  
His soul was filled with yearning.  
And spite of all He suffers there,  
No word is heard but humble prayer,  
For evil, good returning.

Yea, there between the sledge's blows  
They hear the Saviour praying  
And interceding for His foes,  
In wondrous mercy saying:  
"Father, forgive, and stay their doom,  
I pray for them; they know not whom  
In blindness they are slaying."

(Hymn 34, vv. 1-3)

How heinous does sin then appear to the redeemed believer, when the Holy Spirit reveals the holiness of God and the terrible stroke of divine justice that fell upon the Lord Jesus, who was made "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21). Yet how the Lord's people wonder at the gracious love of the triune God to undeserving sinners! The foundation of their salvation is in such unparalleled love. Jesus prayed: "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. O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17. 24-26).

Thus is the eternal love of God the Father to God the Son revealed in the Scriptures; and wherever God the Holy Spirit works in the heart of a believer, there will be a conforming in measure to this love. The words of the Apostle Paul must attend the faithful preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory

of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3. 18). As the love of God shines forth in the Lord Jesus, so should there be a reflection of this love in the life of every believer. Is this true in our lives, both individually and as churches? Do we forgive each other from the heart? May the Lord give us grace to walk in the exhortation, lest our example be a disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4. 7, 8).

*(To be concluded)*

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**"HOLINESS BECOMETH THY HOUSE, O LORD,  
FOR EVER"**

*By Gerald D. Buss*

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Those who are most deeply taught of God are those who are most conscious of His holiness, and those who are most used in God's service are those who have the deepest exercise to be holy and to do nothing that will offend His holy majesty.

To name but a few in the Scriptures: Jacob at Bethel; Moses, who had to take the shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he stood was holy ground; likewise Joshua outside Jericho; Isaiah in the temple; Job in the presence of God; Daniel, whose comeliness was turned into corruption; and John, who on the Isle of Patmos fell at the feet of the Son of Man as dead. These and many others were made to tremble in God's presence, and these solemn experiences gave them a holy fear of God for the rest of their days on earth. Peter speaks of the holy mount where he saw Christ transfigured.

Sadly in our day, as the sacred Holy Spirit is so withdrawn from us, the sense of God's holiness is all but lost, and the reverence for God's holy name has declined greatly in His courts. One of the symptoms of this decline is the way and attitude in which many people attend the house of God.

Our chapels are not temples in the sense that the temple in Jerusalem was, but when God's people meet for worship He is present, and like the stony wilderness at Bethel it becomes God's house, and as Jacob said: "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." God in the Person of His Spirit is present, and as such He is to be revered as much as He was to be in the temple of old. Also from 1 Corinthians 11 we learn that the angels are present in worship and from Isaiah 6 that they humble themselves in God's

presence. How much more should we who are sinners seek to be reverent, as becomes the presence of almighty God in worship!

How is this reverence to be expressed?

Firstly, it is a worshipping heart we should be seeking. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Our first and greatest need as worshippers is the outpouring and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Without His gracious power and influence there will be no worship acceptable to Almighty God.

Secondly, our behaviour in God's house should be consistent with the professed desire to worship God. Unnecessary chatter in the house of God is dishonouring to Him. Habitual lateness is a bad habit. Also, to make a habit of rushing in at the last minute when it could easily be avoided, just as worship begins, as if we are somehow begrudging the Lord of our time, is dishonouring to His holy name. The Word of God warns us about rushing into His presence as the unthinking horse to battle. Equally, at the end of the service to rush out as soon as the *Amen* is pronounced as if we cannot wait to escape His presence is equally unbecoming. At the very least there should be a few moments' reflection before returning to the world. It is also God-dishonouring to engage in idle chatter on the doorstep, allowing the Word just preached to be stolen from our minds.

Thirdly, our dress in the Lord's house should be becoming His presence. If we truly long to be clothed in Christ's perfect righteousness as our covering in the day of His wrath, the beauty of that garment should be reflected in our outward deportment. It is God-dishonouring for either men or women to come without their bodies properly covered. Low-cut dresses, miniskirts, midriffs exposed are unbecoming wherever they may be, but especially in the house of God. If the angels veil their faces, and cover their feet in God's presence, how much more should poor sinners do so! It is also wrong to dress in a showy manner in God's house as if we are seeking to draw attention to ourselves by our clothing and seeking to outclass other worshippers, or making a point about our social status, when God is no respecter of persons. It is equally wrong to come casually dressed, as is an increasing habit among some, as if it were no different to go to God's house than it is to go shopping or to work or to some leisure activity.

It is different if people have no other clothes to wear. We are reminded of how some years ago when a woman said to the late Mr. Kinderman, "You will have to excuse me for what I am wearing," he replied, "Have you nothing more suitable?" He added that they used to have a very poor, godly woman at Manchester chapel who wore a terrible

dress – but everyone knew it was the only one she had, and could not afford another.

J.C. Philpot mentions the stir made when he became curate at Stadhampton and introduced a weekly lecture. Many poor people, hungry for the truth, would rush straight from work to the house of God in their working clothes. And we think of the Bristol miners coming straight from the pit to hear Whitefield preach. But, of course, when necessary, this is far different from the casual, irreverent dress, which is so often seen today! Godly sobriety is to be the keyword in the house of God. Surely it is not too much for God to ask us to come into His courts in such a manner as to show to others that this is the most important part of our life and dress accordingly?

You may argue that God looks on the heart. He most certainly does, but in 1 Corinthians 11, where more is said about the New Testament worship than anywhere else in the Scripture, the Apostle Paul is guided by the Spirit to speak about such practical things as the covering of the woman’s head, the fact that her hair should be distinctively longer than the man, and not shorn, and by inference the man should have hair distinctively shorter than the woman. And all this in relation to worship in His house.

Some have argued that by dressing especially for the house of God we may hinder others from worshipping with us who are not so well-dressed. It is true that many people coming off the street into the Lord’s house would not be expected to understand the significance of the holiness that belongs to worship, and understanding should be shown to such. But where the Lord blesses the Word and sanctifies the truth to the heart, it will show in the person’s demeanour. And such will follow the godly example of those with whom they desire to be at one in worship. But what if there is no longer an example set by the worshippers? Then the standards fall, worldly dress follows, usually accompanied by a carnal attitude to worship which is grieving to the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord keep us in remembrance of the exhortation: “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Three Modern Versions: A Critical Assessment of the N.I.V., E.S.V. and N.K.J.V.,** by Alan J. Macgregor; 126 pages; hardback and paperback; price £6.50 hardback, £4 paperback, including postage in U.K.; published by and obtainable from The Bible League, 46 Bulbridge Road, Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 0LE.

The author is a member of the Bible League Trust, who was brought up to use the Authorised Version but who later attended a church where modern versions of the Scripture were used. At first these versions appeared easier to read and understand, but he became concerned whilst reading and found that some of the words and whole verses were missing. He also detected that some portions had an entirely different meaning, which persuaded him to return to the A.V.

The book is well researched and covers the three main aspects of Bible translation. These are: the importance of treating the Bible with reverence as the Word of God; ensuring that the manuscripts used are accurate and reliable; rendering the translation in a formal and literal manner. Failure to do this will be (as mentioned on page 36) "that it often expresses the mind of the translator rather than the mind of God." We recommend this book to any friends wishing to know more of this intricate subject.

J.A.H.

**Mysterious Ways: The Providence of God in the Life of Joseph**, by David Kingdon; paperback; 96 pages; price £5.25; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

We thought this was an excellent book – a good and gracious exposition of the mystery of divine providence as seen in the life of Joseph. We found it most profitable.

The whole thrust of the book is in line with Cowper's beautiful hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way."

The only flaw is that the author does not keep to the Authorised Version, we do not know why. Why call the "coat of many colours" the "richly ornamented robe"?

**"The Little Chapel" — The History of St. David's Bridge Baptist Chapel, Cranbrook**, by A.F. Baldwin; paperback; 128 pages; price £8 plus £1 p and p; obtainable from the author at 11 Oatfield Close, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3NH.

Another chapel history – and we are glad to see it! It is according to Scripture that the Lord's dealings with His people over the years should be recorded. So we welcome the various little books which are appearing.

St. David's Bridge chapel has a long history, going back to 1780. The book is well researched, and the religious background in Cranbrook is outlined. It will be remembered that William Huntington was a native of Cranbrook, and Robert Traill for a time ministered there.

For many years "the little chapel" was overshadowed by Providence Chapel in the same town, founded by Isaac Beeman who had been a member at St. David's Bridge. At Providence, in its days of prosperity, Daniel Smart and later George Rose ministered.

At one time it appears that "the little chapel" was even closed for two years, but one dear man each Lord's day continued to go there alone!

We were privileged to preach at the 200th Anniversary in 1980. One thing that struck us then was the way the despised few had struggled on and been maintained, while other, once most prosperous places of worship, had now been closed. God carries on His own work in His own way. This point comes out very clearly in the history. The book is well illustrated.



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**NOVEMBER 2004**

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**CONTINUING WITH THE SAVIOUR**

*Sermon preached at the Meetings of the Gospel Standard  
Societies at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester,  
on September 11th, 2004.*

**Text:** “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me” (Luke 22. 28, 29).

Loyalty is a very wonderful thing – and in this sad day it is a thing which is so much missing. Loyalty to parents, loyalty to friends, loyalty to the cause of God and truth, loyalty to the church where we stand in membership, and, above all, loyalty to Christ. May the Lord bless us with that loyalty.

Now it seems here that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was very deeply touched by the loyalty of His immediate followers. There were so many who walked no more with Him. There were so many who had begun favourably and then they had forsaken Him. There were so many who turned against Him. But it seems that, so deeply touched by the love and loyalty of His immediate disciples, despite all their faults and failures and sins, He speaks this word with such affection to them: “Ye are they which have continued with Me.” Many have not. Many did at first, but then the time came, the temptations, the trials, the sorrows, the persecutions, they walked no more with Him. But, “Ye are they which have continued with Me.” And it seems as if the Saviour’s heart overflowed with love and gratitude, touched by their affection and by their loyalty, despite all their sins and all their failures and all their faults. You know, beloved friends, it will be a wonderful thing if in the great day the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ should speak these words to you and me: “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.”

Well then, it is this *continuing*. It is a vital point, (isn’t it?) in real religion, this continuing even to the end, this enduring even to the end. You see, it is one thing to begin, it is another thing to continue. Many seem to begin well, and for a time they seem to go on well, but they do not continue. And so they prove that their religion was never right in its beginning, was never right at all. You know, the great proof of the

reality of our religion is this continuing. "He that endureth to the end," and *only* he that endureth to the end, "shall be saved." What about Judas Iscariot? What about Demas? What about Ananias? What about Simon Magus? So we might go on. And didn't they *appear* to begin well? But they did not continue. And so they proved that their beginning was never right; so they proved that they were wrong altogether.

Now, beloved friends, let us be clear, we firmly believe in the everlasting safety and eternal security of the people of God. They *will* continue to the end, they *will* endure to the end. But the proof of our being among them is that we personally continue, that we personally endure unto the end. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." O, you see, it is this continuing. There are churches that seem to begin well but they do not continue. There are churches which in days past have been stalwart in the truth but today they do not continue. And we know of many who have openly professed the Saviour's name but they do not continue. You see, it is this point of continuing. There are so many exhortations in the epistles, and let us be clear, they are written to the professed people of God, these exhortations to them to continue. So what a mercy if at the end the Lord Jesus shall say to you and me, "Ye are they which have continued.... And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me"!

Well then, if there is to be a continuing there must first of all be a beginning, mustn't there? There cannot be a continuing if there is not a beginning. And it must be a right beginning. And that right beginning is the work of the Spirit of God in a sinner's heart in the new birth, when He implants His holy fear. Now that is a right beginning. Jeremiah speaks of that blessed covenant promise, "I will put My fear in their hearts." That is the beginning, a right beginning, God's beginning. And, because of this "they shall not depart from Me." They shall continue to the end. Have you noticed, of the multitude on the day of Pentecost, three thousand of them, what do we read concerning every single one of them? "They continued stedfastly." Why? Because they had a right beginning, because it was the work of the Spirit of God in their hearts. So if there is going to be a continuing, then first of all there must be that beginning. And if there is a right beginning, the Lord will carry on and complete His own work. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

"Ye are they which have continued with Me." So, there is this beginning, but then come the temptations. You see, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had His temptations. "He suffered being tempted."

"But spotless, innocent, and pure,  
The great Redeemer stood."

And He triumphed, He conquered. And we are told that Satan left Him for a little season. There were those temptations throughout the whole of His life here upon earth. Who can rightly comprehend those temptations in the Garden of Gethsemane? In the judgment hall? As He went to Calvary? O! but you see, the conquests of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ over Satan, sin, death, hell and the grave.

“Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.” So we begin in the things of God, we set out on pilgrimage, we leave the world as a city of destruction, we embark on our spiritual voyage.

“We leave this world’s deceitful shore,  
And leave it to return no more.”

But soon there are the storms, the darkness, the tempest. And those in Scripture who did not continue, who went back, are like so many wrecks on the sea shore, so many warnings, so many beacons.

“Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.” So, the temptations come. Sometimes there is the sore temptation of adversity. Mr. Pliable when he came to the Slough of Despond got out on the wrong side and went back to the City of Destruction. Then the trial of prosperity. But as the Puritans used to say, there are thousands more who perish in the trial of prosperity than who ever perish in the trial of adversity. O! these temptations. The assaults of Satan, the opposition of the world or the alluring of the world. And the temptations from our own hearts, something inside us that is in union with Satan and in union with the world. You see, these temptations; all God’s people come into these temptations. There are the sorrows, the trials, the tribulations appointed; all God’s people come into them. But then it is the going on, it is the continuing.

Now then, beloved friends, there are two words in this text which to me shine out as with letters of gold and they are so beautiful and so precious, and they are these – WITH ME. “Ye are they which have continued *with Me*.” *Beloved friends, we shall never, never continue without Him.* “Ye are they which have continued with Me,” with Me, “in My temptations.” That is, if the Lord Jesus is with us then we must, we shall continue. You see, it is a word something like that in the solemn parable of the wise and foolish virgins: “They that were ready went in *with Him* to the marriage: and the door was shut.” Those two words, “with Him”: “they that were ready went in *with Him*.” Beloved friends, we shall never enter into heaven *without Him*. “They that were ready went in with Him,” with Him, “to the marriage: and the door was shut.” And, “Ye are they which have continued with Me,” with Me, “in My temptations.”

So, I find this an attractive subject. The way to heaven will not be easy. That is why the Word of God so often speaks of it as a stormy ocean. But the reason I chose the hymn we have just sung (1102) is because of that beautiful couplet:

“And with Jesus  
Through the trackless deep move on.”

There is safety, security, heaven there, “with Jesus.”

“Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.” Well, let us try with God’s help to look a little more closely at these two beautiful words, “with Me.” First of all: *with the Saviour’s help*. So God’s people continue. So the Apostle Paul, when he bore that noble testimony, ascribed it all to the help that he had received of God. “Having therefore obtained help of God,” and only as I have obtained help of God, “I continue unto this day.” O that help we daily need! But it is help that is promised. It is divine help; it is almighty help; it is suitable help; it is help that will never fail. And so we have to walk that out, as helpless sinners, so helpless on this point of continuing, painfully feeling our helplessness, but lifting up our eyes to Him from whom alone comes all our help.

“Ye are they which have continued with Me.” I do like that word, the eternal Father speaking to His eternal Son, “I have laid help upon One that is mighty.” You see, in the covenant of grace the eternal Father saw His poor, unworthy people right down the ages, wrestling on toward heaven “gainst wind and storm and tide,” and He saw all the help that they would ever need. And in love and mercy He laid all that help upon His beloved Son. So, as you are struggling along in your temptations, that help is already appointed in Christ. That help is already provided, “laid ... upon One that is mighty.” O seek your help where the eternal Father has laid it from everlasting, and seek it nowhere else. “Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.” It is as we receive help from the Saviour.

“Ye are they which have continued with Me.” The second thing: *with the Saviour’s gracious presence*. If we have that, we shall continue; without it we must falter, fail and die. O but those precious promises of His presence! If we have His presence we have Himself. If we have His presence then we are safe. How Moses realised this when the Lord threatened no more to go with them in the wilderness but to send an angel! Moses realised that apart from the Lord’s gracious presence he could never continue, neither could God’s Israel. “If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” I think some of you know that prayer, don’t you? As you face tomorrow, and the unknown way, and your trials and your temptations, “If Thy presence go not with me, carry

us not up hence.” “*And He said, My presence shall go with thee.*” That is the security of it, that is the value of it: “And He said.” “What more can He say than to you He has said?” “And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” “Ye are they which have continued with Me.” It is only as blessed with the Lord’s divine, almighty help, as blessed with the Lord’s gracious presence that His people ever can continue.

“Ye are they which have continued with Me.” Now the third thing: *with the Saviour’s blessed supplies.* Because whatever His poor, unworthy people need that they might continue is to be found in Christ and in Him alone. “For it pleased the Father that in Him,” and in Him alone, “should all fulness dwell.” Those wonderful supplies to fight the fight of faith, to oppose sin, Satan and the world, to continue in the day of sorrow and tribulation.

“Jesus Christ, your Father’s Son,  
Bids you undismayed go on.”

Now, there are so many things to dismay me, how can I go on undismayed? Receiving these supplies from heaven. The psalmist said, “All my springs are in Thee.” All of them, none on nature’s barren ground, none in my own heart. All the wisdom I need, all the strength I need, all the grace I need, everything I need that I might continue: “All my springs are in Thee.” So we come to those beautiful promises: “Jehovah Jireh,” the Lord will provide; “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Now these wonderful supplies in the Lord Jesus to enable His people to press on, to enable them to continue, to endure even to the end.

“Ye are they which have continued with Me.” And the fourth thing: *in complete dependence on the Saviour.* Nothing in self, everything in Him. Ourselves so weak, helpless, sinful, unworthy, but everything we need in the Lord Jesus. Looking to Him alone, trusting to Him alone, depending on Him alone. O beware of trusting in yourself. Do not place any hope, any confidence in yourself. O it is that depending on the Saviour, depending on His precious, sin-atoning blood, depending on His glorious righteousness, depending on His promise, depending on Him for everything. There is safety there, and there alone. And this is the only way we can continue.

So we have it beautifully in the Song of Solomon, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?” This is the blood-bought church of God. But she is viewed in her weakness and helplessness. She is viewed in the wilderness in her pilgrimage, journeying towards heaven. It is this point of enduring, this point of continuing. And here is her hope, her joy, her stay, her rest: leaning on

Christ. You cannot lean too hard, you cannot lean too often, you will never lean in vain. "A weakling more than strong." That's me!

"A weakling, more than strong;  
Vents in His bosom all her woes,  
And leaning moves along."

This is the posture of the bride of Christ, the blood-bought church of God, "leaning upon her Beloved." So you see the value, you see the preciousness of these two little words, "with Me."

"And with Jesus  
Through the trackless deep move on."

"Ye are they which have continued with Me." Now, beloved friends, is it a point with you, is it a concern with you, this continuing, this enduring to the end? To put it in very simple terms indeed: you are driving along a road, there is a stream of traffic and you are coming towards a roundabout. You do not know which cars will go straight on, but you are hoping to go straight on. And as you follow behind, one goes round the roundabout and straight on, and another round the roundabout and straight on; but then there is one veers off to the left, and another one veers off to the right; then there are others that go on. And it has been like that in the professing church of God ever since Adam fell. The older I get the more I love that beautiful little hymn of Dr. Fawcett:

"Lord, hast Thou made me know Thy ways?  
Conduct me in Thy fear;  
And grant me such supplies of grace,  
That I may persevere.

"Let but Thy own almighty arm  
Sustain a feeble worm,  
I shall escape, secure from harm  
Amid the dreadful storm.

"Be Thou my all-sufficient Friend,  
Till all my toils shall cease;  
Guard me through life, and let my end  
Be everlasting peace."

Now that is continuing with the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It will be a mercy of mercies if at last, in the great day, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says this to you and me, "Ye are they which have continued." You will bless the riches of His grace to all eternity. It is all of grace from first to last. It is "kept by the power of God." It is "preserved in Jesus." It is nothing in the sinner. It is everything in Christ. Left to ourselves we must have veered away, sunk to rise no more, gone back, denied His name.

“Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.” This is what Moses spoke of as “the recompence of the reward.” Now let us be clear, it is a reward of grace not a reward of debt: “the recompence of the reward.” “I appoint unto you a kingdom.” It is sure, it is safe for all the people of God. What did we sing just now?

“There your seat is now prepared,  
There your kingdom and reward.”

“I appoint unto you a kingdom.” The blessed inheritance of the saints in life. The everlasting prospect of poor, unworthy sinners saved by God’s grace. And it is almighty God who gives it, who says it. “I appoint unto you a kingdom.” You know, many appointments are broken, aren’t they? But this is an appointment which cannot be broken because in covenant love and mercy the Son of God has appointed to His poor, unworthy people a kingdom. And it is all secured; it is all sealed by His own precious blood. “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me,” which means two things. It is because of union with Jesus, as the Father views them in Jesus, that the kingdom is prepared. And, second, if it is secured for Christ, and of course it must be, then it is secured for all His people in everlasting union with Him. “I appoint unto you a kingdom.” This is heaven for the people of God.

“I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.” Now, in a sense there is a little loving rebuke in these words. Why do I say that? What do I mean by that? Because the disciples had just been disputing among themselves who should be greatest. And this is a loving rebuke for each one of them, all of them unworthy. There is an everlasting kingdom appointed, then why dispute among themselves? Why want earthly honours among themselves? You see, this is a little loving rebuke, and we need it at times, don’t we? If we become fretful and discontented, or if, on the other hand, we become proud and lifted up, this whisper from heaven, “I appoint unto you a kingdom.” O to live as kings and priests unto God and His Father! Because that will be the everlasting song, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

“I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.”

“A kingdom which can ne’er decay,  
While time sweeps earthly thrones away.”

For “in the days of these kings” – that is those mighty kingdoms of Babylon and Greece and Rome – “in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the

kingdom shall not be left to other people ... and it shall stand for ever.” “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.” I understand that in the original Greek the real significance of this word “appoint” is “bequeath.” “I *bequeath* unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath *bequeathed* unto Me.” So, this is the will and testament of the Lord Jesus for all His beloved people, every one of them, as one by one they are brought safely through, as one by one they endure to the end. “I *bequeath* unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath *bequeathed* unto Me.” You know, sometimes a person unexpectedly receives a letter, someone has died, and they have remembered that person in their will. They have perhaps left them a lovely little legacy. And the person receiving the news feels so touched that this one should have thought of him, remembered him, even if it is only a little thing. Well, what about this from the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? That all His people have a part in His will and testament, that will and testament that He has signed and sealed and ratified in His own blood. And what has He bequeathed to His people? A kingdom. “I *bequeath* unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath *bequeathed* unto Me.”

In conclusion, a little anecdote I read years ago which seems such a commentary on the Lord giving this kingdom to His unworthy people. It is in that remarkable book, the autobiography of Alfred Dye. Alfred Dye, as a young man, living in Bedford, in great trouble of soul, went over to the Southill anniversary and the preacher was A.B. Taylor of Manchester. And Alfred Dye had never heard a sermon like that or one with such effect. Mr. Taylor’s text was: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” But the beautiful simplicity of it, as Alfred Dye unfolded it. First of all the preacher said Christ has a flock in this world but they are only a *little flock*. They are little in number, they are little in the eyes of the world, they are little in their own esteem; only a little flock. O but they have a Father. There is nothing little about that Father. He is in heaven. He is great in His Person, in His majesty, in His glory, in His work. They are only a little flock, but they have a Father in heaven. And would you know, he said, that Father in heaven has a kingdom and He is going to give it to them. He is going to give it to that little flock. And not only is He going to give it to them, but with sacred delight He is going to give it to them; it is His “good pleasure” to give it to them. Then, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” And Alfred Dye went back to Bedford enjoying a gospel day and heaven begun below. O may there be a few hearts here this afternoon touched, longing that this portion might be yours.



“Jesus! to Thee I breathe my prayer;  
Reveal, confirm my interest there.”

“Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me.”

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## THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETIES NORTHERN MEETINGS

*Report of Meetings held at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester  
on Saturday, September 11th, 2004*

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### PRAYER MEETING

Mr. G.D. Buss (Chairman of the Gospel Standard Societies) read Psalm 126, and then spoke from: “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” (verse 5).

This is one of the exceeding great and precious promises that the great Head of the church, the dear Redeemer, has left on record by His Holy Spirit for the comfort and the encouragement of the church militant, that is, the church that is yet on the battleground of earth here below.

There are no tears in heaven. God has wiped away all the tears of those in the church triumphant, but there are plenty of tears in the church militant. Indeed the Word of God has said it will be so. The dear Saviour Himself, speaking to His disciples just before His own unspeakable sufferings, said, “In the world ye *shall*” (not ye might, not some), “ye shall” (as certain as the “shall” in our text), “ye shall have tribulation.” But what a great mercy that the dear Saviour did not leave the word there! “But,” He said, “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” And remember dear friends, He said that in that precious fulness of faith that was in His dear Person. He had yet Gethsemane before Him. He had yet Calvary to endure. But friends, with that blessed certainty, Paul says “who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” And all the tears that His church shed here below, and the joy that in His own season comes to His church, are to be remembered in the context of His own tears.

Let us for a few moments consider first this word as it concerned the dear Redeemer. O how He sowed in tears! He was called the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. His whole life from its first to its last

breath was a sowing time, and O what tears He shed, not just outwardly! We read He wept over Jerusalem, He wept at the grave of Lazarus, but friends, there were those inward sorrows as He felt more and more the weight of Gethsemane and the shadow of Calvary. How He said, "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." And eventually we find the dear Redeemer in Gethsemane's garden groaning, weeping, agonizing. An invisible load presses Him to the ground. What is it? The weight, the guilt of His church imputed to His dear, holy Person, Emmanuel, God with us. O the grief, shall we say, the broken-heartedness of the Saviour under that burden. I think good Joseph Hart puts it like this: "Shocked at the sum, yet prompt to pay." What a depth there is in that one sentence! "Shocked at the sum, yet prompt to pay."

And so He goes from Gethsemane to Calvary, and from Calvary that cry goes forth in the depth of His sorrow, that crowning sorrow, shall we say, of all, when He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" All the comforts of His union with His heavenly Father were withholden at that moment. The union was not broken, that could never be, but the comfort of that union was withheld while He endured the cross, the curse, the outpouring of the wrath of Almighty God. And as the good hymnwriter William Gadsby puts it,

"He bore almighty wrath for you,  
That you might all His glory view."

Of course, the "you" and the "all" are His church, His sheep, His lambs, His dear people.

Now He is in glory. The cross is behind Him. The grave is behind Him. He sits at the right hand of His heavenly Father, and has He forgotten Calvary? No. What does the good hymnwriter Beddome say?

"So fair a face bedewed with tears;  
What beauty e'en in grief appears!  
He wept, He bled, He died for you;  
What more, ye saints, could Jesus do?"

"Enthroned above, with equal glow  
His warm affections downward flow;  
In our distress He bears a part,  
And feels a sympathetic smart.

"Still His compassions are the same;  
He knows the frailty of our frame;  
Our heaviest burdens He sustains;  
Shares in our sorrows and our pains."

O dear friend, what has caused you to weep? What is it within your heart that is breaking the very foundations of it this morning as you have

come into this house of prayer? The Lord knows. He understands. He is not indifferent to it. “He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust,” and in measure, His dear people must walk the same path as Him. They must be taught to weep over the sins that made Him weep, that caused Him that terrible grief in Gethsemane’s garden, and on Calvary’s cross. They must weep over the same temptations that assaulted the dear holy, harmless, undefiled, impeccable Lamb of God. They must weep over the world in its fallen state, and ah, in this sense there is a distinction between us and the dear Redeemer in the point I am about to make: we have to weep over the world inside us. O perhaps the deepest cause of our grief is that there is in our heart that love of sin, love of that very thing that nailed the dear Redeemer to the cross. To think that, left to ourselves, we would have joined the proud Pharisees, the railing Jews, the cruel soldiers. We would have mocked, we would have scoffed, we would have railed at Him, we would have spat at Him. Friend, we have nothing to be proud of (have we?) but O what a mercy if God teaches you to sow in tears!

Of course, not all tears are spiritual. Esau wept bitter tears and no repentance with them, no godly sorrow over sin. All he wept for was the fact that he had lost what his carnal heart wanted. They were not the tears of our text. May God deliver us from those tears. O may God give us those tears that are spiritual. I think of dear Hezekiah in this respect. We read he “wept sore.” It was a bitter cry from Hezekiah’s heart. Why? So many things to mourn over here, that Jerusalem was besieged, the armies of the Chaldeans were right on the borders waiting to pounce, the enemies of the people of God seemed to be prevailing. Hezekiah himself was laid low on a sick bed, apparently facing death. He had no son to succeed him and just at the very moment when he was needed to be the leader, there he was lying prostrate and prone, but friend, that was not even the depth of his sorrow. That was just the tip of the iceberg I have mentioned. What was Hezekiah’s deepest sorrow? I hope it is the same with you and the same with me, his sins.

There he was apparently face to face with eternity and that great matter of sin had not been dealt with. He could not say with God-given confidence that his sins had been blotted out. Friend, *that* brought the grief. How could he face a holy God? How could he answer if those sins were to be laid to his charge that he so deserved that they should be? Where was he to look? What was he to do? Friend, he sowed in tears. “O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.”

And that is how the Lord wipes away the tears of His dear people. He undertakes for them, puts His dear, loving arms right underneath them and lifts them up, and says, “Those burdens that have broken your heart are Mine. That cross that has laid you so low is Mine. Weep not. Weep

not.” We have that in the Book of the Revelation. Poor John wept when there was none to open the book, and he knew, dear friends, that if that book remained sealed, its decrees could not be fulfilled, and where was his salvation? O the Lamb’s book of life needed to be opened up to see His dear name there, but while that book remained sealed, there was no comfort. “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book.” And he turned. What did he see? A Lamb. The dear Lamb of God. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

And so it was, dear friend, with Hezekiah. What did he say? “Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.” Nothing between Hezekiah’s broken heart now and his God. Gone, all those sins, all those clouds dispersed. A smiling God. The smile of forgiveness, the smile of mercy, the smile of love entered his dear heart. No wonder the dear man rejoiced. “The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day.” O how the dear man leapt as it were like a lamb, didn’t he? And so would you and so would I if that precious blood were applied. Some of us hope we have known something of it. O that we might know more of it. And then all of Hezekiah’s other matters were dealt with. The Lord promised him a son, He turned back Sennacherib, destroyed his army, raised Hezekiah up from his deathbed, added fifteen years to his days.

I tell you, dear friend, when God wipes away your tears, He will not leave one tear. No! He may not do it as quickly as your old nature wants. He may not do it in the way your carnal mind has planned but, you mark my words, the Lord knows what has broken your heart this morning. He knows what has caused the grief. He knows why your poor soul tossed around last night in the dark hours wondering where the scene will end, and He says for your comfort this morning, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Why, because He will come, and He who gave the grace to sow in tears will come and give the grace to reap. Prayer will be turned into praise and deliverance written over your path. “Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.” May God add His blessing. Amen.

I would like to call on as many brethren as possible, as we would seek now to turn to the Lord in prayer, confession, repentance and looking to Him for mercy. So may the friends be enabled to be brief as the Lord may guide them, but above all may they be given access, gain the ear of a Holy God, for Jesus’ sake.

Hymns 679, 402 and 759 were sung during the meeting. The following prayed: Mr. F.A. Ince (Fitzwilliam), Mr. J.H. Cottington (Blackboys), Mr. G.E. Hadley (Pastor, Stotfold), Mr. D.J. Christian (Luton, Bethel), Mr. B.H. Honeysett (Shoreham-by-Sea), Mr. M.P. Hydon (Attleborough), Mr. J.E. Pack (Pastor, Irthlingborough) and Mr. J.R. Ince (Pastor, Fitzwilliam and Nottingham). Mr. G.D. Buss closed the meeting with prayer and the benediction.

## BUSINESS MEETING

After the singing of hymn 4, Mr. Richard Field (West Street, Croydon) asked God's blessing on the meeting.

Mr. G.D. Buss (Chairman of the Gospel Standard Societies) read Genesis 18, verses 22 to 33, and then spoke as follows:

Surely, dear friends, what we have been reminded of in prayer and that which I have read before you now is a true description of the state of the church in our day. How low it has got, down to this "ten"! Yet in poor, solemn Sodom there were not even ten found. And yet how amazing it was that the prayer of Abraham was answered! It was answered. It was Lot he was praying for, and the Lord heard his prayer. And what Peter tells us is so true: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment." That was solemnly, dreadfully fulfilled in Genesis 18.

We live in similar days; judgments await to be poured out upon this nation. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" He will do right. But O what a mercy to be found among the righteous, those found in Christ Jesus, those for whom, not only did Abraham pray, but ah more than that, to be among those who have a place in the prayers of our great High Priest who said concerning them, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world." O may God turn our captivity and grant better days yet in Zion.

CHAIRMAN: Now it is my privilege to welcome you to this business part of our Meeting today, and we do thank all the dear friends for their loving support in coming to be with us today. And may it be a good day, a day to be remembered, a day when we may look back and say that despite all our wanderings, backslidings and sins, the Lord was mindful of us indeed.

The Secretary of the Societies, Mr. H. Mercer, then read his report.

### GOSPEL STANDARD AID AND POOR RELIEF SOCIETIES

Mr. Chairman and dear friends,

We are grateful again to the friends at Manchester for the warm welcome extended to us on this annual occasion, and once more we would record the Lord's goodness and mercy which has been lengthened out to us despite our deserts. The Committee is concerned because many of our causes are in a very low state. The decline in numbers gives rise to much sadness and it would appear that unless the Lord is pleased to raise up those who will be burden-bearers and carry the responsibility of a cause of truth, there will be a number of closures in the near future. May the Lord be pleased to raise up men to continue our causes when those at present in office have been taken.

There is a greater anxiety than the numerical decline and this is the low state spiritually in our churches. On previous occasions this concern has been mentioned and the cause of it acknowledged. We know that if there is to be a reviving spiritually, it must be the work of God the Holy Spirit, but there seems to be an apathy and contentment with the present sad condition among us, and this is evident in some places. In past days there have been those whom the Lord has raised up and used to awaken His people out of sleep. And it is the Committee's earnest desire that the Lord might be pleased so to attend the preaching of the gospel with almighty power that there may be more evidence of spiritual life and a day of spiritual prosperity again among us. We believe that this will be begun by conviction of our sins and an acknowledgement from our hearts that we have solemnly transgressed. May the Lord give real repentance and restoration to the glory of His great name. "Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"

Questions are sometimes asked about the responsibilities of the Committee and whether these extend to individual churches. The members of the Committee are the trustees of the Gospel Standard Aid Society and the Gospel Standard Poor Relief Society and their responsibility is to preserve and distribute, according to the Rules of the Societies, the funds entrusted to their care. In addition, the right to publish the *Gospel Standard* magazine is entrusted to the Gospel Standard Societies by a deed of trust and this right continues provided that the truths upon which the magazines were founded are maintained. In addition, the Committee maintains a list of Gospel Standard churches who willingly subscribe to our 35 Articles of Faith and observe our church order. A list of ministers is also maintained and this list contains the names of those who are in good standing with their church, whose conduct is becoming a gospel minister, and who preach the truths contained in our Articles of Faith. It has been suggested that the Committee should sometimes make enquiries into certain church decisions, but the Committee has no power to do so. Decisions by our churches are to be respected and the Committee at all times seeks to abide by the Rules which govern the Societies.

We are pleased to report that the financial position of the Societies continues to be satisfactory. The recent rises in interest rates have been of benefit because most of the fixed interest investments we had have matured and the funds now invested are on deposit and subject to variable rates of interest. During the six months to June 30th, 2004, grants paid by the Aid Society were £16,855, and this sum included two grants to ministers who are not trustees to help with the cost of replacement of their cars. The grants paid by the Poor Relief Society were

£16,350 and the whole of this sum was paid to individuals or to chapels for the maintenance of the ministry. The Committee is very grateful to the friends who continually support the Societies financially and to the chapels who take collections or make donations to those funds.

Following the investigation by the Charity Commission into the conduct of the Committee and the administration of the Societies' funds, a meeting was held with the Charity Commission at Taunton. As a result of those discussions, and with the assistance and subject to the advice of the Charity Commission, the Committee is considering the possibility of merging the funds of the Gospel Standard Aid society, the Gospel Standard Poor Relief Society and the Gospel Standard Convalescent Fund. It may be possible to revise the stated objects of these Funds which in some areas already overlap. There would be no widening of the objects but a clearer definition of them. These draft proposals are at a very early stage of consideration, and if they proceed would probably result in a scheme being issued by the Charity Commission which would be comprehensive and cover all aspects of the operation of the Aid and Poor Relief Societies. Our subscribers will be kept informed when there is something to report.

The Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund continues to be well supported by a number of our chapels who take annual collections or make donations. We are now approaching the time of the year when these collections and donations are received, and the annual distribution will be made, if the Lord will, toward the end of November. Forms have been sent to all of our chapels asking pastors and deacons to notify the Secretary of any friends attending their chapel who may be in need. It is requested that a careful review be made and any worthy cases are recommended by returning the forms to the Secretary before the end of October.

The Magazine Fund has been in surplus for each of the past two years. Last year it was partly because of the recovery of a considerable amount of arrears of subscriptions to the magazines. If a subscription is not renewed promptly, there is usually a period of several months before with reluctance the magazines are no longer sent. Prompt renewal is much appreciated. The Gospel Standard Trust continues to support the publication of the magazines and the trustees are grateful for this. The prices of the magazines for 2005 have been fixed and there will be no increase in the cost of either the *Gospel Standard* or the *Friendly Companion* to friends in this country. However, because of currency fluctuations and the increased cost of postage abroad, the cost of the magazines to our friends in the United States and Canada, in Australia and in Europe, has had to be increased. This increase is approximately 10% and ways are being examined whereby dispatch of the magazines in bulk for distribution in the United States might save considerably on the postage cost. It is always difficult to anticipate currency movements several months ahead. The Committee considers the cost of the magazines for the following year at its July meeting and it has confirmed that the usual reductions will apply to subscriptions for the magazines from students.

We are thankful that the Editors have been enabled to continue throughout another year, and seek that the Lord will give all needed grace and wisdom in the onerous responsibility the Editors have in preparing suitable text for each month's publication. Although there is criticism from time to time, there are those who write to say that they have been much helped from articles published. May the Lord continue to bless the work of the Editors.

The Committee welcomes new subscribers and is thankful that a few of our

younger friends have now begun to support the Societies in this way. It is important that the Societies continue to be well supported because, whilst the Committee who are the trustees of the Societies are immediately responsible for the well-being of the Societies, the subscribers are the people who are asked to approve the annual accounts and to re-appoint the Committee for the following year. The solidarity of the subscribers' votes is important for the preservation of the Societies' funds for the purposes set out in our trust deeds.

Finally, the Committee once more expresses its grateful thanks to the many friends here and overseas who prayerfully support the work that is done and who labour in prayer for the spiritual prosperity of our churches. There is a special burden upon us in respect of our younger friends, because it is fully realised that in this present day there are so many things to attract the natural desires and draw away from the truth. Education today encourages discussion and disputation and this appeals to the natural mind. The burden resting upon many in our churches is that the Lord would implant His holy fear in many young hearts and raise up a seed who shall serve Him in days to come, who hold the truths that their forefathers have defended. "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength: let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness." May the Lord graciously appear for us.

The Chairman said that if any friends had any questions to ask Mr. Mercer, he would be pleased to attend to those during the interval. He also thanked Mr. Mercer for all the work he does on behalf of the Societies.

Mr. T.H.W. Scott (Bethesda Secretary) then read his report.

### **GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND**

Mr. Chairman, subscribers and dear friends,

Once more we are pleased to have the opportunity to give a short report on the affairs of Bethesda.

Many of you will realise that it is now sixty years since Bethesda was first set up in the year 1944. What changes there have been politically, socially and legislatively during that time, but we are able to raise our Ebenezer and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Occupancy levels in the Homes are running at a satisfactory level and in all Homes has so far exceeded the budgeted occupancy rate we set ourselves at the beginning of the year. It is particularly pleasing that the Tunbridge Wells Home has been completely full for over two years.

It is always a privilege to care for the Lord's servants in one of the Homes, and this year Mr. Joseph Short passed away in the Studley Home on June 14th, at the age of 91, having been a resident in the Home for seven and a half years.

Recruitment of suitable staff continues to be a major problem and at times causes our Home Managers much anxiety. By the year 2005 50% of care staff must be qualified to NVQ level 2. As we employ quite a number of short-term staff, this will not be easy to achieve.

The qualifications needed by Registered Managers of care homes are now quite onerous, as a qualification in care alone is not considered sufficient. An



equal emphasis is placed upon a qualification in management. Where management qualifications have been lacking, the National Minimum Standards require such qualifications to be in place by the year 2005. We are thankful that our regulatory body, the Commission for Social Care Inspection, appears to be satisfied with the management situation in each of the Bethesda Homes. Some of our Home Managers and their deputies already had suitable management qualifications, and others earlier this year completed the newly-introduced Registered Manager NVQ at level 4, thus satisfying the requirements. It was not easy for them to embark on a course of this nature in addition to an already full workload, and so we would express our thanks to them all for working so hard to achieve what is now required by legislation.

Most of you will have seen the advertisements in the *Gospel Standard* for a Home Manager at the Brighton Home. The present Home Manager, Mrs. Paula Matrunola Hills, was originally expecting to leave us in the middle of October to await the birth of her baby. I am, however, very sorry to say that Paula was unexpectedly taken into hospital on September 2nd, suffering from pre-eclampsia, and is now having to rest in hospital. We do hope that all might be well with her and the baby, and I am sure our prayers and thoughts are with her and her husband.\* In the meantime, the deputy Home Manager, Mrs. Jean Feaver, is assuming responsibility until a new appointment can be made, and we thank her and the other senior staff for the way in which they have so willingly stepped in to make up the breach.

We are anxious to ensure that the terms and conditions of employment at Bethesda remain favourable. This year a major revision of the Wages Scale took place to reflect some of the changes brought about by what is known as *Agenda for Change*, the new pay and grading system for the NHS. New legislation comes into force in October with the Employment Act (Dispute Resolution) Regulations. The Regulations lay down in great detail the disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures to be followed when problems arise at work, and we have just finished revising our conditions of employment to incorporate these changes. Much of what is proposed is very commendable, and, in the midst of much employment law which is far from satisfactory, the Government is to be congratulated in bringing forward these measures in an attempt to resolve difficulties in the workplace by fair and thorough procedures before they get as far as Employment Tribunals.

Repairs and renewals in the Homes continue to be a drain on our resources. During the early summer the central heating system at Tunbridge Wells was completely renewed, with new boilers, new water tanks and new low surface temperature radiators. Much of the plumbing at the Harpenden Home is also showing its age, and a considerable amount of severe corrosion has been found in some of the copper piping. In addition, under the Health and Safety Regulations, a Legionnaires' Disease Risk Assessment was carried out, when evidence of corrosion and general deterioration was found in the cold water storage tanks on the roof of the Home, and we are now proposing to bring the installation up to water bye-laws standards.

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\* A baby girl was born on September 14th at Hammersmith Hospital, and is now in intensive care at Haywards Heath hospital. The baby is gaining weight but breathing is still an anxiety. Mrs. Matrunola Hills is now making progress, having been extremely ill. *T.H.W.S.*

Each of the Homes is currently being surveyed by a specialist firm for the presence of asbestos in the buildings. To comply with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations any dangerous asbestos will need to be removed, and a register maintained of all other known or suspected asbestos, which will be made available to contractors working in the Homes. The extent of any work required to meet the Regulations is at present unknown.

Financially, the Fund continues to be supported by a number of chapels who regularly hold collections, and so far this year we have heard from twenty-six chapels. Private donations are received on a monthly or annual basis from those who like to give regularly, usually under Gift Aid. When a resident passes away donations are often made to Bethesda in memory of the deceased, and this has particularly been the case this year. As mentioned in the Annual Report, legacy income is running at a much lower level than in the past, and in the year 2003 was the lowest for twenty-three years. The Fund's reserves fell by £70,000 in the first six months of this year.

Finally, we would like to thank all who help Bethesda in any way, whether financially or practically. Whilst it is difficult to single out any particular group of supporters, we would mention the minibus drivers, the men who take reading and prayer, handicraft helpers, Home Support Group members, visitors, and many others, who give such valuable help toward the running of the Homes. In particular, every member of the staff is valued for their work in providing for the needs of the elderly residents in our care. May the Lord's blessing rest upon all their labours, so that the Homes may continue to serve their original purpose of providing a dwelling place when it is impossible to continue any longer at home alone.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Scott for what he does behind the scenes and in public for the Bethesda Fund and said that Mr. Scott would be very pleased to answer any questions during the interval.

MR. MERCER: At the Annual General Meetings held in London on Friday, April 16th, a resolution was passed approving an alteration to the Rules of the Societies which would permit the Committee to convene the Annual General Meetings outside London if the Committee felt it appropriate. Our Rules require that this resolution be confirmed at a further meeting held not less than two months after the first meeting, and it is therefore requested that a subscriber propose and a further subscriber second the following resolution so that it can be put to the meeting for approval:

"That the Rules of the Societies be amended to state, 'A General Meeting of the subscribers shall be held in London or, if considered desirable, outside of London in April of each year.'"

Mr. K.M. Price proposed and Mr. M.P. Hydon seconded this resolution, which was carried *nem con*.

CHAIRMAN: The reason for that option that we may have to take eventually is that it is getting increasingly expensive to find a place in London to meet. Westminster Chapel, although very convenient in many ways, is becoming very exorbitant now in its costs and we are concerned also that we would like to be able to hold it in one of our chapels if that were possible, but we have to wait on the Lord to see what His will is concerning these things.

I would echo the thanks that our Secretary gave to the friends at Manchester for their kind and loving welcome to us again and we do pray that they, and all the northern churches, may be richly and abundantly blessed yet with an outpouring of His gracious Spirit.

The meeting concluded with the singing of hymn 938, and prayer by the Chairman.

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## PREJUDICE AND PARTIALITY

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Not long before he died, Mr. F.L. Gosden said that during his life he had found that two things had caused havoc in the church of God - prejudice on the one hand, and partiality on the other.

Prejudice is a terrible thing. Really it is taking dislike to a person or thing without any good reason. You will remember that in Bunyan's *Holy War*, all the men that Mr. Prejudice took to listen to the overtures of Immanuel were stone deaf!

How the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, when here on earth, was treated with prejudice. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

The second chapter of James solemnly warns against prejudice. "If there come into your assembly ... a poor man in vile raiment ... and ye say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool...." Often today it is not social standing or condition, or even race, but many people sadly build up their own prejudices.

Some are prejudiced because a person is young. "Let no man despise thy youth," even the apostle was compelled to write concerning Timothy. Sometimes it is the young who are right, and the old wrong.

Sadly at times the old North/South division has crept into the church of God. Some will not hear a minister because of his accent or dialect.

Perhaps one form of prejudice which has done more harm than others is despising someone who has been known from childhood days - "a prophet without honour ... in his own country." "But it's only young So-and-so?" We remember with sadness reading an unpublished diary written by a young church member over a hundred years ago. He had the burden that his friend should be considered as pastor. But with what

sadness the diary described the church meeting! “Not young John?” “You don’t really mean we should think of having that lad for pastor?” “We like the older, deeper ministers,” etc. Within a year or so “that lad,” “young John” had commenced a pastorate, and became one of the most esteemed ministers our churches have known – John Booth of Bradford.

Today, as a natural swing against the prevailing lightness seen on every hand, there is strong prejudice in favour of anyone who is very sombre and heavy in speech and demeanour – though they may be extremely uncertain concerning various points of truth. Everything must be sacrificed for sobriety.

Prejudices are often formed on first impressions. It is always dangerous to act on first impressions. The man may be ill, or in trouble – not stand-offish, unfriendly or bearing a grudge. “Judge righteous judgment,” is the counsel of the Word of God, and at times we need to confess we have been wrong.

As a pastor, how we have had to heed the word: “Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons,” and to realise that “he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” In the great sheet, knit at the four corners, were *all manner* of creatures – wild beasts, flying fowl, creeping things. All were unclean, but all were cleansed in the blood of Christ.

Often “hearsay” is the fuel that causes the fire of prejudice to burn fiercely; and how often “hearsay” proves to be wrong!

When Nathanael expressed his prejudice against the Lord Jesus, the wise and gracious answer he received was, “Come and see.” And how often this has availed! We remember well years ago a minister’s name being mentioned, and an old, well-respected minister expressed his fears and anxieties about him. He had heard such things. Someone present said, “You ought to invite him for tea!” After a moment’s thought the old minister replied, “I will!” and he did. Both are now dead, but a harmonious friendship was begun which continued until death.

We feel that the best thing to break down unfounded prejudice is the love of Christ felt in the heart. We once witnessed this in a remarkable way. We accompanied a minister to a service where he was preaching, and at the end of the service an elderly woman came up to the front of the chapel to speak to him. What she said was something like this: “I came to chapel this evening full of prejudice against you, even hatred. But when you began to speak of Christ, it all vanished. Mind you,” she said in her honest way, “there are still some things I don’t agree with you; but I felt *I must tell you how much I love you for Jesus’ sake.*”

“Love all defects supplies,  
Makes great obstructions small;  
,’Tis prayer, ’tis praise, ’tis sacrifice,  
,’Tis holiness, ’tis all!”

But then there is partiality. Partiality is showing special favour when in no way it is merited. Partiality is unfair.

The Word of God specifically warns against partiality: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." "If ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing ... are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" "The wisdom that is from above is ... without partiality."

Parents can cause much sorrow and distress by showing favouritism among their children, and by excusing wrong in their own children that they would bitterly condemn in others. King David failed badly here in the way he treated his son Absalom, despite Absalom's waywardness and wickedness.

So often error has been allowed into the church of God because there has been some special personal liking (and therefore innumerable excuses) for an offending minister. Likewise, breakdown of true church order is usually not a thing that has been planned or thought out. Rather it is some close friend or relative who has been guilty of sin, and because of the relationship it has all been smoothed over and no action taken. Or a person not eligible for the Lord's table has been welcomed. "He is So-and-so's son." "We must not offend him." "We do not want to cause trouble." But God is offended, and the Spirit withdrawn.

Really the first division in the New Testament church was caused through partiality – Paul and Barnabas. There was a disagreement as to whether Mark should go with them a second time on their preaching visits. "Paul thought it not good" – and he gave a good reason why not: on a previous occasion Mark had defaulted, and left them. But "Barnabas *determined* to take with them John, whose surname was Mark." And when we turn over a few pages, we discover the reason why. Mark was Barnabas' sister's son. Partiality! "And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other."

May we personally and in the churches be delivered from prejudice and partiality, both of which dishonour God. May we exercise righteous judgment in the fear of God. Think of Jonah fleeing to Tarshish. Prejudice would have said he could not be a child of God, doing such a dreadful thing. Partiality would have said that he could not really have done much wrong because he was a child of God. But both prejudice and partiality would have been mistaken. There is no doubt that Jonah was disobeying God, but there is no doubt that he was an honoured servant of the Lord.

Perhaps one last word should be a word of warning. One thing

continually commended in the Word of God is *loyalty*. We think of Ittai the Gittite. "Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile .... And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over." And was not the Lord Jesus Himself touched by the loyalty of His immediate disciples, when so many went back, and walked no more with Him: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me."

But what has this to do with either prejudice or partiality? There are some people who do not seem to know what loyalty means, but who pride themselves in their fairness, open-mindedness, treating everyone the same. They give no reverence where reverence is due, nor do they show love where love is required. They would glory in the fact that they are *free* of partiality; they detest it. They are *not* prejudiced in a person's favour. But let us be clear: love, faithfulness, loyalty are wonderful things, and it is confusion to account loving devotion to a parent, minister or friend as being partial. The Lord deliver the churches from both God-dishonouring prejudice and partiality, but may love and loyalty abound.

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## THE EXAMPLE OF OLD PEOPLE

*By Ashton Oxenden, 1880*

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Every station and stage of life has its own special responsibilities. Childhood has its responsibilities, such as obedience to parents, modesty and willingness to be taught. A husband and wife have their responsibilities. Manhood has its responsibilities; grown-up men or women are required to be useful in the world, and not to live unto themselves, but unto the Lord.

And so, too, old age has its responsibilities. I will mention some of them.

1. You should endeavour to be *patient and gentle*. Amid all your pains and infirmities, how blessed if you can feel a cheerful submission to God's will, and if you can accept, not merely with resignation, but with actual thankfulness, all that He lays upon you. God can give you this patient, humble, submissive spirit, if you will earnestly and daily seek it from Him.

2. You should try to be *cheerful and considerate of others*. Sometimes old people are a little apt to dwell too much on their own

troubles and desires. Guard against this, and seek to make those around you happy. You cannot do much, perhaps, but you can do something. A gentle word or two, or even a kind look, will cheer some and encourage others.

Do not grudge young people those delights which you can no longer enjoy. But put yourself often in their place, and remember that you were once a child yourself. The very feeling that you are trying to make others happy will make you happy yourself.

3. Be much in *prayer* and in the *reading of God's Word*. These are great helps to a Christian pilgrim; they are like so many staffs by the way. Use them diligently and they will help you onward. As you read a little further, you will find some directions how to profit by the use of them.

4. You should *sit loose to this world*, and be in readiness to leave it. This, you will say, belongs to all. Yes, but especially to the aged; for the clock of time seems now to be sounding its warning alarm in your ears. Every day seems to be saying to you, "Prepare to meet thy God! The night is far spent; the day is at hand. The Judge standeth at the door."

It is a sad sight to see an old person bent down with years, standing at the edge of eternity, and yet unwilling to loose his hold of this world – clinging to life with an eager grasp, as much busied as ever with its trifling concerns, still thirsting for its poor pleasures and yet unable to enjoy them, all before him a blank, having no hope as regards the future. Such an old age is indeed a sad one.

But you will perhaps say, "Surely when anyone has grown old, and when he has sown the wild oats of youth, he will, as a matter of course, become thoughtful, and turn his mind towards that world he is so shortly to enter." But no; this does not at all follow. On the contrary, I have seen many in old age be just as worldly-minded as ever, putting from them, even then, the thoughts of a life to come.

Dear friend, only grace can make you anxious about your soul. Only grace can prepare you for eternity. We all need the powerful working of God's Spirit to draw our minds from earth to heaven, from sin to holiness.

Happy for you, if heaven is the home of your heart! Happy for you, if your thoughts are centred there! Happy for you, if you can say, "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6. 14); "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen"! (2 Cor. 4. 18).

5. *Your conversation should be heavenly*. Your time is nearly ended; and therefore you should not think much about this world which you are about to leave. Its pleasures, its riches, its occupations, should not occupy your mind. You should rather busy yourself with

preparations for your journey to your everlasting home. You should love to speak about your Father's house.

True, our evil hearts will ever be cleaving to the dust (Psa. 119. 25). There is a weight upon our wings ever keeping us downwards. But O, struggle against this. Pray against it. Ask God to be continually drawing your mind heavenward, and to enable you to "set your affection on things above" (Col. 3. 2). Speak thankfully of His preserving mercy. Bear testimony to His goodness and faithfulness, and recommend others to trust Him without a doubt.

6. Try to set *a good example for others*. We should all wish to be useful in the world. But now that you are grown old, you feel perhaps that your time for usefulness is past. Satan may whisper, "You are too old to be useful now." But not so; you may do something still. It is true you cannot labour for your family as you once did. You cannot go here and there to help those who need your assistance. But you may be very useful even now – useful if you are rich, and useful, too, if you are poor. As you sit by your fireside, you may speak Christian words; you may show by your conduct and temper the blessed effects that religion has upon your heart. You may, by your prayers and praises, by your patience and perseverance, by your watching and waiting, glorify God. A really Christian old man or woman may thus be a great blessing to the house and place in which he is living. He may spread a feeling of contentment around him. He may stop many a bad work, and soften many a quarrelsome spirit. He may show forth so clearly the power of grace in his own conduct that he may lead others to seek it, and pray for it themselves.

Without speaking much, or doing much, you may honour God by your Christian conduct; and thus your light may so shine before men, that you may glorify Him. We know that a nice picture in a room is a pleasant thing to gaze upon; we constantly turn to it with pleasure. And what picture is there more beautiful than that of an aged Christian, old in years, and ripe in grace? "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16. 31).

Yes, remember always you may do much by your example. This will say more than your words, for your words may be mistaken, but your life cannot be. It must and will speak. Paul reminded the Corinthians of this when he said, "Ye are our epistle ... known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ" (2 Cor. 3. 2, 3); that is, your lives plainly declare whose and what you are.

These are some of the responsibilities which belong to old people. Dear reader, neglect them not; try to fulfil them. It will be for your own happiness, and for the good of others. Thus you will be "bearing fruit in old age."



## LET THEM DECLARE HIS PRAISE IN THE ISLANDS

*The life and poetry of Hallgrímur Pétursson*

*By Dr. I.A Sadler*

*(Concluded from page 325)*

### Part 5

In this final article about the Icelandic minister Hallgrímur Pétursson and his poetry, we continue with selected quotations from the final part of the “Hymns of the Passion,” in which Hallgrímur Pétursson meditates upon the precious blessings that flow from the Lord’s crucifixion. We will then conclude with a few words about Hallgrímur Pétursson’s last days, in which he was called to walk in deep suffering, but died triumphing in Jesus.

We must first consider the repentance of one of the thieves crucified alongside the Lord Jesus. “And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss, And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto Him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23. 39-43). How this sets forth the intercession and tender care of the Lord Jesus, now risen and ascended into heaven, towards all those who truly and spiritually confess their sins, pleading mercy in His name. May we, like the dying thief, come venturing with nothing to plead but a cry for divine mercy. As we meditate upon the Lord Jesus, may the Holy Spirit give us clearer views by faith of the glorious love of God the Father. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4. 6).

Hallgrímur Pétursson brings forth most beautifully the Lord’s gracious love and care for the soul of the repentant thief, even amidst His excruciating pain and suffering upon the cross.

He saw the Saviour dying  
Beside him on a tree.  
Yet, on His word relying,  
He dared to make his plea.  
Repenting all the evil  
In blindness he had done,  
He turned now from the devil  
To love and serve God’s Son.

Thy love so strong and tender  
 Quick to his cry gave heed,  
 Caring for this offender  
 More than Thine own deep need.  
 That love is still abiding  
 And ne'er shall pass away.  
 We find, in Thee confiding,  
 Thou art the same today!

(Hymn 39, vv. 6, 8)

The “Hymns of the Passion” include poetry on each of the cries that the Redeemer uttered from the cross. The following meditation is upon the Lord’s cry, “I thirst” (John 19. 28). Hallgrímur Pétursson brings out not only the terrible sufferings of the crucifixion, but also that these words speak of the loving desire of the Lord towards His people for whom He laid down His life. We read of this gracious, loving desire in the Song of Solomon, where the Son of God speaks in prophecy of the church. “Thou hast ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse; thou hast ravished My heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, My sister, My spouse!” (Song 4. 9, 10). The church responds: “I am my Beloved’s, and His desire is toward me” (Song 7. 10).

His human frame  
 Was all aflame  
 With pains of crucifixion –  
 Perchance the worst  
 The burning thirst,  
 As there, accursed,  
 He hung in deep affliction.

And now behold –  
 Thou hast been told –  
 O, keep it e’er before thee  
 He thirsted more  
 Thee to restore;  
 He longed to pour  
 His living water o’er thee.

Thou shouldst rejoice  
 To hear His voice,  
 The Heavenly Bridegroom’s wooing  
 “Walk by My side!  
 I long to guide  
 My earthly Bride.  
 Her perils all subduing.”

I answer, Lord,  
 Thy dying word,  
 E’en through my tears, my Saviour:

“Of men the worst,  
In sin immersed,  
I also thirst –  
After Thy grace and favour.”

Praise be to Thee,  
Now I am free,  
Free, at the cost of Thine anguish!  
Death has no sting,  
Now will I sing  
To Thee, my King,  
No more in thirst to languish.

(Hymn 42, vv. 9, 10, 12, 14, 16)

The final selection from the “Hymns of the Passion” is a beautiful meditation upon the piercing of Jesus’ side. “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19. 33, 34). Hallgrímur Pétursson writes of Adam’s bride being drawn from the side of Adam, and then considers the eternal blessings that flow from Jesus’ wounded side towards His bride, the redeemed church.

Adam’s lonely state perceiving,  
God created him a bride.  
Deepest sleep the pain relieving,  
Drew her from his wounded side.  
To her husband ever cleaving,  
With him ever to abide.

Thus to Christ His bride was given,  
Taken from His wounded side.  
By the spear His side was riven,  
Setting free the cleansing tide.  
Thus her sins were all forgiven,  
She for all time sanctified.

So that I might see more clearly  
The full measure of His grace,  
He reveals His wounds more nearly;  
Brings me to Him face to face.  
That His feet I more sincerely  
And more humbly might embrace.

(Hymn 48, vv. 5, 6, 10)

We will now draw these articles to a conclusion by briefly writing of the latter years of Hallgrímur Pétursson’s life. He was called to walk in a path of deep bodily suffering. That which he wrote at the beginning of his “Hymns of the Passion” was to be his lot.

Over the Kidron Jesus passed,  
 Dark was the heaven overcast,  
 But darker still was Kidron's name,  
 Which seems a doctrine to proclaim.

Over the deep, dark brook of pain  
 I, too, must pass and not complain.  
 My Saviour trod that weary track;  
 Shall I from troublous paths turn back?

(Hymn 1, vv. 15, 16)

It was not many years after these verses were written, that Hallgrímur Pétursson contracted leprosy, a disease that was not uncommon in Iceland at that time. In 1669 he resigned his position in the ministry and went to live with his son. Although the outward body decayed, the inward man was renewed by the Holy Spirit, for he was still composing spiritual poetry even on his death bed. He passed from this life of suffering into glory in 1674. His poetry "Death's Uncertain Hour and Christ's Victory" ends with the following verses:

Dying, He crushed Death's power  
 And broke his poisoned sting.  
 Now in our latest hour  
 To Christ's dear cross we cling.  
 Our frame, like dress discarded,  
 Surrenders to decay;  
 Our soul, by angels guarded,  
 To heaven wings its way.

He gives me strength for living,  
 In death His help is nigh.  
 Though weakness cause misgiving,  
 I do not fear to die.  
 O, Death, my Lord has spoken,  
 For me His blood was spilt,  
 And now thy yoke is broken,  
 Be welcome, when thou wilt!

(vv. 11 and 13)

In the life and ministry of Hallgrímur Pétursson, who was called to labour in the remote and outwardly barren country of Iceland, we are reminded of the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands" (Isa. 42. 10-12).

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Holy Discoveries and Flames**, by John Saltmarsh; hardback; 115 pages; price £7.50 *including postage*; published by Thornby Publications, and obtainable from 4 Thornby Avenue, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 2BJ.

We welcome a new Christian publisher, and their desire to make known the works of a lesser-known seventeenth century writer.

John Saltmarsh (1612-1647) was a Cambridge educated minister, who unexpectedly died young after delivering a solemn message to the officers of the army and to Cromwell himself. His writings were recommended by both Dr. Gill and William Huntington. Three years ago this magazine recommended his *Free Grace*, published by The Huntingtonian Press.

*Holy Discoveries and Flames* consists of short meditations on verses from the gospels. These are quaint and unusual, and in many ways reminiscent of Bishop Hall's *Contemplations* and Sir Richard Baker's *Meditations on the Psalms* – both of which date from the same period.

The book is very well edited, Latin quotations being translated and archaic words explained, and it contains an excellent introduction on the background of the times in which Saltmarsh lived.

As this is a hardback, and well produced, the price is surprisingly low.

**Coppice Baptist Chapel: Bi-Centenary Souvenir 2004**; paperback; 146 pages; postage and packing £1.60; otherwise *free*: donations if wished to chapel building repair fund; published by The Coppice Chapel, and obtainable from the pastor, Mr. David J. Field, Church Farm House, Beckbury, Shifnal, TF11 9DG.

Beautifully produced, well-written, well-illustrated, interesting – we are pleased to welcome this history of The Coppice Chapel. The Coppice is in Coseley, not far from Wolverhampton

The historical (and ecclesiastical) background of the district is traced, and there are chapters on the history, the building, the Sunday school, the raising of money for the Lord's people in Zambia, and four sermons. Specially interesting is the chapter on "Some Coppice Characters." Those who knew George Rose will be interested that The Coppice was the first chapel where he preached, away from home.

In former years the Black Country has been very favoured spiritually, and we pray it might be so again.

Several chapel histories have appeared this year. We are glad for it. It is both scriptural and profitable to record the Lord's mercies for the generation following.

We feel it is exceedingly kind of The Coppice friends to make this lovely book available free of charge (apart from postage). We know our readers will at least generously cover expenses.

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It is part of true Christian wisdom, of living faith, of real humility of mind, of submission to the will of God, to be content to believe what we cannot see.

*J. C. Philpot*

## OBITUARY

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**Ebbie Claude Stuart Cooper** passed peacefully away on February 2nd, 2001, aged 85. He was a member of the congregation at Clifton Strict Baptist Chapel all of his life, and a member of the church for the last four years. He was a humble walker, not a ready talker; the hymnwriter said these are they that Jesus loves.

In the early years of his married life his wife was very ill and was taken into a London hospital. Then one day as he sat on Hitchin station waiting for the train to come, he felt very dejected and full of sorrow because of his sins and the illness of his wife. He picked up a newspaper and all that he saw on the page were these words: "And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." These words were with power, and he never forgot them. The Lord was wonderfully to fulfil them, but not until he had been through some deep waters. His dear wife was soon taken home to glory, leaving him with one little son. A few years later the Lord provided him with another wife who was a helpmeet to him for the rest of his life.

In the late 1950s, while he was waiting to have an operation, the Lord spoke to him: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." The Lord wonderfully humbled our dear friend and brought him safely through the operation.

The Lord greatly helped him in his farming business, and he had some real answers to prayer. On one occasion he felt he would like to buy some land that had come up for sale adjoining his farm. He prayed that if it was the Lord's will, that He would make the way clear, because there were several other farmers that wanted it. The day before the land was to be auctioned he went into Clifton Chapel very burdened feeling that it was impossible for him to have the land with so many after it. When Mr. Robert Field took his text (Rom. 8. 28), "And we know that all things work together for good," etc., as he sat under the preached Word, the Lord gave him faith to believe that He would appear. The next day he ventured to the auction and the Lord wonderfully worked, so that he was able to buy it. He said he felt so humbled that the Lord had appeared and answered his prayers.

He had a good hearing time under Mr. Davidson at Braintree from the words: "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." The Lord favoured him under other ministers and his soul was blessed and fed.

For years his sins loomed before him like a mountain, particularly of recent years. One night at the end of 1996, the sins of his past life came before him; he felt they would crush him. Then the Lord came and favoured him with a sweet taste of His pardoning love, and all his sins just faded away and he had such peace. Through this wonderful blessing he was made willing to follow the Lord Jesus whom he so loved in the waters of baptism. He said that he felt he would lose his reason if he did not speak of what the Lord had done for him. He was baptized on January 30th, 1997.

He often felt very tried, but he felt upheld by one of his favourite hymns, 320, especially the verse,

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.”

He was so tried about his prayers, whether they were real, and especially about speaking in public prayer, but the Lord dropped these words into his heart: “He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.”

The last year of his life he often felt very unwell, but he was sweet to visit. The following are a few things that he said:

On August 26th, 2000: “He lends an unseen hand.”

September 10th, 2000: “Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.” He was so concerned that everything was in order in his heart and in every other way.

October 5th, 2000. He spoke of the precious blood of Jesus being so precious and vital to him.

November 7th, 2000. Troubled to know that all his sins were put away, he said, with tears running down his face, “The Lord has dropped this word into my heart: ‘I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins.’”

January 4th, 2001. He seemed weak, but said, “The Lord has said to me, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ There is all my hope.”

January 14th, 2001. His deacon visited him in hospital, and he was in a lovely place and he quoted the same words: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” That night he had a severe heart attack and the next day another one, and he was unconscious for the remaining days.

On February 2nd he breathed his last breath, we believe to be with his dear Redeemer for ever.

We were favoured to take his funeral service at his request on February 10th, 2001, and to commit his mortal remains to mother earth.

Truly “the memory of the just is blessed.”

R.D.G.F.

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What a mercy it is to have a God to go to, and to know that we have a merciful, sympathising High Priest at the right hand of the Father, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. When we look at the majesty, holiness, justice and purity of God, and seeing light in His light see also our own sinfulness and depravity; when we think of the numerous – yea innumerable – sins and crimes which we have committed in thought, word and deed; when we see also our helplessness and inability to save or deliver our souls from the wrath to come, the sight and feeling of all these things is enough to sink our souls into despair. But when we see by the eye of faith what a Saviour God has provided for poor, lost sinners in His dear Son, what a mighty Redeemer, ever-living Advocate, and all-prevailing Mediator, then it raises up sweet hope and blessed encouragement, and the heart goes out after this divine Mediator in faith and love as feeling how suitable, how precious He is to those that believe.

*J.C. Philpot*

# A SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE PARDON OF SIN

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My God a God of pardon is.  
 His bosom gives me ease.  
 I have not, do not please my God,  
 Yet mercy doth Him please.  
 My sins aloud for vengeance call;  
 But lo! a fountain springs  
 From Christ's pierced side, which louder cries,  
 And speaketh better things.

My sins have reached up to the heavens;  
 But mercy's height exceeds.  
 God's mercy is above the heavens,  
 Above my sinful deeds.  
 My sins are many, like the stars,  
 Or sands upon the shore;  
 But yet the mercies of my God  
 Are infinitely more.

My sins in bigness do arise,  
 Like mountains great and tall;  
 But mercy, like a mighty sea,  
 Covers these mountains all.  
 This is a sea that's bottomless,  
 A sea without a shore.  
 For where sin hath abounded much  
 Mercy abounds much more.

Manasseh, Paul, and Magdalene  
 Were pardoned all by Thee.  
 I read it and believe it, Lord,  
 For Thou hast pardoned me.  
 When God shall search the world for sin,  
 What trembling will be there!  
 "O rocks and mountains, cover us!"  
 Will be the sinner's prayer.

But the Lamb's wrath they need not fear  
 Who once have felt His love.  
 And they that walk with God below  
 Shall dwell with God above.  
 Rage earth and hell; come life; come death;  
 Yet still my song shall be,  
 "God was, and is, and will be good  
 And merciful to me."

John Mason (c. 1646-1694)



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**DECEMBER 2004**

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MATT. 5. 6; 2 TIM. 1. 9; ROM. 11. 7; ACTS 8. 37; MATT. 28. 19

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**GOD'S GIFT OF HIS SON**

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham,  
London, on Lord's day evening, April 25th, 1948.*

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**Text:** "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8. 32).

This is truly a wonderful chapter! The apostle emerges, as it were, from the experience of bondage, of sin, to the blessed liberty of the everlasting, glorious gospel. There is a very striking change of language between the concluding part of chapter 7 and the opening verses of chapter 8. In chapter 7 is a man groaning under the power of indwelling sin, which prevented him from doing the good that he would do, because of the evil that was in him. Here is a man groaning under the workings of sin in his members, in his body – and this did so ferment as it were in his very soul, as to cause him to say, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But when the apostle broke out after this manner, it was not because he could see no way of deliverance, for in the next verse he says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." So you see, it was not so much the apostle himself but it was "the law of sin" in him that was continually "warring against the law of his mind," the natural against the spiritual, the flesh against the spirit. "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." But this is the striking part – from this he breaks forth after this way: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." And this is something more than a general observation.

He proceeds to affirm his personal standing in this liberty. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" – that is, the gospel in its liberating efficacy in the soul – "hath made me free from the law of sin and death," as much as to say, This is what it has done for me. O what a mercy if we can come to a point like that and say that this law, that is the law or teaching of the gospel, hath made us free from the law of sin and death! The law, the moral law, is said to be "the ministration of condemnation," which it must necessarily be in every case to a sinner, because it can do nothing other than condemn him, having no power either to forgive or justify; but the gospel has power to do both. It reveals a full forgiveness and a free justification. "There is therefore

now no condemnation,” and where there is no condemnation, there is no separation.

So the chapter ends with a chain of challenges: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” No, nothing can separate Christ from the sinner whom He loves and nothing can separate this sinner from Christ. Any of these things could separate a dead professor, but they cannot separate a child of God from that eternal, living bond that unites the Head and members in an indissoluble union. O what a mercy it is to be embraced within the language of this chapter, and to feel that even for us there is no condemnation and therefore no separation! Everything else comes within the compass of this; the evidences of divine grace, the effectual working of the Holy Spirit in the soul, the graces of faith and hope and love, all come within the compass of this, because all is in Christ.

So then, here, in the words I have read as a text, the apostle assures us – that is, if we are believers – that we have the gift of all things in Christ. It is like this – if we have Him we have everything. “Therefore let no man glory in men. For 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; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” This is the wonderful secret of a true religion which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

It is noticeable how in the context the apostle frequently refers to the Father – refers to Him as ordering all things for our good in His divine purposes. “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” That may seem an impossible thing when providence is adverse, when afflictions abound, and things appear so cross-handed, but we see, as it were, only one link in the chain. God sees the end of a thing from the beginning. Moreover, if all this teaching, correction, discipline, chastening, affliction and trial is designed in a believer’s pathway to prepare him for the heavenly land, to wean him from earth and its things, all must, in the issue, work for good; and we are sure that it will to all who love God and are the called according to His purpose.

The Father is referred to in His foreknowledge of all their persons: “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” This predestinating decree of an immutable God is the fulfilling of a set purpose to predestinate – to predetermine by an immutable will that can never be altered or revised subsequently, but which is firmly set and fixed in the purpose of the Trinity. These people, being foreknown by Him, are conformed to the image of His Son – not to the world and the vanities of it – but they are conformed here to the

suffering image of the Son of God. This means necessarily a path of tribulation, more or less, and if it is to be glory hereafter with us, it will, in some measure, be a cross here; for if there is no cross, there will be no crown.

The apostle refers to the Father, too, in His calling of His people according to His own purpose and will, with an invincible and effectual calling. But in the text the Father is referred to in the highest evidence of divine love that can possibly be made to sinners. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," a truly remarkable statement this! The Lord Himself draws attention to the same truth in the Gospel according to John: "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." So John writes in his Epistle: "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. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

This is truly an amazing consideration to us – a profound mystery! So must it ever be, but yet it is a believable truth. We can understand why He did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down under chains of darkness for ever. We can understand why He did not spare guilty Sodom, where such awful wickedness prevailed. We can understand why He did not spare the rebels in the wilderness who revolted against His word and laws. We could understand it if He did not dispose to spare us – guilty sinners before a holy, heart-searching God – deserving to be banished to perdition. But O, how can we understand this revelation of distinguishing love in not sparing His own Son?

We have the case of Abraham who was commanded to offer Isaac, when the Lord said to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him up." See how the Lord pressed it home there – "thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest." Not Ishmael, not the son of the bondwoman, but the son of the free woman, the child of promise, the child that was the living answer to so many prayers – take him, and offer him up. But faith was strong in Abraham; he obeyed the divine command to the last point, until the Lord appeared for him from the heavens (when his hand was stretched forth to strike the fatal blow), saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." As though He would say, "By this act of obedience I know that you put Me first and that your love to Me is even above your love to Isaac." But O when we think of the love of the

Father to sinners, all beside just pales into insignificance. What wonderful, distinguishing love is this!

“He spared not His own Son.” He was ever His Son before the world was; the Son in whom He delighted, in whom He was well-pleased – yet He did not spare Him. He was in His divine nature His Son, co-equal and co-eternal with His Father, possessing inherently every perfection of Deity; yet still He did not spare Him, He in whom His soul delighted from all eternity, “brought up with Him,” “daily His delight”; yet He did not spare Him. O what an instance of distinguishing love is this!

History records the case of a family during a famine in Germany, where were four children being brought to the verge of starvation. The parents, very reluctantly and painfully, discussed parting with one of their children for food, but when they considered the eldest they said, “O no, we cannot part with him, he is our firstborn; no we cannot part with this one.” Then came the second and he was such a striking likeness of his father that they said, “No, we cannot part with him; we cannot sell this one. We must keep him.” The third, a girl, a delightful child, the image of her mother; they considered her and said, “No, we cannot part with her. She is our only girl; we must keep her.” Then came the youngest and they said, “No, he is our Benjamin, we cannot part with him.” So they decided, rather than part with one of their children, they would all perish together. But this great, infinite, glorious God, the eternal Father, notwithstanding the delight He ever possessed in Him, the love He bore toward Him and the mutual love that was ever between them as Father and Son, yet He did not spare Him. He did not spare Him!

May I bring this point home particularly because it is such a striking instance of His grace? He did not spare Him! “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” And here, too, I think we may see throughout the whole of His life on earth, He was not spared anything that was necessary to the complete redemption of the church. No, He did not spare Him! He did not spare Him in the circumstances of His birth, for they were indeed mean in their nature. Here He is, born in a stable, destitute of even ordinary comforts that are usually expected at such a time. Having “no room for Him in the inn” the incarnate Son of God was brought forth into this world and laid in a manger. He did not spare Him early persecutions either, for in His infancy Herod sought His life, so that His parents fled with Him into Egypt till they were “dead which sought the young Child’s life.”

He did not spare Him the temptations in the wilderness, which were a great strain upon His human powers, for we are told those temptations were real sufferings to Him, though the devil “found nothing in Him.” He did not spare Him a life of poverty. For “foxes have holes, and the

birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He had not the provisions of this life. No, He did not spare Him. He did not spare Him the reproach and blasphemies that were continually cast upon Him in the days of His flesh. If He worked a miracle they would slander Him in the face of it and say, that He "cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." He was not spared bitter opposition, shameful ill-treatment at the hands of men. In all this the Father did not spare Him; His life was not made easy and attended with all possible comfort.

He did not spare Him the agony of Gethsemane, the load, the intolerable load of imputed sin; He did not spare Him the awful conflict there between the powers of sin, death and hell, so that as Hart describing it, said, He had "strength enough, and none to spare." He did not spare Him those bitter groans pressed from Him when blood fell from His sacred brow. We may shed a tear occasionally for Him but He shed tears of blood for us – that is, if we do belong to Him, if we are the purchase of His blood. He did not spare Him a mock trial in the judgment hall, mocking, buffeting, scourging. He did not spare Him the death of the cross. "He that spared not His own Son."

And is it not also amazing to contemplate, to meditate, the unbroken fortitude that possessed the Saviour all through His estate of humiliation. He did not turn back. "Therefore have I set My face like a flint," it is said in prophecy; "For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded." "He poured out His soul unto death." He was with the wicked in His death and He made His grave with the rich. In all this He did not turn back. "He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

Well, beloved hearers, you say, What is the point of all this? Well, the point is, if He did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all – that is all His chosen people, every one, if He delivered Him up for them, "Shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" In other words, would He give His own Son for unworthy sinners and then deny them all the blessings that are in Him? O no! Would He give the greater and then deny the less? No! The great point here is that the Father gives all things with Him – or in Him.

"He that spared not His own Son," but gave Him up, delivered Him, "shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" This is in the form of a challenge, a question. Shall He not do this? Has not the church all spiritual blessings in Him? Do they not flow richly and freely through His precious death? And if we have Christ formed in us the hope of glory, then have we every blessing in Him including heaven itself. All things are ours if we have Him.

"Shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The gospel is freely given; it can never be bought. I believe what a friend once said

at Brighton is true: it is a pauper's gospel. So it is. It is a gospel for bankrupts, for those who have nothing to pay.

Well then, what is the condition? There is no condition in one sense because all is freely given – and yet there must be some preparation for it. What is that? Well, conviction of our guilt, of our sin; there must be this. A need, a longing, a hungering, a thirsting, a panting for this living bread and this living water. “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.” Part with your rags for this, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

“Shall He not?” Will He withhold other blessings of His grace if He gives His own Son? God forbid. Other things are freely given; they are all in the gospel. But there is this too – He will keep us waiting, watching and praying, applying at a throne of grace for the communication of these great blessings of the gospel. “Shall He not with Him” – *with Him* – so it is not a case of saying, “If you have these other things you cannot have Christ, or if you have Christ you cannot have these other things.” O no, a believer has all things *with Him*. This is the confirming point: “Shall He not *with Him* also freely give us all things?”

Well, what things? What things are they that the Father gives with Christ, with His own Son? Well, one is the great gift of His Holy Spirit. See how the Lord speaks of this Himself. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” And here let me say that we cannot receive Christ without receiving the Holy Ghost too; neither can we receive the Holy Spirit without receiving Christ, for He is the Spirit of Christ. Moreover we may see how this good Spirit was promised and was duly given. “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Moreover in this very chapter the apostle speaks particularly about this great gift of the Holy Spirit, and of what He does in the experience of believers. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” “The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Well, this is a wonderful gift; and I believe at times, we shall feel the moving and operating within us of this good Spirit in His sweet anointing, softening the heart. He is given us as a Teacher. “The same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.” “The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you.” Does it? He will give, then, this good Spirit.

Not only so, but in the gift of Christ, and with Him, He will give all needful, temporal blessings. O yes! Paul writing to the Philippians

assured them of this. In reply to their practical kindness to him he said, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." For, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." All temporal mercies are His gifts and they are free gifts too. But you say, "O well, everybody has all they need of the things of this life for their bodies, and so on." Yes, that may be, but this is a very different thing from the exercise of faith in a believer, who receives even the bread on his table as coming from the good hand of a covenant God; especially when he feels like the poor woman who had but a crust of bread, and was so filled with the goodness of God that she said, "All this and Christ!" It is only this that can really sanctify our temporal mercies to us.

"Every grace and every favour  
Comes to us through Jesus' blood."

But what else? A free and full forgiveness of all our transgressions. O say some of you here, "It may be. If only I could receive that, if I could get that blessing, I know it would be well with me. I should have all I need then, but I am just bound by my sins." Well, if you feel like that, go with your sins to Christ, go with your burden, your distress, your bondage, your chains, your darkness. This blessing is given with Him and is a free forgiveness.

"Mercy never can be bought;  
Grace is free and all's the Lamb's."

Moreover it comes freely and one day you may have a sacred sense of this blessing of heaven flowing into your heart. O such a token! The burden removed, your conscience purged and your spirit set free, so that you can say with Paul here, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Sweet liberty this! When this liberty flows in, it flows freely – absolutely so. "When they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both." And it is free to sensible sinners, to repenting backsliders. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

But this mercy will never make sin cheap. It does not lead to licentiousness, but sanctifies the soul to Christ; and when you get this you will love Him and hate yourself and hate your sins. But here it is: "Shall He not with Him also freely give us" this blessing? Do not despair of this. If your sins lie as a burden upon your spirit, confess them before Him, for, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Well, is there anything else? Yes, for with Christ He will give a perfect righteousness, such a righteousness as to present a poor sinner, in himself defiled, “without spot” – making it possible even for the Lord to say, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.” And this righteousness is given. What is it? It is Christ’s obedience to the law of which He is the end on behalf of every believer in Him. Christ has become “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” The law cannot pass the cross and strike a sinner whose faith is centred in the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer; the law finds its end there; it is satisfied.

“Hell is vanquished, heaven appeased:  
God is satisfied and pleased.”

And here is this justification, this righteousness, this perfect robe, against which all our goodness is but a lighted taper compared to the sun in its full shining in the heavens. O what a righteousness is this! “Shall He not – shall He not” give this? Yes, for He is “The Lord our righteousness.”

Is that all? No, for we are assured that with Him, with Christ, He will also give eternal life. “I give unto them [My sheep] eternal life ... neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” No, because they have eternal life in Him, and there is no separation from that. This eternal life is not just an eternal existence (for the damned in hell will have that) but this eternal life is the life of Christ in the soul, immortal life, eternal felicity, eternal life in its beginnings, and is begun here in the life of grace. But O, think of the prospect! “Shall He not” give this with His own Son? Yes, because it is a blessing which is in Him and in every member of His body in union with Him.

Then just this in conclusion. He will give with His own Son, with Him, the gift of an unfading inheritance, an inheritance that will never fade away. Never! To this the Lord’s people are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,” kept to this, “to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God.” Here are the mansions; Jesus has gone to prepare them; here they are. “In My Father’s house are many mansions.” And if He has not withheld His own Son, will He withhold these? O no, because it was for this purpose that He came. By His death He has opened heaven’s doors to a coming sinner and by His resurrection has secured their justification in Him.

O then, may we have grace to lay hold of this and to feed upon this. May He nourish our souls.

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Amen.



## THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION

*By J.C. Philpot*

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What a wondrous way has God devised in His own eternal mind that the breach might be healed; that agreement might be made; that sinning man might be reconciled to his justly offended Maker, and yet that none of His glorious perfections should be tarnished or impaired! And what plan was this? Hear it, O heaven and earth! That the Son of God – His Son by nature and essence – His co-equal and co-eternal Son – should take into union with His divine Person a pure, sinless and spotless humanity; for “as the children were partakers of flesh and blood,” it was necessary that “He Himself likewise should take part of the same” (Heb. 2. 14). This was the will of God which Christ came to do, as we read, “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book” – that is, the book of God’s eternal decrees – “it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart” (Psa. 40. 7, 8).

God prepared for His dear Son a body, as the apostle says, quoting Psalm 40. 6: “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared [“fitted,” *margin*] Me” (Heb. 10. 5). This was a pure, holy and incorruptible humanity – the body taken in the womb of the virgin, offered as a bleeding sacrifice on the cross, but now at the right hand of God in heaven. Man had sinned, offended, gone astray, become involved in transgression. Before, then, there could be any healing of the breach, any reconciliation of man unto God, flesh and blood must be assumed, that in that nature an atonement might be made for sin, justice be fully satisfied, the law righteously obeyed, its penalty removed, and its curse taken away. This mighty work none but the Son of God could accomplish, nor He except by becoming man.

As God, Christ could not suffer, bleed or die. As God, He could not endure the wrath due to transgression, sustain the curse of the law, or work out an obedience such as it demanded. Deity can no more obey than it can suffer, bleed and die. Yet there must be obedience, or the law cannot be fulfilled; there must be suffering, or the wrath of God cannot be appeased; there must be blood-shedding, or a sacrifice cannot be offered; there must be death, for to die is a main part of the sacrifice. If the surety take the place of the debtor, he must endure the penalty of the debt; if the substitute stand in the room of the criminal, he must suffer the punishment of the crime.

O wondrous scheme, that the Son of God should take our nature into union with His own divine Person, and in that nature render an obedience perfectly acceptable to God; an obedience which must be rendered, but one that we could not render; an obedience exactly such as the law demanded: perfect in thought, word and deed. Outraged Justice else

might say, "Where is my victim? I demand a victim: it must be either the criminal or someone in his stead. I cannot waive my rightful claim. I must have it satisfied, or else I should cease to be Justice." The blessed Lord comes forward and says, "Justice, take thy claim. Here is My innocent head: let thy thunderbolt fall upon it. Law, what dost thou demand? Perfect obedience. I render it. What dost thou inflict upon the criminal as the penalty of disobedience? The curse. I endure it. Holiness of God, what dost thou require? A spotless purity of soul and body, of heart, lip and life; perfect love to God and man. Here I am: I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law in its length, breadth and spirituality, in its holiness, purity and power, is in My heart."

Thus by the substitution of the Son of God as rendering an obedience in our nature, all the perfections of God were glorified; all His attributes harmonised; justice was satisfied, the law magnified, and the holiness of God well pleased. Complete satisfaction being thus made to all the requisitions of justice, room was given for mercy and love, pity and compassion to fallen man to flow freely, through the channel of a Redeemer's meritorious sufferings and death. There was no other way whereby the breach could be healed; but by this divinely-contrived plan it has been healed, and that most effectually.

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## MARY – AND MARIOLATRY

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One very sad thing in this dark and degenerate day is that people (even professed believers) are becoming more and more tolerant of the errors of Roman Catholicism. Many errors might be mentioned but we have been appalled recently at the rapid spread of Mariolatry (idolatrous veneration of the virgin Mary). This is not only in Roman Catholicism, but also very much so in our national church. We deplore prayers for the dead but we were shocked, on a visit to one of our English cathedrals recently, to find that prayer was made that the faithful departed might be blessed with eternal fellowship with the blessed virgin.

Let us be clear. We honour Mary as a most gracious woman, the one specially chosen and given the honour to be the mother of the Lord Jesus. We admire her godliness, her humility, her submission to God's will. It is very wrong for Protestants to speak disparagingly of such an eminent saint.

But very little really is said about Mary in holy Scripture; in the epistles she is not even mentioned. There is not a hint of prayer being made to her or of her being a mediator (or mediatrix – the feminine form of the word).

True it is that officially the Roman Catholic church denies *worshipping* the virgin; yet more and more she is given an exalted position. Many *Ave Marias* are said to her, approach is made through her to the Lord Jesus, and prayer is made to her. One of those largely responsible for the increasing veneration of Mary is the present Pope. It is said that when an attempt was made to assassinate him, he cried to the virgin Mary for help; and year by year since he has blessed her for his deliverance. She is referred to as “the Mother of God,” “the Queen of heaven.”

Two most unscriptural doctrines held by the Roman Church concerning Mary are the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and the Doctrine of the Assumption.

The Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was declared an official belief by the Pope in 1854 (so this year marks the 150th anniversary). The doctrine is that Mary was born completely free from original sin. But Mary was a sinner saved by grace and herself confessed it: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Luke 1. 46, 47).

Many Protestants misunderstand completely the meaning of “the Immaculate Conception,” thinking it refers to the Lord Jesus. Years ago we heard a minister preach a sermon on the birth of Jesus in which he constantly exclaimed, “We believe in the immaculate conception.” Well, we do – but the immaculate conception of Jesus, not Mary.

The Doctrine of the Assumption was declared officially by the Pope in 1950. This doctrine is that the third day after her burial, Mary rose from the dead and ascended bodily into heaven. There is not the slightest scriptural authority for this.

All this is very solemn – but it is not something doctrinaire, something that is not important. Immortal concerns are at stake.

1. *Christ alone is to be exalted and to have all the honour and glory.* His glory He will never share with another. Mary is so exalted, almost to become a fourth Person in the Godhead, and often is certainly exalted above the Lord Jesus.

We once ourselves witnessed (in a church in Nazareth itself) an ornate screen behind the “high altar” where Mary was shown as exalted far above her Son Jesus.

How often Jesus is portrayed in pictures or images either as a helpless Babe in His mother’s arms or as a dead Christ on the cross, while Mary appears in all her glory!

2. *Christ alone is the way to heaven.* “There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” – not Mary. It is a soul-destroying error to depict Mary as a mediatrix by whom sinners can venture. A sinner must be eternally lost whose hope is built on Mary, not the Lord Jesus.

3. *Nor can Mary (or any other saint) answer prayer.* We believe Mary's glorified spirit is in heaven, yet only as one among many of "the spirits of just men made perfect." She has finished with all below, and has no influence, good or bad, on the affairs of this world.

We feel we must warn against the increasing toleration of erroneous Romanist beliefs which are destructive of the soul.

In conclusion, let us say it is hard for Protestants to understand the love and veneration which Romanists have for the virgin Mary. Not too long ago we received a most distressed letter from a family (seemingly Italian) who somehow had come into possession of our children's book *The Birth of Jesus*. The point which distressed them was where we said it is wrong to pray to Mary. "What hope is there for us," the letter read, "if we cannot pray to Mary, if we cannot go to her for refuge?"

We believe that in speaking to Roman Catholics on this subject we should always speak with the greatest of tenderness and compassion – pointing out that we love Mary as a godly woman, but she cannot save and cannot answer prayer. It must be "none but Jesus."

In all this we seek the honour of His name alone. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

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## BAPTISM: A COMMAND

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"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord"  
(Acts 10. 48).

My very dear Friend,

Grace, mercy, and peace be with thee. I have read your letter with pleasure, and was glad to hear of the dealings of God with your soul, and that the Lord should condescend to bless the Word of His grace through such a very unworthy instrument. I hope you will be enabled to come before us, and publicly tell us the reason of your hope, so as not to "turn aside by the flocks of His companions."

But my friend says he cannot see that baptism by immersion is a door into the church. My dear friend, Christ is the door into the invisible church, but baptism by immersion in water is the right way into the visible church. Now, my dear friend, it is believers' baptism. "If thou believest ... thou mayest," said Philip to the eunuch; and when Peter preached to three thousand and they were pricked to the heart, then they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Was not that a command of Peter to

them? But my friend may say, "How could Peter baptize so many in one day?" But there were seventy disciples, and they or more could all be employed. In Acts 10. 47, 48, we read, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." What was this but a command? And we read that John was baptizing at Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there. And they were baptized both men and women at Antioch. Not a word about baptizing children.

"But," say you, "was not the jailor and all his baptized?" Yes; but Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." So they were baptized on their faith; not before. In Matthew 3 we read, "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins"; not until they made a confession of their sins. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him; but John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him." Therefore Jesus Himself must have gone down into the water to come up out of the water, as an example for us to follow His steps.

But my friend may say, "I never have had it so laid on my mind." Perhaps my friend has been expecting some wonderful revelation from the Lord, to say to him with some audible voice, "Mr. Mannington, you ought to be baptized." But the Lord says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. And in keeping My commandments there is great reward." Not *for* keeping them. The Lord often meets with them as He did the eunuch, when he came up out of the water; for "he went on his way rejoicing."

I know my dear friend has been taught not to think much of immersion from his cradle; but I as much contend for the baptism of the Spirit as father Vinall\* does. All other baptism short of the baptism of the Spirit is only a shadow. The baptism of the Spirit is the only essential baptism; and they who have never been baptized by the Spirit have no scriptural right to water baptism; as saith John: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.... And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good

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\* John Vinall of Lewes (1782-1860) was a very gracious minister, but at times he spoke against believers' baptism by immersion.

fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” Therefore John would not baptize them without signs or fruits of repentance. But I am decided about the ordinance by immersion being of God. I only say I should wish that my dear friend should be guided and led by infinite wisdom, and by the Spirit and Word of God, as these cannot err.

I should not have written to you on the ordinance of baptism if you had not mentioned it in yours; and some friends told me you could not see baptism was a command. And what was this but a command: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world”? Teaching first, and then baptizing; not baptize infants, and then teach them.

My Christian love to you and your dear wife. I am at the Cape of Good Hope in winter quarters, waiting for a south wind to sail to a desired haven of rest and peace.

James Pert

Flimwell, February 12th, 1856

James Pert, pastor at Flimwell (1852-1880) was one of the ministers who preached at the opening of Galeed Chapel, Brighton

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### **WALKING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT**

*Morning reading by James Bourne, November 25th, 1840*

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“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph. 5. 8). This light of life, if we have it, will be shown in those checks and convictions telling us of things that are wrong and lame. These are the convictions of the Spirit, that we may not pass over those evils, but bear them in mind, and confess them; so that not even the least thing of this kind may pass without a clear issue in the blood of Christ. For if we pass it now, we shall hear of it another day, as sure as we live, and that in a blacker light. Our bad memory will do us no good here; “he that covereth his sins shall not prosper.” “All things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light.” There is a profession which is exceedingly dangerous – much reading and prayer and writing, but not this clear coming to Christ, so as to obtain a clear sense of His kindness and mercy.

We may easily know when we are favoured with this, it so takes away all our guilt and misery, and like the scapegoat carries our sins out of God’s sight and out of our sight, casts them into the depths of the sea, sets our feet on the Rock, and orders our goings. If I do not get this from

time to time, nothing can reconcile me to living without it; nothing in this life can amuse or satisfy; but I am full of grief, misery and sorrow. And there is nothing I dread so much as to have the light of those things in the head without the feeling sense and power of the blood of sprinkling in the heart; which must follow the least intimation of anything that is wrong. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what" this "will of the Lord is"; that is, that you should take notice of these wrong things, and not pass them over, but be brought down to nothing, as feelingly lost before Him, till the virtue of His blood is realised. Do not think if you have contracted guilt to get over it in that easy way of sliding into the favour of God, and being drawn by love. There is no such thing in the Word of God; for He will make us know that He is exceedingly displeased with sin, and there is no healing but by faith in the atonement of Christ.

There are many causes which make men overlook and neglect these convictions, and not cherish them till they are brought to a clear issue; for O, how many stop short here at this turning point! Above all, one cause is having no heart to it; and there are many "needful" trifles that stop us. But God bids us not to be unwise, but to know His will: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise"; and He speaks to that living principle within, that we may be very cautious and honest here.

"Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Paul describes the entrance of this light to him as a light above the brightness of the sun. That is the light of God's mercy revealed to the soul in Christ Jesus, which is above all natural light. So clear and certain is the smile of His approbation we cannot mistake it; it so sweeps away all guilt and misery, so breaks the power of all those corruptions that have lorded it over us, so brings us out of the world, and so removes all the accusations of Satan, that it cannot be mistaken.

The power of this light is described in Titus: "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared," these were put off. The Lord said to Paul, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks"; that is, to contend against God. When He is bringing those evils to light, and you want to cover them, this He will not endure. To be left to pass them over, and say, "This is but a little thing," and give way, this is the corner-stone on which a tower of future misery and sorrow may be erected. The fruit of this washing Titus speaks of: "That they which have believed in God," who have "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," "might be careful to maintain good works." These who were far off are made nigh in Christ

(Eph. 2. 13). And what hinders your being made nigh, and coming to this exceedingly clear sense and discovery of God's pardoning love? It is that you have no heart to it; for I must declare that if you had, you would certainly obtain it. There is nothing so sweet as this sense of His mercy and kindness in Christ Jesus; there is the fullest satisfaction in it, and every trouble and every care is removed.

I cannot enough bless God for causing me, ever since I have taken up this morning reading, to walk in the things I have set before you; which has caused a great increase of His fear. As to what you say about your prayers being so dead and cold and heartless, I cannot describe how deathlike are the prayers I put up, which God hears and answers; for however dead our state, Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, and quickens all who come to God by Him.

From *Morning Readings* by James Bourne, obtainable from Gospel Standard Trust Publications.

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### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

*From a sermon by Christmas Evans (1766-1838)*

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Christmas Evans, "the Bunyan of Wales," was renowned for the quaintness of his preaching; some have thought he verged on the extravagant in some of his allegories. But his preaching was abundantly blessed to hundreds, if not thousands, and his emphasis is clear: the sin-atoning sacrifice of Calvary. It was this the Holy Spirit used with such effect two hundred years ago in Wales. The Editor's biography *Christmas Evans* is still available from Gospel Standard Trust Publications.

**Text:** "But how should man be just with God?" (Job 9. 2).

The Almighty proclaimed Himself to Moses, "the Lord, merciful and gracious"; and in the New Testament, He is called "the God of all grace." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

God is determined to glorify the unsearchable riches of His grace in the salvation of sinners. But how can this be done, without casting a cloud over the divine throne, and bringing into contempt the divine law? How can the guilty be considered and treated as innocent, without an apparent indifference to the evil of sin, and a total disregard of the claims of eternal justice? How can the rebel be acquitted in the court of heaven, with honour to the character of God, and safety to the interests of His moral government? This is a question which angels could not answer; but it has been answered by the God of angels. The light of nature and



reason is too feeble to afford us any aid in this inquiry. "But we have a more sure Word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place"; for "God ... hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Following, then, the guidance of the New Testament, let us consider the nature and the ground of a sinner's justification with God.

1. To justify is the public act of a judge, declaring a person innocent, not liable to punishment. "It is God that justifieth" the ungodly. Justification, in its strict sense, and remission of sins, are two very different things. Job could forgive his friends; but he could not justify them. But in the gracious economy of the gospel, these are always immediately connected; nor these alone, but other and superior mercies – mercies infinite and unspeakable. Those whom God justifies are not only forgiven, but also purified and renewed; not only delivered from condemnation, but also entitled to eternal life; not only redeemed from the curse of the law, but also blessed with the spirit and the privilege of adoption; not only liberated from bondage and imprisonment, but also constituted heirs "to an inheritance ... that fadeth not away." They are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." They are kings and priests, and shall reign for ever and ever. God having given His Son as our Surety, and published "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and taken His seat upon the throne of grace in the character of a merciful judge, He proclaims the believer free from condemnation, and "accepted in the Beloved."

In a human court, a man may be either justified or forgiven. Sometimes the jury finds the prisoner innocent, and he is acquitted; sometimes they find him guilty, and he is forgiven. The former is an act of justice; the latter, an act of mercy. No earthly court can go farther; no earthly court can justify the guilty. But God is able, through the wonderful economy of substitution and atonement revealed in the gospel, in the same court, from the same throne, by the same law, and in the same sentence, to proclaim full pardon and free justification to the sinner. By virtue of the obedience and suffering of Christ on his behalf, he is at once forgiven and justified. Faith unites us to Christ [that is, in experience], and gives us an interest in Him, as our Mediator, who "bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

The righteousness by which the sinner is justified infinitely transcends all other righteousness in earth or heaven. It is the righteousness of the Second Adam – an invaluable pearl, to which all the

members of Christ's mystical body are equally entitled. It is the pure gold of the gospel, which cannot be mixed with the works of the law, or derive any increase of value from human merit. It lies upon the very surface of evangelical truth, like oil upon the water. It is the righteousness finished upon the cross – a complete wedding garment furnished by the Son of God, which the sinner puts on to be prepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

How cold and cheerless is the doctrine of the mere moralist, leaving the poor sinner wallowing in the mire and weltering in his blood, with nothing but his own works to depend upon for salvation! But the doctrine of justification through the satisfying righteousness of Jesus Christ warms the heart and quickens the soul of the believer into a new and heavenly life. Here is our deliverance from the curse of the law. Here is the sea into which our sins are cast to rise no more. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit"; and they may boldly say, "O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me."

2. The ground of our justification now claims more particular attention.

This is a subject of the greatest importance; for if we build upon the sand, the whole superstructure inevitably falls, and great must be the fall thereof. The Jews, being ignorant of God's righteousness – the righteousness of faith – went about to establish their own, which was by the works of the law. Let us examine these two foundations – the righteousness which is of the law, and that which is of faith.

What sort of righteousness does the law demand as the ground of our acceptance with God? It must originate in the heart. It must be commensurate with life, and not a broken link in the chain, for he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all. It must be so comprehensive as to include all your duties to God, your neighbour and yourself. It must engage all the powers of your mind, without the least imperfection, in thought, word or deed. The coin must be pure gold, of full weight and measure, and bearing the right and lawful stamp. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

"But what saith the righteousness which is of faith?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth ... shall not be confounded." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." He hath magnified the law, and made it honourable. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." This is the doctrine which answers all our questions, removes all our guilty fears, and opens to us a path of hope in

the valley of the shadow of death. The justifying righteousness of Christ is as deep as the misery of man, as high as the requirements of God, as broad as the commandment, and as long as eternity. It is sufficient for all them that believe, and able to save unto the uttermost. It is a deluge which covers the mountains of transgression, and bears the believer securely in the ark. It comes to the sinner, shut up under the judgment of God, and reads to him the article of his freedom. I hear it addressing the guilty in the following language:

“I saw the Son of God coming forth from the bosom of the Father, and uniting Himself to the nature of man. I saw the mighty God manifested in the Son of Mary, and lying in a manger. I beheld some of His blood shed, as an earnest to the law, when He was eight days old. I stood in the garden of Gethsemane when He drank the cup of trembling mingled and presented by His Father’s justice. I was with Him on Calvary when He blotted out the handwriting of Eden and Sinai, and nailed it to His cross; when He finished the redemption of man, and spoiled the powers of darkness, and sealed with His own blood the covenant of peace. I beheld Him descending to the lower parts of the earth, and lying in the grave. I beheld Him rising in the same human nature, with the keys of death and hell in His hand, and the crown of the mediatorial kingdom upon His head. I beheld Him ascending to the right hand of the Father, leading captivity captive, and entering into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for thee. And now I see Him in the midst of the throne, as a Lamb newly slain; and the merit of His sacrifice, as a sweet-smelling savour, fills the heaven of heavens. On thy behalf He has honoured the law, satisfied the claims of justice, and opened a new and living way, whereby God can be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

Thus the question is answered: “How should man be just with God?” Sinners are “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” This is the key-stone of the gospel, and the strength of the arch of salvation. The only way to obtain acceptance with God is by grace; “and if by grace, then is it no more of works.” In the justification of the sinner, divine grace and human works can no more be mixed together than oil and water, for they belong to different covenants. Christ came into the world, not to repair the old covenant, but to be the Mediator of a new covenant, established upon better promises; not to mend the leaky and sinking vessel of the law, but to build and launch a new ark of salvation, and rescue the shipwrecked and the drowning. The law could not save. The law is holy, but we are unclean. The law is spiritual, but we are carnal. The law is righteous, but we are guilty. The law is good, but every imagination of the thoughts

of the heart of man is evil, and only evil, and that continually. The law will not consent to a compromise with the sinner, will not relax its claims upon him, nor in any way accommodate itself to his fallen condition. Its power to condemn is commensurate with its authority to command.

Thus we see how it is that no man can be justified by the deeds of the law. We are not under the law, but under grace. Were we under the law, the deeds of the law would be required for our justification. The law demands obedience; obedience satisfies the law. Between obedience and the law there is perfect correspondence and harmony; the one gives what the other asks. There is also a perfect agreement between grace and faith. Grace bestows freely, without money and without price; and faith, having nothing to pay, receives humbly and thankfully. Grace, by bestowing, acquires great glory; faith, by receiving, obtains great happiness. God confers blessings according to the riches of His grace; sinners receive according to the strength of their faith. Faith and the law cannot agree at all. Therefore "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Ye are justified through the righteousness and merit of Christ, who became your Substitute, and both obeyed the law and suffered the penalty in your stead.

This view of the ground of a sinner's justification is everywhere sustained in the Holy Scriptures. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." "By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "The obedience of One," and "the righteousness of One," in these two sentences, signify the same thing. Again: He was made "sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." "All we like sheep have gone astray ... and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

The perfect obedience of Christ and His meritorious death were both necessary as the ground of a sinner's justification. Neither would have been sufficient without the other. His obedience would not answer without His death; for the law which had been broken must be honoured; and the penalty which had been incurred by the sinner must be endured by the Substitute. Neither would His death answer without His obedience; for it is the obedient, and not the punished, that the law justifies; he who keeps the precept, and not he who endures the penalty. It is only by satisfying both claims on our behalf, that Christ "of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

When it is said we are justified by faith, it is not meant that there is any merit in faith, any justifying efficacy; but that faith is the means by which we are justified for the sake of Him who obeyed and suffered for us – the divinely-appointed means by which we appropriate the merit of His obedience and suffering. It is by the eye of faith we see the excellency and adaptation of Christ's righteousness and merit; and it is by the hand of faith we take and put on the wedding garment provided for us, and thus prepare ourselves for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Faith is the bond which unites us to Christ, by virtue of which union we are justified. Faith is the wedding ring by which the poor daughter of the old Amorite is married to the Prince of Peace. She is raised from the greatest poverty and degradation to unspeakable opulence and honour, not because of the intrinsic value of the ring, though it is a golden one, but on account of the union which it signifies between her and her Beloved. "He that hath the Son hath life."

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## **"WHAT THOU OUGHTEST TO DO"**

### **A Meditation on Acts 10**

*By Gerald D. Buss*

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The events of Acts chapter 10 and their further telling in the following chapter have a deep significance in pointing the manner in which it is ordained of God that the gospel is to be preached to sinners.

It was the Lord's will that the Apostle Peter should, contrary to his own preconceived traditions and notions, be the instrument in the hands of the blessed Spirit in being the first to bring the glad tidings of sins forgiven through a precious Christ to the Gentiles. In bringing this to pass the Lord, as always, worked at both ends of the matter.

Firstly, there was the Gentile, Cornelius, one of the centurions of the New Testament of whom is recorded some good thing. In his case it is evident that the Holy Spirit had already implanted the fear of the Lord in his heart and that of his household. The fruits of this were apparent to all with whom they had to do. Yet for all of his prayers and alms-giving Cornelius felt that there was an aching void in his heart that had not been filled. It was this Holy Ghost-wrought emptiness which prepared him for such a filling of the Spirit under Peter's ministry and especially for that revelation of Christ which alone can fill the hungry with good things whilst the rich are sent empty away. Nothing short of this could render him acceptable to his Creator before whom he so deeply felt to be standing. He deeply felt that there was a solemn, unanswered question in his life for which he had neither wisdom nor strength to attend to

aright. Yet how vital it was to Cornelius that this solemn matter be dealt with!

But how could he learn the way of salvation? “How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?” Whilst the Holy Spirit could have revealed a precious Jesus to him without any human instrumentality, yet it is His general method to save sinners through the foolishness of preaching. So at the other end of the matter the Holy Spirit was preparing His servant Peter to be the minister of grace to Cornelius and his household. It was to Simon the tanner’s house that the angel of the Lord commanded him to send, which command Cornelius immediately obeyed.

We find Peter resting upon the housetop awaiting his meal, when he falls into a trance. Before him descends, from heaven, a great sheet, knit at the four corners, thus securing all the contents of this mysterious vessel. Within it, to Peter’s deep consternation are found all manner of unclean creatures, forbidden under the law of Moses to be touched. Yet a command attends the vision, “Arise, Peter, slay and eat.” “Not so, Lord,” answers Peter with his usual instinctive reaction to events. “I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.” Back comes the almighty silencing voice of divine majesty: “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”

Three times this was repeated, before the sheet was finally received up into heaven, intimating that whatever objections Peter may have on earth, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each welcomed into heaven these cleansed beasts. This reminds us of the work of each of the three glorious Persons of the Trinity in salvation. The Father’s electing love, the Son’s redeeming love and the Holy Spirit’s regenerating love. Again it is very significant to notice that in the holy Word of God there are three beginnings referred to. We have the beginning of creation in Genesis 1; the beginning of redemption in John 1; and then in Acts 11. 15 Peter refers to the beginning which was wrought by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. This inward regenerating beginning which the outward anointing of the Holy Spirit confirmed with His special gifts at that time, Cornelius was a subject of to Peter’s amazement. Surely Peter’s hesitancy was somewhat like Jonah’s, though thankfully not with the same spirit of rebellion to which that well-known prophet was left.

Just as Peter was meditating on these things, the three men commanded of God to be sent by Cornelius arrived at Simon’s house where Peter lodged. At that very moment Peter was shown what he “ought” to do. “Behold, three men seek thee.... Go with them, doubting nothing.” How wonderful is God’s timing of His works. Just as minutely planned here as at the well when Eliezer met Isaac’s, God-appointed wife to be, Rebecca. So Peter, without gainsaying (that is

without any more questioning!), departs on the next day to find the congregation to which God had appointed him to preach.

How wonderful is the constraining power of the Spirit, when He overrules all objections and sweetly draws the feet of Christ's disciples in the appointed way! Then what we “ought” to do is no longer a cumbersome duty, but a loving privilege, all the strength and willingness coming from Him whose command it is. It is the Holy Ghost who reveals these solemn obligations and responsibilities to the children of God and then gives the enabling grace to do what we “ought.” “It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” “I will ... walk in them,” says their God. This is what Peter means in his Epistle when he speaks of being elect unto obedience. Not just to be justified by the obedience of Christ, but also to be sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

How different the law is in this respect! It clearly reveals our responsibilities but lends no help to the awakened sinner to fulfil its obligations.

“‘Run, run and work,’ the law commands,  
Yet finds me neither feet nor hands;  
But sweeter news the gospel brings;  
It bids me fly, and lends me wings.”

How transcendent in all this is the sacred example of Christ, who in speaking of His sufferings to the two favoured disciples on the Emmaus road said, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” O how attractive is the sweet submission of Christ to His Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane! What holy love and zeal filled His holy Person, God and Man, to bear that solemn “ought” that His Father had laid upon Him! Isaiah says of Him in prophecy: “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth.”

On Peter's arrival at Cornelius' house he finds an expectant congregation waiting to receive the Word. How diligent Cornelius was for the souls of those with whom he had to do, to gather them in this manner! And of how many congregations can it be said: “We are all here present before God, to hear the things commanded thee of God”?

Before he preached, Peter had to remind his attentive hearers that he was but a man, and therefore was not to be the object of adoration or praise. How even John in the Revelation was twice reproved for worshipping an angel! In all our gatherings in His name how conscious we need to be of the command: “worship God”! But how is He to be worshipped?

“Worship God, then, in His Son;  
There He's love and there alone.”

This was the lesson Cornelius and his household and the gathered friends were about to learn.

What subject did Peter preach? He preached of Christ as the Judge of all; of Christ crucified; of Christ the one Mediator between God and Man. In all this he published (not offered) the glad tidings that “through His name whosoever (Jew or Gentile) believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins”; that God is no respecter of persons. The dear Holy Ghost, who alone can give power to the ministry, accompanied Peter’s sermon with double power: the power to believe on Christ for salvation within, and the outward witness of His work so often repeated in New Testament times, the speaking of tongues to magnify God. Whilst the miraculous gift of speaking with other tongues has ceased, the grace and gift of God in putting a new song in the mouth of God’s believing people, “even praise unto our God,” has not ended. At such times of love, the very stones would cry out if these should hold their peace.

Cornelius’ aching void was at last filled with an application of the atonement and a view of a precious Christ. Now at last his cup ran over in praise to God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Like Simeon his eyes had seen by faith His salvation. Nothing else could have brought his weary, aching soul into “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.” It was the cross of Christ which alone answered his deepest needs.

Peter, on seeing the evident approbation of God Himself upon these Gentile believers, commanded them, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to attend to His own command, to be baptized, asking that question: “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” Without any gainsaying on either Peter’s or Cornelius’ part, they entered into loving obedience in that which the Lord had showed them that they “ought” to do.

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the midst of all His people.”

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

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We need trial upon trial upon trial, and stroke upon stroke to bring our soul out of carnality and death. We slip insensibly into carnal ease; but afflictions and trials of body and mind stir us up to some degree of earnestness in prayer and supplication, give a force and reality to the things of God, show us the emptiness and vanity of earthly things, make us feel the suitability and preciousness of the Lord Jesus; and as we taste any measure of sweetness and blessedness in Him, He becomes more feelingly and experimentally all our salvation and all our desire.

*J.C. Philpot*



## OBITUARY

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**Richard Burg**, a member of Zion Strict Baptist Church at Grand Rapids, U.S.A., passed away to his eternal rest on October 18th, 2003, aged 96.

Dick received many early impressions from a godly grandmother, who attended a sound Reformed church. She tried to impress upon him the value of his soul and the great need of being found right for eternity. On one occasion during his school days, Dick was reproved for a misdeed he had committed. That night he was unable to sleep, and brought to feel that his sin was against God. His grief was not so much the fear of hell, but that he had sinned against God. This caused him to walk more carefully for a time. Evidently, these convictions wore off and he began to follow the course of this world.

As a teenager he left off attending a sound ministry, to attend a lighter church with his friends where the truth was not preached. During this time the country was in the midst of a depression, and work was very difficult to find. With another young man, who later became his brother-in-law, Dick decided he wanted to see the country by "riding the rails" for a few months. Hopping on trains, he ventured to the west coast of the United States and back in a carefree manner. In later years, he looked back with sorrow of heart and great shame that he could live so carnal and so careless during that period. He considered them wasted years.

Upon his return, he married his friend's sister, Nellie. Her parents were members of a Holland Baptist church where she also faithfully attended. Pastor D. Laansma was a sound experimental minister. Nellie insisted that Dick attend the same church she did, and he consented to her wishes. Here Dick received sound instruction in the Word of God. On one occasion, Mr. Laansma was relating some of the experiences of God's people from the pulpit. Dick could barely contain himself as he sat in the pew, feeling that he had so described his soul's feelings and desires. While attending there, a woman asked Dick, "Are you seeking a religion, or are you seeking Christ?" It seemed to take hold of his conscience.

With the onset of old age, Pastor Laansma was unable to continue his ministry, which resulted in the appointment of a new minister. Dick did not feel comfortable sitting under the new pastor's ministry. A number of godly members had left just prior to the arrival of the new minister. They met at a rented hall known as The Lady's Literary Club, and sermons of Philpot, Popham, and others were read. (Later that group became organized as Zion Strict Baptist Church and became affiliated with the Gospel Standard Churches of England). Dick began to attend faithfully with this group. When a church building was purchased, Dick (being a skilled woodcrafter) lovingly made the pulpit, chairs and communion table with hand carved letters: "THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

Dick received some favours under the ministry. On one occasion he had a very special hearing time as the minister spoke of the security of God's people, as they are sheltered under the blood of Christ. He had such a holy desire that he might prove to be one of those favoured people. At that time, hymn 746 by Joseph Hart quite melted him, and he was brought to see the blessedness of the gospel.

"Laws and terrors do but harden,  
All the while they work alone;

But a sense of blood bought pardon  
Soon dissolves the heart of stone."

In more recent years, Dick spoke of many good hearing times. On one occasion, the present pastor preached from the Song of Solomon 1. 2, 4 and 7 and particularly the words: "Kiss me ... Draw me ... Tell me." Dick felt so blessed as it expressed his soul's particular exercise that he kept repeating to himself all the way home: "I have had a feast today, I had a feast, I had a feast...." On another occasion, he had a blessed hearing time under a sermon from Ephesians 4. 5, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." At the end of the services, Dick often related to the pastor with warmth and sincerity that he had a good day.

In November of 2002, his only child, a daughter, was taken through cancer. This was a very severe trial to him in his old age.

Dick was often exercised about the ordinance of believer's baptism. He kept looking for a further confirmation in order to venture forward, but did not receive what he thought that he should have. During a sermon the words were quoted, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." They brought guilt to his conscience and he felt that he had been walking disobediently. After the service that evening, Dick went home feeling miserable. He was unable to sleep through the night and felt heavily burdened all the following day. After prayer meeting, in the evening, he made his wishes known to the pastor that he must go forward to be baptized.

A church meeting was arranged and Dick related his call by grace. After he was told that the church had unanimously received him, he said, "All you are receiving is a big sinner." Dick was baptized on June 29th, 2003 at the age of 95.

Although he was with us for only a few months as a member, he felt much freedom relating some of the past dealings of God to his soul. During the prayer meetings, Dick's prayers seemed almost as if he was in the very presence of God. After a certain Lord's Supper, he said, "What a privilege, what a privilege!" It was evident that the Lord was fast ripening him for eternity. Dick would often quote Charles Wesley's dying expression:

"In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?  
Jesus: my only hope Thou art;  
Strength of my failing flesh and heart.  
O let me catch a smile from Thee,  
And drop into eternity."

He was taken from us suddenly, being instantly killed in a road accident at the age of 96.

J.K.S.

[We have never met anyone who had a deeper knowledge of the old volumes of the *Gospel Standard* than Dick Burg. He was well esteemed for his godliness by the English ministers who visited the U.S.A. Practically, he is remembered by them for some of the lovely gifts which, as a skilled carpenter, he made for them.]

**Mary Cottingham**, a member of the church at Hope Chapel, Blackboys, for over fifty years, passed to her eternal rest on Christmas Day 2003. She was a

much-loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She had been a widow for over thirty years (see *G.S.* October 1973, Obituary, Joseph Ebenezer Cottington). A summary of her experience follows:

I was born into this world on November 6th, 1920, the second child of a family of six. My father died when I was six and mother was left with six children, the eldest being seven and the youngest four months. From a very early age I had solemn thoughts and often used to tremble when I heard of someone dying.

When I was thirteen, in the providence of God I was favoured with being able to help the late Mr. and Mrs. John Tingley in their bakehouse at Waldron in school holidays and Saturdays. How I so looked forward to these times and became very attached to them, and their nephews and wives. After I left school at fourteen, I felt constrained to live with them at "Burnetts," Waldron, and help in the house, the bakehouse, and on the bread rounds.

Dear Mr. Tingley was a poor, honest man, and a very spiritual character; I used so to value his prayers. I felt I could not take any money from him but lived with them as one of the family, though feeling so unworthy. While at the bakehouse, I had to walk in a very heavy trial. I will not relate the details, but it made me cry unto the dear Lord to go before me and make the crooked things straight, and the rough places smooth. I was in a very low place one evening and on retiring to bed fell on my knees begging for mercy. After getting into bed, I opened my Bible and these words stood out as though they were written in gold: "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

When Mr. Tingley's health began to fail, he felt he must give up the bakehouse. His nephew, Mr. R.S. Jupp, took the business over. Mr. and Mrs. Tingley and I then took a cottage in Uckfield for a few months and rented a small business in the town selling greengrocery and some items of grocery. I was seventeen at the time and learnt to drive the car, which was very old. I then worked up rounds in Uckfield, Fletching and Isfield.

Eventually Mr. Tingley's health began rapidly to fail. I was between eighteen and nineteen. About this time I witnessed an old lady die whom my mother looked after. I shall never forget the solemn thoughts I had as I walked along Framfield Road, Uckfield. I felt the ground would give way under me, and something seemed to say, "That person is in hell, and you will soon be following." I felt quite ill and had a job to eat my food.

Shortly after this, Mr. Tingley died, February 17th, 1940. O how I missed him and especially his prayers! Mrs. Tingley and I did not know what we should do. However, the Lord went before us and we went to live in Hailsham with her sister, who had been widowed six weeks previously. The war was still on; it started the September before Mr. Tingley died. I was called up to work in a hostel in connection with a factory at Kidderminster. After eleven weeks I was sent home. I had rheumatics in my back, feet and hands. My nerves were very bad at this time. I was on the sick list for three months.

I looked forward to the services at Blackboys on Sunday and Dicker Tuesday and Thursday. (I could not get to Blackboys in the week.) Before the war ended, I was given work at the Uckfield institute where I looked after the master and matron's little boy for about fifteen months. I will say to my shame that while at the institute one beautiful week evening, while cycling over to the

week evening service (Blackboys), I thought, "Well, fancy spending an hour and a half in chapel on such a lovely evening." I entered chapel so carelessly, and our late deacon, Mr. Charles Dobell, gave out the opening hymn 999 ["Wilt thou forsake Me too?"]. How I felt so broken and humbled and trembling said, "I humbly answer NO!"

I had some special times during the pastorate of dear Mr. Jabez Field, although I felt at times the Lord would cut me off, and if ever I get to heaven it will be by the skin of my teeth. I believe the Lord deepened His work in my soul, and those words sounded in my ears, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." I was raised to a hope under a sermon of Mr. Field's from the Book of Ruth. I was comforted with a view of what the dear Lord suffered. I felt it when Mr. Field was taken in May 1951. I trust he was my spiritual father.

My late dear husband and I were married on August 18th, 1944. He was a most gracious character, though sorely afflicted and very tried in spiritual things. He was afflicted all his life. He died on June 25th, 1973. We were favoured with four sons and he was favoured to see them grow up and three of them get married, which we never thought he would.

During Mr. Field's pastorate, I began to be exercised about following the Lord in the ordinance of believers' baptism. From 1951 to 1954 we were without a pastor. Mr. Jupp's ministry was made a blessing to me at this time; he often came into my experience and traced out my pathway, and then would say, "The word says, 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments.'" Hymn 723 was given out and I felt I must venture; it was especially the two lines:

"If you tarry till you're better,  
You will never come at all."

During the next week, the late Mr. Charles Smith (pastor, Jarvis Brook) preached. His discourse was most encouraging and I felt such a love to the Lord and His people and His ways.

We were at this time without a pastor. I said something to my dear husband, not about joining the church, but he prised it out and said to me, "Catch the six o'clock bus." So with much fear and trembling I caught the bus from Lower Dicker to Halland, then changed buses at Halland to go to Blackboys to Mr. Charles Dobell's house (deacon). The devil so tempted me that he would not be at home. However I proved the devil a liar. Mr. Dobell received me very kindly, and I stammered out a little of what I hope the Lord had done for me. He then kindly drove me home.

I was so tried the next week and felt I must give it all up. I was talking to my dear sister-in-law Lois and she said to me, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." This was confirmed by Mr. Tyler at the week evening service at The Dicker that week. Mr. Jupp, who was eventually to be our pastor, baptized me in August 1953. I cannot say I had anything special at the time, except the answer of a good conscience. When Mr. Jupp received me into the church, he gave me the following word: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." How I have proved to need them! The way is still rough and I am sometimes so tried and have many fears that I shall come short at last. But I do trust that at other times I feel,

“He who has helped me hitherto  
Will help me all my journey through.”

Also:

“My soul shall pray for Zion still  
While life and breath remain.”

This was written in March 1984. The following was added in February 1995:

I have felt constrained to write a little more of what I hope the Lord has done for me. How I do feel to need the assurance that my sins, which are many, are all forgiven!

In January 1989 I went into the Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, for an operation on both my eyes. The pain was very bad and I was blindfolded for two days. But I do hope it was not altogether unprofitable. My mind was led a little into Christ's sufferings; my heart was sweetly softened and I felt my sufferings were nothing to what He endured, and felt, “Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”

I have had a varied experience both providentially and spiritually since I last wrote. I have passed through trials and had a few helps by the way.

Our dear pastor, Mr. Jupp, is in Brighton Bethesda Home. When able he is fetched for the services. He is a faithful and very tried man, with the cause at heart. I do miss him when he is not able to come.

I have had one or two special times of late. Mr. Jabez Rutt was a help at the prayer meeting on Tuesday commenting on Psalm 45, also when he preached at Dicker on Thursday evening from Solomon's Song 1. 8. It was good to be there.

For the most part I prove it true, the days of darkness are many. O for a true, God-given religion that will stand when the end comes! How often I have to pray,

“Prepare me, gracious God,  
To stand before Thy face.”

I do not want to be deceived or come short at last. My memory is beginning to fail, but what is sad, can folly still retain.

These writings were put together by Mr. Jabez Rutt from jottings and notes Mother had made in 1984/95, and which she gave to him in 1999 when she asked him to take her funeral service when the time should come.

Mother moved to the Bethesda Home in Hove in 2000. Her health continued to deteriorate and she was often low in body and spirit. She had to go to hospital in November 2003 following a stroke. She recovered in some measure but remained in hospital because of her severe weakness. It was at this time she was to experience her greatest assault by Satan, feeling herself to be deceived and a deceiver. She was able to return to Bethesda, and became more peaceful, although very weak and unable to communicate much. It was evident Mother was being weaned from all below to know only her precious Jesus. Her youngest son Jim and his two sons were with her at lunchtime on Christmas Day, and they left her in a quiet state. Later that afternoon her tea was left with her, but on returning to her room a little later, a member of the staff found that she had passed away.

As can be seen, although mother was a gracious character, she was often tried and tempted. She was also very concerned for the state of Zion at large, and the troubles in her own beloved denomination and church.

The funeral, at Mother's request, was conducted by Mr. Jabez Rutt.

R.C.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Some Account of the Life and Experience of George Payton**; hardback; 172 pages; price £13.25 plus £1.25 postage; published by, and obtainable from, Mr. John Crowter, Haystacks, Green Lane, Potter Heigham, Norfolk, NR29 5LP. Some years ago a lady in Kent kindly presented us with this autobiography of George Payton, published in 1819. She also furnished us with a few details about him as he lived for a number of years after the book was published.

George Payton (1766-1837) was pastor at Edenbridge, Kent, for nearly thirty years until his death. Through the original publication of his life in 1811 he was invited to preach at Conway Street Chapel, London, when his preaching was very much blessed. Later he was a frequent preacher at Gower Street Chapel after it was built by the Conway Street congregation. A number of his letters were published in the *Gospel Standard*.

George Payton's life was remarkable and interesting – a story both of poverty and deliverance from a life of sin. There is a living witness to Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord who will provide. We have often thought of running this life through the pages of the *Gospel Standard* month by month, but the difficulty is that it would have gone on for so long. We are, therefore, pleased that Mr. John Crowter has produced the original volume, exactly as the copy we possess.

We are sure spiritual readers will welcome it. The reason for the price is, of course, because few copies are published and these are very nicely, privately bound.

**Troubled Journey: a Missionary Childhood in War-torn China**, by Faith Cook; paperback; 118 pages; price £5.95; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Having enjoyed Faith Cook's books so much, we were very interested to receive an account of her childhood days. This is a lovely but sad book in which Mrs. Cook gives her memories. The daughter of missionaries in China with the China Inland Mission, she was for long periods separated from her parents – with the inevitable sadness of the separations. The question is asked in *Troubled Journey*, Was it right for missionaries to sacrifice even the care and bringing up of their children for Christ's sake (the old missionary adage: "all on the altar")? Or was this a mistaken application of leaving all for Christ's sake?

Sad it is to read of a young girl's sorrows, and especially of some of the unkind (even cruel) treatment received in the boarding schools she attended.

As can be expected, the book is written in Mrs. Cook's inimitable style. To quote one sentence only, describing a scene in the Chinese mountains: "I loved to roam the hillside, stopping to admire the exquisite loveliness of the pure white

flowers with their angry red spots, or to sit quietly beside some stream watching the play of sun on water.”

*Troubled Journey* is not really a *spiritual* book, though many of the spiritual lessons learned are recorded. Readers of our magazine will like the William Gadsby quotation which ends the book:

“As I look back, I can echo the words of an old hymnwriter who spoke of God’s providence and care:

‘My every need He richly will supply;  
Nor will His mercy ever let me die;  
In Him there dwells a treasure all divine,  
And matchless grace has made that treasure mine.’”

**The Little Woodman and His Dog Cæsar**, by Mary Sherwood; hardback; 82 pages; price £5 including postage; published by and obtainable from Mr. D.J. Playfoot, Cavepits, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7HS.

We are delighted that this lovely little children’s book has been republished. Written in Victorian times, and very popular in former days, it tells the story of the mysterious providence of God in the life of a little orphan boy named William.

The story of William reminds us strongly of that of Joseph. Cruelly abandoned by his older brothers, wandering through a forest, alone apart from his dog, William finds an isolated cottage, where he is treated kindly. Amazingly the old lady there is his grandmother.

In later years William again meets with his brothers, who have suffered deeply for their sin. Like Joseph he forgives them, most kindly treats them and does all he can to make their last days comfortable.

The story is based in Germany and, at the beginning, the old copies assured us it was based on fact. The chapters were serialised in the 2003 *Friendly Companion*.

*The Little Woodman* is beautifully produced with many of the attractive illustrations from earlier editions included. We feel it will make an excellent present or prize.

**The Story of our Bible**; children’s address by the Editor. This has appeared in the *Friendly Companion* for October, November and December, and is available free of charge as a small booklet from Mrs. Alison A. Kingham, 11 Sutherland Place, Luton, LU1 3SY.

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Let thy soul be set on the highest mount that any creature was ever yet set upon, and enlarged to take in view the most spacious prospect both of sin and misery and difficulties of being saved, that ever yet any poor humble soul did cast within itself; yea join to these all the hindrances and objections that the heart of man can invent against itself and salvation; lift up thine eyes, and look to the utmost thou canst see; and Christ by His intercession is able to save thee beyond the horizon and utmost compass of thy thoughts, even to the utmost.

*Goodwin*

## THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

---

See what glory now surrounds us,  
 God made flesh, and born a Babe;  
 Here's a mystery quite confounds us,  
 Yet 'twas done our souls to save.  
 What a stoop! (my soul adore it),  
 Omnipresence clothed in clay;  
 Reason's power must fall before it,  
 Faith alone can it survey.

The eternal God of glory  
 Veiled Himself in human flesh;  
 Who can tell the pleasing story,  
 And not feel a sacred blush?  
 Blush to think how we're belovèd,  
 Yet what little love we show;  
 Matchless was the love that movèd  
 God to dwell with worms below.

All the glories of creation  
 Seem but like corrupted earth,  
 When compared with that salvation,  
 Couched in the Redeemer's birth;  
 Mourning sinner, lost and starving,  
 Jesus Christ was born for thee,  
 Born to bear thy base deserving,  
 Born to set thee fully free.

Born to give His life a ransom,  
 For a vile, rebellious race;  
 When the birth of Christ we mention,  
 May we feel His matchless grace;  
 Shout His praises and adore Him,  
 Cast upon Him all our care,  
 Humbly prostrating before Him,  
 All His ways and works revere.

William Gadsby

---

How various are the trials and afflictions of those who desire to fear God, and walk in His ways. But though they may differ in nature and degree, yet they are, for the most part, as much as they can well bear. The Lord, indeed, is very gracious in not laying upon them more than they can bear; but He will give them all enough to find and feel that this world is full of sin and sorrow; that their own hearts are full of evil; and that nothing but the pure, rich, free, superabounding grace of God can save or bless their souls.

*J.C. Philpot*



# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

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## INDEX

### EDITOR'S PIECES

A Few Thoughts from John Elias . . . . .	226
Mary – and Mariolatry . . . . .	370
A Mother's Influence . . . . .	233
New Year Address . . . . .	1
The "Passion of Christ" . . . . .	115
Philpot's Portions in Albanian . . . . .	45
Predestination and Fatalism . . . . .	297
Prejudice and Partiality . . . . .	347
A Present-Day Concern . . . . .	151
Such a Time as This! . . . . .	120

#### *Sermons*

Elisha and the Syrian Army (2 Kings 6. 15-17) . . . . .	161
Continuing with the Saviour (Luke 22. 28, 29) . . . . .	329

### GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETIES

Committee Statement . . . . .	128
London Meetings (Addresses by R.D.G. Field and G.D. Buss) . . . . .	170
Northern Meetings (Address by G.D. Buss) . . . . .	337

### GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST

Annual General Meeting (Address by C.A. Wood) . . . . .	284
---------------------------------------------------------	-----

### HYMNS AND POEMS

<b>Dulley, J.</b> . . . . .	"Nothing to Pay" . . . . .	292
<b>E.D.</b> . . . . .	Heart Breathings . . . . .	96
<b>Elven, C.</b> . . . . .	Be Merciful to Me . . . . .	200
<b>Gadsby, W.</b> . . . . .	The Word was Made Flesh . . . . .	392
<b>Hammond, R.</b> . . . . .	Have I a Hope of Glory? . . . . .	157
<b>Kelly, T.</b> . . . . .	Tomorrow . . . . .	32
	Christ the Forerunner . . . . .	228
	The Cross . . . . .	127
<b>Mason, J.</b> . . . . .	A Song of Praise for the Pardon of Sin . . . . .	360
<b>Medley, S.</b> . . . . .	But . . . . .	64
<b>Quarles, F.</b> . . . . .	The Sinner's Judgment and Acquittal . . . . .	263

### LETTERS

<b>Beddome, B.</b> . . . . .	Low Views of Self . . . . .	74
<b>Bryan, R.</b> . . . . .	All in Jesus . . . . .	247
<b>Gadsby, W.</b> . . . . .	Living Springs . . . . .	44
<b>Newton, J.</b> . . . . .	Comfort in Sorrow . . . . .	15
	The Inward Witness to Faith . . . . .	307
	Letter to a Friend in Trouble . . . . .	81
<b>Pert, J.</b> . . . . .	Baptism: A Command . . . . .	372
<b>Philpot, J.C.</b> . . . . .	The Difference Between a "Precious" and a "Vile" Experience . . . . .	248
	Looking Unto Jesus . . . . .	79

### MEMOIRS

<b>Blackstock, E.</b> . . . . .	The Converted Atheist . . . . .	20, 56, 86, 122
<b>Elias, J.</b> . . . . .	Sabbath-Breaking Overturned . . . . .	152
<b>Sadler, I.A.</b> . . . . .	Let Them Declare His Praise in the Islands (Life and Poetry of Hallgrímur Pétursson) . . . . .	221, 258, 288, 321, 353

## MISCELLANEOUS

<b>Booth, A.</b>	The Righteousness of Christ	78
<b>Boston, T.</b>	The Eternity of the Marriage Covenant	277
	The Marriage Covenant	254
	The Seal of the Covenant	256
<b>Bourne, J.</b>	None but Christ	27
	Walking as Children of Light	370
<b>Brooks, T.</b>	Time for Secret Prayer	139
<b>Buss, G.D.</b>	"Holiness Becometh Thy House, O Lord"	325
	"What Thou Oughtest To Do"	381
<b>Calamy, E.</b>	Puritan Prayer	17
<b>Church of England</b>	Article 17	299
<b>Durham, J.</b>	The Covenant of Redemption	46
	Divine Justice Satisfied	304
	The Effect of Christ's Love	244
	Redemption Accomplished	104
<b>Erskine, E.</b>	Jesus Only	51
<b>Flavel, J.</b>	Why Has God Not Answered Our Prayers?	18
<b>Gosden, J.H.</b>	Answer to Question	51
	Believers' Baptism	116, 148
	The Lord's Supper	195, 217
<b>Hawker, R.</b>	The Church's Longing for Christ	212
<b>Kiffin, W.</b>	An Aged Minister's Farewell	287
<b>Krummacher, F.W.</b>	The Ark	75
	The Believer's Standing	140
	A Blessed Sign	279
	Not the Righteous!	311
	The Path of Faith	252
	Saved by Blood Alone	105
	True Repentance	194
<b>Neele, C.</b>	Heavenly Teaching	41
<b>Newton, G.</b>	Glorifying God	146
<b>Owen, J.</b>	A Few Warnings	143
	The Holy Spirit's Work in Mortifying Sin	142
	The Importance of Mortifying Sin	141
<b>Oxenden, A.</b>	The Days that are Past	318
	The Example of Old People	350
	Life's Journey	281
<b>Philpot, J. C.</b>	A Compassionate High Priest	43
	The Importance of the Resurrection	111
	Kept by the Power of God Through Faith	26
	The Resurrection of Christ	110
	The Work of Reconciliation	369
<b>Popham, J.K.</b>	"Our Beloved Brother Paul Also"	55
<b>Serle, A.</b>	Patient Enduring of Wrongs	211
<b>Watson, T.</b>	The Blood of Christ	84

## SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

<b>Brown, J.</b>	A Warning to Young Ministers	257
<b>Delves, J.</b>	God's Gift of His Son (Rom. 8. 32)	361
	Longing to See God's Glory (Ex. 33. 18)	8
<b>Evans, C.</b>	Justification By Faith	376
<b>Foster, F.</b>	Godly Counsel to the Churches (Rev. 2. 1)	131
<b>Gill, J.</b>	Encouragement in a Covenant God (1 Sam. 30. 6)	65
<b>Gosden, J.H.</b>	Godly Counsel to the Churches (Phil. 1. 27 on)	129
<b>Harwood, J.</b>	Godly Counsel to the Churches (Rom. 14. 19)	136
<b>Hazelton, J.E.</b>	"It Was Now Dark" (John 6. 17)	33

<b>Hill, J.</b>	Believers Pardoned, Yet Chastised (Psa. 99. 8)	236
<b>Jarvis, J.</b>	The Blood of Sprinkling (Isa. 52. 15)	97
<b>Maydwell, R.</b>	An Afflicted Minister to His Flock	300
<b>Philpot, J.C.</b>	The Heavenly Race (Heb. 12. 1, 2)	265, 313
<b>Popham, J.K.</b>	Prayer Meeting Address (1 Peter 1. 1-9)	52
	God is Love (1 John 4. 19)	201

#### OBITUARY

Bouma, H.	128, 229	Fay, R.M.	291
Burg, R.	385	Short, J.A.	232
Cooper, E.C.S.	358	Wilkins, H.M.	158
Cottingham, M.	386		

#### BOOK REVIEWS

An Acceptable Sacrifice, by J. Bunyan, 94; The Basis of Christian Unity, by D.M. Lloyd-Jones, 63; Brown, John, Life of, 95; Christian Love, by H. Binning, 156; Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ, by J. Bunyan, 93; Common Grace and the Call of the Gospel, by G. M. Ella, 198; Coppice Baptist Chapel: Bi-Centenary Souvenir 2004, 358; The Day God Made, by G.C. Knecht, 63; Ebenezer Baptist Chapel, Stone-in-Oxney, Kent, A Short Account, by M. Pont and M. Hyde, 198; Elias, John: Life, Letters and Essays, by E. Morgan, 227; Great is Thy Faithfulness: 200 Years of God's Goodness at Chippenham, compiled by G.D. Buss, 262; Hebrews, Sermons on, by R.M. M'Cheyne, 295; History of the Work of Redemption, by J. Edwards, 29; Hobson, Canon Richard, 29; Holy Discoveries and Flames, by J. Saltmarsh, 357; Is All Scripture Inspired? by J.C. Ryle, 63; Is It Nothing To You? by F.S. Leahy, 294; Letters on Revival, by E. Porter, 156; "Little Chapel" – History of St. David's Bridge Baptist Chapel, Cranbrook, by A.F. Baldwin, 328; The Little Woodman and His Dog Cæsar, by M. Sherwood, 391; The Lord's Supper, by T. Watson, 94; Morning Readings, by J. Bourne, 28; Morning Thoughts, by O. Winslow, 199; Mortification of Sin, by J. Owen, 155; Mysterious Ways: The Providence of God in the Life of Joseph, by D. Kingdon, 328; New Testament Sermons, by R.M. M'Cheyne, 295; Old Testament Sermons, by R.M. M'Cheyne, 295; Owen, John, on the Lord's Supper, by J.D. Payne, 296; The Path of True Godliness, by W. Teellinck, 293; Payton, George, Some Account of the Life and Experience of, 390; Roe, Ernest, Sermons by, 198; Song of Solomon, Commentary on, by R. Hawker, 262; The Story of our Bible, by B.A. Ramsbottom, 391; The Suffering Saviour, by F.W. Krummacher, 92; Three Modern Versions: A Critical Assessment of the N.I.V., E.S.V., and N.K.J.V., by A.J. Macgregor, 327; Troubled Journey: A Missionary Childhood in War-torn China, by F. Cook, 390; The Troublemakers at Frankfurt, by G.M. Ella, 62

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### OUR MAGAZINES

The Lord has kindly promised that bread cast on the waters shall be found – not lost – after many days (Eccl. 11. 1). So we have laboured on through one more year, desiring that the name of Jesus might be glorified and His people edified.

We thank our readers for their prayerful interest, and those who as churches or personally have given financial support. The continuing help of all who assist in producing the *Gospel Standard* is gratefully acknowledged.

“Now through another year,  
Supported by His care,  
We raise our Ebenezer here;  
The Lord has helped thus far” (Newton).

The Editor