

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JANUARY 2011

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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

It was John Raven of Smallfield who said, "Though the outlook is bleak, the uplook is bright." The outlook certainly is bleak – in the country and in the world. Atheistic leaders (God is not in all their thoughts), open opposition to the very mention of Christianity, persecution of those who seek to honour God, immorality, violence, a difficult financial situation – and much more. After the legalising of abortion, we now have pressure for euthanasia. The words of the prophet have surely come to pass: "The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn" (Hos. 4. 1-3).\*

So as in this sad situation we venture into the new year, where is the brightness of the uplook? Recently we were very much struck by the opening words of the Book of Ezra: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, *that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled*, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia...." Here was the greatest empire on earth. Here was a mighty king. Amazing things were taking place. But above all God was in control, sovereign, almighty. Nothing can prevent the Lord's purposes being fulfilled. The hearts of all men are in His hand. "The king's heart is in the Lord's hand as rivers of waters; He turneth it whithersoever He will." So when the moment had come for God's ancient people to be delivered from Babylonian captivity, God's word must be fulfilled, His purpose must stand, and the mightiest king on earth must do His bidding. The Lord "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus," we are told.

May we, then, by faith view the Lord in complete control, fulfilling the counsel of His own will. The godly Puritans used to remind the people that, in reading holy Scripture, ever remember that God is the same now as He was then. Nothing can take place without His divine

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\* We have just been sent "A Call to the Nation" from an old newspaper. How true today! Why are we progressively retreating in world influence? Why are we borrowing and in debt? Why are crimes and lawlessness increasing like a flood among our people? Why are our economies in crisis and exhortations to the nation uninspired by the Christian faith?" etc., etc. The answer is given in the Word of God, and the promise of deliverance given to the nation that calls upon Him.

permission. "He bindeth the floods from overflowing." "Thou hast set a bound which they cannot pass over." "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever." May we be encouraged that "this God is our God for ever and ever," and that our times are in His hand.

We have also been reminded of the sovereignty and greatness of God in the severe weather and icy spell which descended suddenly on England at the end of November. "He giveth snow like wool. He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold?" Almighty God can paralyse the nation in a moment. He can overthrow the plans of the mightiest.

So how do we approach the new year? and what are our desires in our homes and families, and for ourselves? We have noticed that a common expression nowadays, instead of saying, "Goodbye," for people to say, "Have a good day!" It has made us think: what is it *really* to "have a good day"? And taking it further: what will it be to have a good new year? We have felt the little verse is a gracious answer:

"Peace in the Saviour,  
Rest at His feet,  
Smile of His countenance,  
Radiant and sweet,  
Joy in His presence,  
Christ ever near –  
This will ensure thee  
A happy new year!"

As New Year's Day arrives, it has become an English custom to say, "A happy new year." It may not be out of place to record what J.C. Philpot wrote concerning New Year's Day:

"Refreshed and strengthened at the throne by communings with the God of all our mercies, we go down to meet our families, and are at once greeted on all sides with, "I wish you a happy new year," a greeting which we as warmly and affectionately return. Almost every friend, well-nigh every acquaintance that we meet with in the course of the day, greets us with the same kind wish. Now in all this there may be a great deal of formality, lip-service and traditional usage; but there may be also a good deal of sincerity, kindness and affection. We are not, surely, so shut up in miserable self as to have no desire for the health and happiness, the temporal and spiritual welfare of our families, our friends, or even our acquaintances. And if we desire their good, we need not be backward or unwilling to express it in a few words of friendly greeting. 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted'; 'Be pitiful, be courteous'; 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,' are precepts imbued with all the spirit of the gospel, and may be, indeed

should be, attended to without the least sacrifice of that faithfulness which becomes those who would daily walk in the fear of the Lord. There may be a form of *kind* words as well as ‘a form of *sound* words’; and as we may use the latter in perfect harmony with the doctrines of the gospel, so we may use the former in perfect harmony with the spirit of the gospel.”

The Word of God is very clear where true happiness lies. “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.” Or as Toplady beautifully sings:

“Object of my first desire,  
Jesus, crucified for me,  
All to happiness aspire,  
*Only to be found in Thee.*”

With the living family of grace, their desire is to know the Lord’s presence and His peace, to feel His love, to go forth in complete dependence on His grace, and above all to be prepared for when their last year shall come. Many longing souls will say,

“The joy of salvation, when shall it be mine?  
The high consolation of friendship divine!”

And surely every living desire is included in Berridge’s beautiful hymn 739: “No help in self I find.”

During the last year, through the mercy of God, the *Gospel Standard* celebrated its 175th anniversary. It is a wonderful thing to be maintained so long. But it is not just the magazine: it is our churches, and above all the glorious gospel of the grace of God.

Throughout its history the *Gospel Standard* has stood, unmoved, on its foundation principles. Things like this:

1. The glorious Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
2. Salvation entirely of grace from first to last.
3. The vital necessity for the Holy Ghost’s work, giving a personal, experimental knowledge of the truth.
4. The extreme importance of the fruits of the Spirit shown in a consistent, God-honouring life.

Our churches have been kept faithful to the truth over the years. Much has been said and written of the revival of interest in Reformed religion in the 1950s, largely as a result of the republication by The Banner of Truth of the works of some of the old divines. For this we are truly thankful. But it has often been overlooked that our ministers and churches maintained a faithful witness during the first half of the twentieth century, and especially during the spiritually-barren inter-war

years. Apart from the Strict Baptists, there were very few who still held to the doctrines of free grace. And (as a recent article in the *English Churchman* has pointed out), the *only* free grace publishing house belonged to our people, C.J. Farncombe and Sons.

We say this, not through any merit of our own, but as upheld by God's supporting hand, and to the honour and glory of His name.

The river of God still rolls on, and whatever there is to make us sad, "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the holy places of the tabernacle of the Most High." John saw it in its eternal source in the covenant of grace, "proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." We take the river to signify the wonderful fulness of grace, love and mercy that there is in Christ. And John says, "He shewed me." We need to be *shown* these things, revealed by the Holy Spirit, and to know our interest in them. Then we shall sing:

"I stood amazed, and wondered when  
Or why that ocean rose,  
That wafts salvation down to men,  
His traitors and His foes."

These streams can never run dry. They flow by the way of the cross. As in the wilderness, "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river," so every blessing of the gospel flows from a crucified Saviour. How these streams satisfy! How they revive! How they refresh! And John Kent says,

"Streams of salvation, which never run dry,  
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high."

As we consider the state of our churches, our concern is that the Lord will return in power to the ministry. Recently we came across an unpublished sermon of Mr. F.L. Gosden on Isaiah 33. 16. As he spoke of "the munitions of rocks" – the attributes of God in Christ, Christ's righteousness; His love; the atonement – and what a defence they are against the condemnation of the law and Satan's assaults, we felt sad that that godly generation of ministers is no longer with us.

We are further saddened by the death of Mr. Clement Wood on November 30th. Dearly beloved by the Lord and by His people, a man of "an excellent spirit," he will be much missed – his preaching and his influence. May the Lord fill the vacant places. Only He can.

On November 13th, a meeting of our ministers for prayer was held for this very purpose – that the Lord might return to us in the ministry. The following prayed: Mr. J.F. Ashby (Pastor, East Peckham), Mr. N.H. Roe (Pastor, Ossett), Mr. J.L. Rosier (Pastor, Blackboys), Mr. G.D. Buss

(Pastor, Chippenham), Mr. G.W. Hyde (Pastor, Tenterden), Mr. Jabez Rutt (Pastor, Lamberhurst) and Mr. T.J. Pocock (Pastor, South Moreton). It was good and pleasant to see brethren dwell together in unity.

At the meeting we felt constrained to read Isaiah 6, verses 1 to 8, and in a three or four minute address emphasised the need for us to be alone in the presence of God. This was the secret of Isaiah's ministry. In the temple, alone, he saw the greatness, majesty and glory of the Lord, and felt his own nothingness, unworthiness and sin. He was then blessed with a sweet sense of forgiveness and cleansing through the atonement. His life was never the same again.

We are again reminded of what Mr. Gosden so forcefully spoke about: never to be left to give out more than we take in, and the importance of unction in our preaching – which only the Holy Ghost can give.

Our desire in all that we have written is for the honour and glory of God and for the profit and edification of His people. As we venture into the new year, may we hear the Lord saying, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." There is a blessed refuge for sinners.

May we seek to walk worthy of our high calling. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." The Lord deliver us from talebearing and gossiping, and above all from slander. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry."

The Lord has solemnly promised that He will "roar out of Zion" – and what may this mean for the nation and the churches? Yet what a kind word He has added for His little remnant when the time comes: "But the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3. 16).

So often we mourn our wilderness condition, personally and in our congregations. These will be blessed days if "in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." We are encouraged that a generation of young people is following on, and some openly professing the Lord's name, testifying of the reality of their hope, and seeking to walk in humility in the fear of the Lord.

Looking back over the past year, how suitable are the words which Moses spoke when his son was born (Exod. 18. 4). Concerning Moses' thoughts and feelings during his forty years in the backside of the desert, we are told very little. Forty years is a long time, but is passed over in a verse or two. But it must have been a very trying time for Moses. He

had been a great man in Pharaoh's palace, but now day by day he is doing a job a little boy could do: leading a few sheep out into the wilderness. He had sacrificed all for Christ's sake. He knew he had to lead God's people to the promised land; but time was passing away and he was getting older.

We have just one clue how he felt as he looked back – the name he gave to his son: Eliezer, meaning "God is my help." And he bore a testimony: "For the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me." Cannot we too bear witness to these two things during the past year: divine help and divine deliverance? Cannot we also say, ELIEZER? And then:

"He who hath helped us hitherto,  
Will help us all our journey through.

We send greetings to all our readers, old and new, at home and overseas. May the Lord be with you in the new year, and O that we might be favoured at last to be found amongst that favoured multitude who sing the new song, and stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion.

"The Lamb with His fair army  
Doth on Mount Zion stand,  
Where glory, glory dwelleth,  
In Immanuel's land."

With love for Christ's sake,  
The Editor  
B.A. Ramsbottom

I once walked into a garden with a lady to gather some flowers. There was one large bush whose branches were bending under the weight of the most beautiful roses. We both gazed upon it with admiration. There was one flower on it which seemed to outshine all the rest in beauty. This lady pressed forward into the thick bush, and reached far over to pluck it. As she did this, a black snake, which was hid in the bush, wrapped itself around her arm. She was alarmed beyond all description; she ran from the garden, screaming, and almost in convulsions. During all that day she suffered very much with fear; her whole body trembled, and it was a long time before she could be calmed....

Such is her hatred now of the whole serpent race that she has never since been able to look at a snake, even a dead one. No one could ever persuade her to venture again into a cluster of bushes, even to pluck a beautiful rose. Now this is the way the sinner acts who truly repents of his sins. He thinks of sin as the serpent that once coiled itself around him. He hates it. He dreads it. He flees from it. He fears the places where it inhabits. He does not willingly go into the haunts. He will no more play with sin than this lady would afterwards have fondled snakes.

*Joseph Mede*

## THE LORD MY BANNER

*Sermon preached by Mr. C.A. Wood at Tamworth Road Chapel,  
Croydon, on November 29th, 1987*

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**Text:** “Jehovah-nissi” (Exod. 17. 15).

“Jehovah-nissi” – that is, the Lord is my banner. In ancient days the banner, or the standard, was the rallying point of those engaged in battle. There their captain would stand; there unitedly they would go forth into battle. The banner of the child of God is truth and love made known through Jesus Christ, in His sufferings, victory and triumph on Calvary’s cross. “Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand.” There true believers in Jesus Christ gather, spiritually considered, under this banner and are not ashamed to be called Christians. The Lord is their Captain, and they seek in that spirit of unity to go forth to that assured victory through their Lord and Saviour, the Captain of their salvation. Under whose banner are you enlisted, my friends? One or the other. The banner of Satan, the prince of evil and the power of darkness, or under that of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation? “Jehovah-nissi.” The Lord is my banner.

It may then be asked against whom does the child of God go into battle? It is against Satan and it is against sin and it is against the world. When we say the world, not against the people, but sin in the world. It is against our own sinful flesh – mainly against Satan and against the sinful lusts of our flesh. This is the enemy; and where there is wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit a work of grace, a spiritual life, there is that new nature. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit and that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

Now there are two great opposites in a believer, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” There are two great powers. That is why we read the 7th chapter of Romans this morning, setting forth the experience of these that are enlisted, if I may use such a word rightly and carefully, under the banner of the cross; these for whom Christ died; these in whose heart the work of grace is begun; these who, though sinners lost and ruined, have implanted in them that incorruptible seed, that holy principle, that work of God’s grace, precious faith, spiritual life. Now there are distinct opposites here as you will readily understand. There is a holy principle, there is this work of grace, this incorruptible seed in distinction and opposition to that which is our sinful flesh.

So then there is a warfare; there is a battle. So then these two parties are opposite one to the other. Let it ever be remembered that whilst a believer is blessed with this holy principle, this work of God’s grace, this new heart, yet it is in this body of sin. It is not the old nature

that is changed; that remains sinful flesh to the end of our days, and sanctification does not attain to perfection in the flesh. Sanctification! We pray under God's teaching and blessing for the deeper love to God, that tender fear of the Lord; that this sinful flesh of ours may be subdued, that grace may reign and this flesh may be crucified – crucified to the world and the world crucified to us. But ever let it be remembered that whilst we must never make an excuse for it, we are still, whilst breath is in our body, in the flesh, and that is why the apostle groaned out before God, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It was the custom, as we understand, in the days of the Apostle Paul for the Romans sometimes to chain a corpse to their prisoners. It must have been very, very dreadful, and every moment hampered, being chained to a dead body. This brings before us the experience of those who fear God. How they long for full liberty through the precious blood of Jesus Christ! "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." So then whilst there is liberty, yet there is still this body of sin and this constant warfare.

Consider the miserable lot and plight of Israel in bondage in Egypt. There seemed to them to be no way out, and yet they groaned before God. God brought them out, redeemed them, in God's way, by God's provision, the blood of the lamb that was sprinkled on the doorpost and the lintel so that the destroying angel passed over them. They were brought out of their bondage; they were redeemed by price, by the blood of the harmless lamb without blemish and without spot; and they were brought out by the mighty power of God. That great multitude came out into the wilderness, guided by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and were brought out through the Red Sea, seeing their enemies completely defeated. Then they were brought to a fresh trial of faith. The bitter waters were made sweet. They came to a place of refreshing at Elim, with its wells of water and its palm trees. Then manna fell from heaven. Earlier in this chapter as they thirsted, there was water from the smitten rock. All of this sets forth the spiritual experience of believers in Jesus Christ. They were in bondage under the power of sin and Satan. God brings them out by redemption by the blood, brings them into the wilderness journey, guides them by day and by night, feeds them with the bread of life and the water of life.

But now we come to these words, "Then came Amalek." You see what a favoured people they had been. They might have thought being brought out, and brought into liberty, redeemed, guided and provided for, that there was no danger; but suddenly, unexpectedly, there came this enemy. Who was Amalek? Where did this tribe spring from? Amalek was a descendant of Esau; he was a grandson of Esau and from that grandson came this tribe which was a constant enemy of Israel. The



name Amalek is significant – it means “warlike,” or it means something that licks up, destroys, eats up, attacks; something cruel. That is very clearly demonstrated in the history of the Amalekites in the Word of God. Suddenly they came upon Israel, and how did they come? We read later, as Moses is recounting the way in which God had brought His people through the wilderness as recorded in Deuteronomy, “Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way.”

Now mark – Israel were not straying from God. There was the pillar of cloud right above them. They stood, they encamped where God had commanded them; but even then the enemy came against them, and how? “He met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.” He came behind them, he came unexpectedly, he came upon those that were weak, he came upon those that were faint.

“Then came Amalek.” If you are a believer standing under this banner, you will find right through life’s journey, this enemy. There is a limit to how we spiritualise the Word. The Israelites were forty years in the wilderness. Now Amalek did not come against Israel every day, every moment of that forty years. But a believer has an enemy, this sinful flesh, and mark what I say: if you are an unbeliever you are without God, you are not under this banner, you are without Christ, you are held by Satan, fast in his grip, and in the power of sin. But a believer, a possessor of that divine nature, that work of grace, is one who will be attacked by the enemy of souls and by his sinful flesh, because these two are distinct opposites to grace.

“Then came Amalek.” Go to the Garden of Eden – a serpent crept in. Then came Satan. Go to the days of Samuel when Israel were confessing their sin and the Philistines came up against them as they were repenting before God – then came those Philistines. Go on to the eventide of David’s life. Satan provoked him. He came to David in his old age, in his prosperity, and tempted David to count the people now and satisfy his pride! My old friends and saints in Jesus Christ, the devil is not dead, your flesh is not dead. It is a battle to the gates of glory, but under the banner of the cross, victory is sure. But seek grace to watch and to pray and do not think that old age or increased infirmities will lessen the attacks of the enemy or the power of sinful flesh. We need to watch and pray right to the end of the journey.

Go to the days of Nehemiah as they seek to build the walls, there comes an enemy against them to oppose them. Go through the prophecy of Zechariah; there is Joshua standing before the throne clothed in filthy garments. There is someone else. Who is that? The devil! Satan ready to resist him. Go to the New Testament, and O find comfort, dear,

tempted, afflicted child of God. Following the baptism of Jesus Christ, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness and then we read, "Then came Satan" tempting Him. Think of the Lord's words to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Go to the early church and as soon as you see the Spirit's work, there is the devil. The battle is without and within but here is the banner of love and truth. O to stand firm and take the whole armour of God!

"And Amalek fought against Israel." Now how were Israel to fare at such a time as this? Now you will see two things. One a sword, the other a rod. Joshua (the first time he is named) is bidden by Moses to "choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek." But it is not to be only a literal, naked sword. It is not to be just the armed might of the Israelites. It is very wonderful to see these Israelites; they were not trained for warfare. We do not read of them coming to a battle before this; and yet God was with them and helping them. But the secret was this, that Moses would go on the mount, on the hill with his rod in his hand; not just a rod, for that rod would be nothing without God. But that rod spoke of what God had done for Israel in the days that were past. The rod sets forth the power of God; the rod sets forth the promises of God. Moses then went to the mount and stood there with his arms held up and the rod high. Victory! Victory! Joshua is gaining the victory. But look! Moses' hands are weary; his arms are heavy; they are drooping! They are drooping, and Amalek now are coming up, and they are prevailing, gaining the advantage. The Israelites are surely going to be overcome.

Do you know something of this ebb and flow in the battle, beloved? Do you know your weakness when you are prayerless? When your arms are heavy, when you feel that you cannot battle alone, when you think that you can overcome in your own strength, when there is pride, when there is a wrong spirit, when there is worldliness, when there is prayerlessness? Then we are an open target for the enemy. Mercifully he will not gain the final victory over any believer. "Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." But what a battle it is here below! O how powerful is our sinful flesh! How great is this conflict!

What is the distinction between the movings of natural conscience and this inward conflict which is spiritual? Those that are without the work of grace have a conscience and have conflict when they say, "I should not be doing this," but there is no love of God, there is no fear of the Lord in their soul, no seeking of the glory and honour of God. Yet conscience is a warning and never to be despised, even by the ungodly. May that conscience preserve even the ungodly from that which is

wrong, and it may be very sensitive. It is very sad and solemn when the ungodly or even a saint's conscience gets seared and deadened – when we keep on in a known sin and conscience gets quieter and quieter. You cannot hear it speaking, you go on in sin. But with a child of God there is a conscience tender in the fear of God: “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” O it is not easy – does not my flesh long for this and does not it love to do that and is pleased with the other? There is something that attracts my eye. O the filth that is in me is stirred up and I would like to do it and I would like to have it. Yet there is another power that tells me – No. It is against Christ. It is against His love. It is against His truth. It is harmful to my soul. It is damaging to my peace.

Friend, it is no easy thing being a Christian, is it? Blessed be God, your victory is assured, but it is a battle to the end. And it will not always be the sound of the guns firing, and the cannons roaring and the swords flashing when the enemy attacks you. You will come sometimes to the place where it is absolutely quiet and you think, “Ah now I can rest, I can go to sleep, I can be quiet.” Friend, beware of enchanted ground, a danger spot in the pilgrim journey where the Christian is liable to become drowsy and go to sleep, the sleep of death. It is not for us to sleep. The watchman, the sentinel on duty is called to watch, and O how great his crime would be to go to sleep in the face of the danger of the enemy action!

But there was help for Moses; Aaron and Hur were there. Now I am not going to spiritualise these. I think we have got to be very careful. But I will speak of what I feel is safe ground for the child of God. For the believer battling on, praying to God, there is One in heaven interceding, One who stands in the midst of the throne, “a Lamb as it had been slain,” and within us is the Holy Spirit. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Triumphant groanings! Do not despise them, nor be cast down when you may hear some professing believers say, “O it is all joy on the way to glory.” God grant us more of sacred joy, but real joy. These groaning ones are “more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

“Jehovah-nissi” – the Lord my banner. The victory is gained. O what a victory it was, but do mark this: “And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.” “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Continue in prayer until the going down of the sun, until, dear fellow pilgrims, the gates of glory are reached, and like the dear little maiden who when dying could tell her minister on his last visit to her, “I have finished with prayer; it is all praise.” Yes, but it is prayer to the very gates of glory, and I believe the redeemed will go forth through

life's journey praying their way through, and that their hands must be steady until the going down of the sun. O there is much to cast down, but Elijah, he prayed again. "Go again seven times." Continue in prayer, watch unto prayer, wait upon the Lord, beloved, as you go forth into this battle. Seek the help of heaven.

How solemn it is to try to fight the Amalekites on our own, without God! I wonder if you children could tell me of an occasion when some of the Israelites did go out against what God had said and were defeated. Do you remember it? The occasion was when the spies came back from looking at the promised land and you will remember that ten of them were discouraged and some spoke very solemn words because of unbelief. Truly Joshua and Caleb stood alone. They were enlisted, as we might say with the deepest reverence, under the banner. They said, "Yes," as it were, "let us go up, we can go forth. What are those walled cities, what are those great giants? Our God will fight the battle." They did not say it in presumption. God keep us ever from that. But there is the language of precious faith. There is victory through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; there is indeed. O my friend, work without prayer will lead us to failure, and prayer without work is mockery. But some of the Israelites were grieved at what God had said, and said, "We will go up." But God had said, "No." Moses said, "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you," but they would go and what happened? The Amalekites came out against them and defeated them because they were not under the banner. My Christian friend, fellow believer, warrior, as you go forth to go to the battle, ensure that at all times you stand beneath the banner – under the truth of God, the love of Jesus in your soul. It is vital. Without it there will be defeat; I know for the believer not final, nor utter defeat. We need to take heed to these warnings.

"Jehovah-nissi" – the Lord my banner. This was to be written in a book and it was to be rehearsed in the ears of Joshua particularly. Why? God knew what was appointed for Joshua forty years later, that this dear man of God with his beloved Caleb would go forth to battle. Great battles, many kings, walled-up cities. Joshua, remember what God has done. Remember the victory, and that will comfort you and encourage you. Surely it teaches us also to be ready to tell it to the generation following, to speak of what our God has done and to trust Him for all that is yet before us. The future is unknown, but our God, our Captain, will bring us through. God says, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." God commanded Saul to annihilate Amalek for the sin of their life and their opposition. There was then at that time partial obedience. David suffered at the hand of these robbers, the Amalekites, who came and burnt Ziklag and took his possessions.

See what the Amalekites are like. They left the Egyptian slave to die – showing no compassion, no love.

The enemy comes against you when you are faint and weary. O he will pull you down, tempt you, and try you, especially when things do not go right, especially when you cannot understand the path. You have tried to walk in the fear of God and everything has gone wrong. The world does not fear God; they go on in their wicked ways and everything goes right. What does it all mean? The devil attacks you. Now is that your God of love? Is that the God who cares for you? My friend, it is. He is going to teach you, He is still blessing you and He will bring out of this path you cannot understand, a blessing. He is going to tell you that it was all for the best, to wean you from your idols, to tell you to turn to Him and look to Him for help, for submission to His will and His grace that is all sufficient to carry you through.

We read later, in the days of David, how victory was given over Amalek and last of all in the days of godly Hezekiah. But what does God say? “I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” We are in this body of flesh, but when the saint reaches glory, as he will under the banner, when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, this flesh of ours will be transformed. It will be a holy body, incorruptible, immortal with honour and glory. All that is of sin and weakness and flesh will be conquered. “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

“Jehovah-nissi.” Friend, the victory is sure. Are you under the banner? Does the cross control, influence, direct your life, your spirit? It was the rallying point. It was the place of union. They would gather at the standard to go forth together into the battle with their Captain leading them. In literal battles there were defeats. Ai is a solemn example of sin in the camp and what it can do to the whole church of God. What a hindrance it can be! But there is final victory. Spiritually viewed there is an overcoming. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; 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.” It is in love and it is in truth.

“And His banner over me was love.” What a banner! The love of God to a poor sinner, to tell that sinner in the battle, I have loved thee, I have died for thee. It is well with thee. Go forth, beloved, in the name of your God. Go forth and fight the good fight of faith and prove that victory is through Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## THE BLESSING OF PEACE

*By William Gurnall (1617-1679)*

“The Lord will bless His people with peace.” Though some precious souls that have closed with Christ and embraced the gospel be not at present brought to rest in their own consciences, but continue for a while under some dissatisfaction and trouble in their own spirits, yet even then they have peace of conscience in a threefold respect; *in pretio*, *in promisso*, *in semine*.

First, every true believer hath peace of conscience *in pretio* [in price]; the gospel puts that price into his hand which will assuredly purchase it, and that is the blood of Christ. We say that is gold which is worth gold, which we may anywhere exchange for gold; such is the blood of Christ. It is peace of conscience because the soul that hath this may exchange it for this. God Himself cannot deny the poor creature that prays on these terms: Lord, give me peace of conscience; here is Christ’s blood, the price of it. That which could pay the debt surely can procure the receipt. Peace of conscience is but a discharge under God’s hand that the debt due to divine justice is fully paid. The blood of Christ hath done that the greater for the believer, it shall therefore do this the less. If there were such a rare potion that did infallibly procure health to everyone that takes it, we might safely say, as soon as the sick man hath drunk it down, that he hath drunk his health, it is in him, though at present he doth not feel himself to have it. In time it will appear.

Secondly, *In promisso* [in promise]. Every true believer hath peace of conscience in the promise, and that we count as good as ready money in the purse, which we have sure bond for. “The Lord will bless His people with peace.” He is resolved on it, and then who shall hinder it? It is worth your reading the whole Psalm (29) to see what weight the Lord gives to this sweet promise, for the encouragement of our faith in expecting the performance thereof. Nothing more hard to enter into the heart of a poor creature (when all is in an uproar in his bosom, and his conscience threatening nothing but fire and sword, wrath, vengeance from God for his sins) than thoughts or hopes of peace and comfort.

Now the Psalm is spent in showing what great things God can do, and that with no more trouble to Himself than a word speaking. “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty” (verse 4). It breaks the cedars, it divides the flames, it shakes the wilderness, it makes the hinds to calve. This God that doth all this promiseth to bless His people with peace, outward and inward; for without this inward peace, though He might give them peace, yet could He never bless them with peace as He there undertakes. A sad peace, were it not, to have quiet streets, but cutting of throats in our houses? Yet infinitely more sad to have peace both in our

streets and houses, but war and blood in our guilty consciences. What peace can a poor creature taste or relish while the sword of God's wrath lies at the throat of conscience? Not peace with God Himself. Therefore Christ procured peace of pardon to obtain peace of conscience for His pardoned ones, and accordingly hath bequeathed it in the promise to them: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you" (John 14. 27). Where you see He is both the Testator to leave, and Executor of His own will, to give out with His own hands what His love hath left believers; so that there is no fear but His will shall be performed to the full, seeing Himself lives to see it done.

Thirdly, *In semine* [in the seed]. Every believer hath this inward peace in the seed. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psa. 97. 11). Where sown, but in the believer's own bosom, when principles of grace and holiness were cast into it by the Spirit of God? Hence it is called "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12. 11). It shoots as naturally from holiness as any fruit in its kind doth from the seed proper to it. It is indeed most true that the seed runs and ripens into this fruit sooner in some than it doth in others. This spiritual harvest comes not alike soon to all, no more than the other that is outward doth. But here is the comfort – whoever hath a seedtime of grace pass over his soul shall have his harvest-time also of joy.

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## LONGINGS FOR CHRIST'S PRESENCE

*By John Fawcett (1740-1817)*

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If Christ be precious unto us, we shall earnestly desire the fulfilment of that promise, that He would make known unto us more and more of the loveliness of His Person and of His special kindness and love to our souls. Distance from Him, the suspension of His favour or the hidings of His face will give us pain. We shall often say, "Lord, when wilt Thou come unto me, according to Thy promise? Let me find Thee graciously near, assuring my soul that I am Thine and that Thou art mine for ever. Fill my heart with those heavenly comforts and holy joys which Thou bestowest on them that love Thee. I cannot bear this absence from Thee. Come, Lord Jesus, dwell in my heart by faith, that I being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, the depth and height, and to know Thy love which passeth knowledge; that I may be filled with all the fulness of God."

When the eyes of men are opened to see their sin, their danger by it, and the insufficiency of their own works to justify and save them, no object is so desirable to them as the Lord Jesus Christ. The riches, the honours and the pleasures of the world are but vanity and emptiness to

them in comparison with Him. He is therefore said to be the “Desire of all nations,” because men in all nations under heaven who are made sensible of their need of Him uniformly desire acquaintance with Him, and an interest in Him above everything else. Their desires, like so many needles touched by the loadstone, have all a tendency to Him as their centre. They all meet in Him as the same blessed Object.

Were those who are illuminated by His Spirit and grace collected together from the remotest corners of the earth, it would be found, on the strictest examination, that their desires have all the same tendency. Now that which is the object of our ardent desire is precious in our estimation. To win our hearts the divine Redeemer died. To draw men unto Himself was the end He had in view when He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” Surely such a Saviour is worthy of our warmest desires and our most fervent love. While others are in such a state of blindness and infatuation as to see no beauty or excellency in Him that they should desire Him, to those who believe, He is so precious that the desire of their souls is to His name, and to the remembrance of Him. But as bread and water are made necessary and desirable by hunger and thirst, so this desire after Christ springs from a sense of need.

“Come down from on high, Thou Sovereign of my heart; take possession of me for Thyself. Inspire me with that holy flame of spiritual affection, that my soul may offer up the perpetual incense of holy love and desire towards Thee.”

O may all the alluring trifles and vain delights of this world stand aloof from my heart, for I have devoted it to my Redeemer for a habitation. Keep your distance, ye captivating delusions, from the gates of that temple where He only should dwell. There may He reign alone, over all my powers for ever.

I seek after Him in His public ordinances; I search for Him daily in my retired devotions; I there give my soul a greater latitude, where no eye beholds me, where no ear can hearken to my vows. There I tell Him all my heart in secret groans and cries. He knows what my sighs mean, and what are my fears and my painful sorrows. There I blush before Him for my secret sins, and pour out the tear of penitential sorrow. There I utter my bitter complaints of the disorderly passions I daily feel within me; I lament over the vanity of my thoughts, and spread before His eyes all my sores and diseases. I lay myself low in the dust at His feet, and tell Him with humble confusion of face how much I have done to dishonour Him, how unworthy I am of His notice, and yet how I long for communion with Him.

O when shall these days of sin and temptation, these tedious seasons of absence and distance from my God and Saviour have an end? I



breathe out from time to time the most earnest desires after Him, and after the endearing sensations of His love. My soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?

In proportion as He is precious to us will be our aversion to sin and all unholiness. In the undertakings, the sufferings and the death of our Redeemer for us, we have such a representation of the evil of sin, and of the dreadful punishment due to it, as must tend to inspire our hearts with hatred against it.

We see in the wounds, the sorrows and the crucifixion of the Saviour the dreadful malignity of sin. We see how hateful it is to God, since He punished it so severely in His beloved Son, when in our room He bare it in His own body on the tree. We read the nature of sin in characters of blood on the cross of Christ. All the laboured declamations of moralists on the intrinsic deformity of vice can never represent it in such proper colours as it is seen here.

Those who have a due sense of the spirituality of the divine law, and who strictly examine their own hearts and lives by that perfect rule of righteousness, will ever see abundant reason for humiliation and self-abasement before God.

From love to Jesus Christ will arise hatred of those things which are contrary to His will, and which oppose and hinder us in our endeavours after conformity to Him. The vain imaginations of our own evil hearts will be matter of grief and sorrow to us: "I hate vain thoughts: but Thy law do I love."

The Christian is grieved and distressed that his thoughts and affections are so much exercised concerning the affairs of the present life, and that he should be so insensible and unmoved at many times in respect to the affairs of another world; that his heart should be so hard, so dull and unaffected about matters of infinite moment. He mourns to think that his love to God is so cold, that his desires after Him are so languid, that his zeal for Him is so low, and his gratitude for favours received so small.

His heart is pained within him that he should feel himself so insensible and unmoved under the sound of the gospel; that he should sit and hear of the astonishing love of God in Christ Jesus, and of His giving His beloved Son to bleed and die for our sins, without being melted into penitence and inspired with love and zeal; that he should be so unaffected with the amazing kindness and compassion of Jesus Christ, manifested in His dying agonies, His bloody sweat, His ignominious cross, His loud and bitter cries, His pierced side and bleeding heart, and all this for His bitter enemies, to deliver them from deserved and eternal destruction and to bring them to the possession of everlasting glory and felicity. "Surely," says he, "if there is a call for the exercise of fervent

affections anywhere, it is here at the foot of the cross. O how I am disquieted to think that I should be so stupid and insensible, even when I could wish my heart to be most engaged! Can anything be presented to my thoughts more important, more wonderful, or more interesting? And yet how superficial and inefficacious at some times are the impressions which are made upon my mind by these views!

“Blessed Jesus! how cold, how feeble, how languid is my love to Thee, who art altogether lovely. Alas! how readily are my fluctuating passions captivated by the objects of sense! O that I might feel the force of that motive, of loving Him who hath first loved me! May Thy love, O precious Saviour, constrain me, and attach me intimately to Thyself when I consider what Thou hast done for me. Do Thou, by a gentle but powerful influence, attract my desires. Though mine eyes have never seen Thy lovely face, though no accent of Thy voice has reached my ear, yet Thou canst make Thyself more intimate to my soul than any of the objects of sense. O let me not live so estranged from Thee. Warm my cold and frozen heart, and kindle up in my bosom a flame of holy fervour towards Thee.

“Keep me, O my God, in every hour of temptation. Unsupported by Thy preventing hand I fall, I wound my conscience and dishonour Thy name. But armed with Thy protection, I shall stand fast, be strong and victorious. O strengthen me to war a good warfare, that at length I may overcome through Him that hath loved me. Be at my right hand to save me, lest the enemy should triumph over me, and I be made the reproach of the foolish.”

Round the creation wild I rove,  
And search the globe in vain;  
There's nothing here that's worth my love  
Till He return again.

How long shall my poor, fainting soul  
Seek Thee, my Lord, in vain?  
Reveal Thy love, my fears control,  
And ease me of my pain.

Thy presence, gracious Lord, can cheer  
This dungeon where I dwell;  
'Tis paradise when Thou art here;  
When Thou art gone, 'tis hell.

Immortal joys Thy smiles impart;  
Heaven dawns in every ray;  
One glimpse of Thee will ease my heart,  
And turn my night to day.

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## WHAT IS IT TO FOLLOW CHRIST?

*Address given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, on November 1st, 2010*

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### **Reading:** Luke 9. 57-62

The great point in real religion is to be a true follower of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to follow Him by faith (which in the New Testament seems to be almost the same as believing on Him and trusting in Him), and then to follow Him in the narrow way which leads to eternal life.

Now in these few verses I have read to you there were three people and all of them were concerned about following the Lord Jesus and all of them were talking about following the Lord Jesus, but all of them seemed to have various difficulties and problems and obstacles and thoughts. We will not be dogmatic, but it seems to me that one became a true follower of the Lord Jesus, that another one did not, and we cannot really tell about the third.

There are some very solemn things here. One of them said, "Lord, I will follow Thee; *but*." There are no *buts* in real religion, beloved friends. There are no *buts* in following after Christ. If you have these *buts* in your religion, then there is something solemnly deficient in it. "Lord, I will follow Thee; *but*." Yet so many people have these *buts*. I will follow Thee, *but* there is plenty of time; it will do later. I will follow Thee, *but* I will keep it secret to myself. I will follow Thee, *but* there is no need for me to make an open profession. All these various *buts* keep coming in. Now the Lord will not have you with your religion with these *buts*. "Lord, I will follow Thee; *but*."

There were a few things. Following the Lord Jesus was not coming *first*. It was not the one thing needful, the one thing that really mattered. And the Lord Jesus said, "Seek ye first," and if He is not first, beloved friends, He will be not be second. They were willing to follow the Lord Jesus, but there were these other things and there were these difficulties and the Lord Jesus would not receive it from them. It is, "Seek ye *first*." In two cases it was family things, and you might say lawful family things. This has been a problem in our congregations and still is, that people are valiant for the truth, except the family must come first, and people are willing to follow the Lord, but only if it fits in with things in their family.

Now there seems to be an emphasis here, that these family things, however lawful, must never come first. What about this man who said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father"? You would think if there was anything you could think of in a person's life which was a good reason, it would be that: the death of a father and the father's burial. But the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would not even receive that. I take it to mean this: that even the closest thing, even the best

thing, even the most lawful thing, the Lord will not accept if it comes before Himself and following Him. It must be Christ first. "That in all things He might have the pre-eminence." And the Lord Jesus is not unkind, not unsympathetic. I think some of us have known this literally. "Lord, suffer me to go and bury my father.... Go thou and preach the kingdom of God." It is not easy, is it, if your dear father has just died and your dear mother is almost broken-hearted, and almost immediately you have to travel nearly two hundred miles to preach? But it is "Seek ye first." "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

O these different cases here! Now the first one of all spoke the best of the lot. He did not say anything wrong. It was wonderful what he said, some of the best language in the whole of the New Testament: "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." And the Lord Jesus did not receive it. That comes close. He put his religion to the test. There is a counting the cost. A real disciple has to count the cost. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." And what was the response? Well, not a single word. We never hear mention of him again.

Well, you can see the faults with the second one and this third one. It is delaying and dallying and putting other things first. What was wrong with *this* man? Well, we are told in the other gospel, he was a scribe; he was an eminent man. "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." What was wrong with that? It is beautiful language; it is a blessed desire; it is the language of the redeemed: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." What was wrong with this scribe? Shall I tell you? *Real religion does not begin there.* Real religion does not begin with a sinner going boldly to the Saviour and saying, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," or saying I will do anything else. This man did not ask the Lord Jesus to do anything for Him. There was no prayer. There was no sense of need. He did not want the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to do anything for him. He just told the Lord Jesus what he was going to do. He was going to be a follower, and it seems a good follower: "Whithersoever Thou goest." That is strong language. There was nothing wrong with the language. But real religion does not begin there. It begins with a sinner at the Saviour's feet, begging for His mercy and forgiveness and cleansing in His precious blood. But when that sinner feels something of the love of Christ in his heart, then and only then, then and not till then, can he speak the beautiful language that is spoken here. And the Lord does not reject it then. He receives it in love as it is given in love, but in humility and in dependence. Lord Jesus, didst Thou die for me on the cross? Hast Thou loved such an unworthy wretch as me? Then Lord Jesus, I am willing to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And the Lord Jesus is pleased with language like that.

There were three different ones here and so many complications and so many perplexities and so many *ifs* and *buts*. But it is a great point to be a follower of the Lord Jesus, and may that be your concern and my concern, and if our religion is real, and if we really feel our need of the Saviour, there will not be these *buts* or *ifs*, or may I do this, or can I do that? It will be nothing but Christ. It will be going after Him in faith. It will be the only thing that really matters. And,

“When He reveals the Book of Life,  
O may I read my name  
Among the chosen of His love,  
*The followers of the Lamb!*”

When the end comes, that will be the only thing that really matters: were you, was I a follower of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? And it is “sovereign grace o’er sin abounding” that makes a sinner a follower of the Lamb.

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## PATIENCE IN TRIBULATION

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My dear friend,

It is on my mind to pay you another visit by way of a few lines, hoping the Lord will direct me to write something which shall be to your profit. We were pleased to hear of you on Saturday by your parents, who kindly called on their way home from the hospital.

You have need of patience, and we are told of two things which worketh patience. In the fifth of Romans, “Tribulation worketh patience,” and in the first chapter of James, “The trying of your faith worketh patience.” The Lord be with you in all your tribulations and trying of faith at this time that your precious soul may be much profited, for, “Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.”

When I was very ill in 1938, the third chapter in Lamentations was made especially good to me where it is said, “Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” and, “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” Also, “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” These words caused me to put my mouth in the dust if so be there might be hope. May the Lord bless your soul in this chapter, if His will, bless your soul in faith to be still and to know that He is God, that you may be made fruitful in the land of affliction and that in after days you may be restored to say, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted,” and the church of God be enriched by your being enriched of God at this time. You are constantly on my mind and I cease not to pray for you and yours in my humble way, trusting you may be restored soon.

Please give our love to your good wife. May the grace of God be her sufficiency that you each may be favoured to kiss the rod, believing it is steeped and softened in His blood, for there is no curse but blessing where the precious blood of Christ is.

Will not weary you with more. Please accept this little note as a visit from me. May the sure mercies of David be yours is my desire.

Yours affectionately,

P.O. Laver

Rotherfield, July 9th, 1962

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## JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

*By J.C. Philpot*

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Justification and sanctification are distinct blessings. The first springs out of and is connected with the finished work of the Son of God; the other springs out of and is connected with the work of the Holy Ghost on the soul. Sin has defiled our persons externally, as well as polluted our souls internally. We cannot therefore stand before God unless washed in the blood of the Lamb and clothed in His spotless righteousness. This righteousness forms our title to heaven, as holiness constitutes our meetness. The former is our wedding robe, the latter our spiritual qualification. The hymn well draws this distinction:

“Tis He adorned my naked soul,  
And made salvation mine;  
Upon a poor, polluted worm  
He makes His graces shine.

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

“The Spirit wrought my faith, and love  
And hope, and every grace;  
But Jesus spent His life to work  
The robe of righteousness.”

Without these two qualifications, what entrance could there be into heaven, or what happiness there, could entrance be gained? For consider not only the infinite purity and holiness of God but the blazing splendour of His immediate presence, the piercing ray of His deep-searching eye. Who or what can live in His presence but what is absolutely perfect without and within? But this the church could not be unless she were washed in the blood and clothed in the righteousness of God's dear Son,

and perfectly sanctified by the operations and indwelling of His Spirit. We therefore read: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5. 25-27).

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### **A YOUNG MEMBER'S CONCERN OVER HIS PASTOR'S DEATH**

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Dear Persis,

I was very pleased indeed to receive your last kind letter and to hear a few particulars concerning our late beloved pastor's last illness and moments. It does seem as you say that he could hardly have realised his end was so near, yet there was much mercy in it, he being spared a long and painful affliction. He had not many days before written and told me of Mr. Stapley's death, expressing the desire that his end might be like his (Mr. S's). Well, that wish was granted and he is gone.

When I last parted with him in the chapel on the Wednesday evening, I never thought for a moment he would be taken so soon, but we know not what a day may bring forth. The news was a great shock to me – it was difficult to realise it, and as time goes on I feel it more, for his prayers for us are ended. And how are they ended as regards himself? The same as with David, in praise, blessing God for evermore. But when I shall miss him most will be if and when favoured to return home. How different the place will seem without him, and those of our other aged and dear friends who have also been called home. How we shall miss his familiar features in the pulpit! I believe many others will say the same, but this I can honestly assert, that if there was one who rejoiced when the vestry door opened and our late dear pastor emerged and ascended the pulpit stairs, it was me. That we younger ones had a warm corner in his heart and ministry, we know too well, and I was favoured from time to time in receiving helps and encouragements thereby.

I sincerely hope that Mrs. P. is bearing up as well as possible and feels to have the Lord's supporting hand. I trust she received my letter safely.

I have been pleased to hear that the pulpit has been well supplied and I trust they have all been God's true sent servants, for we want none other. My desire is that the Lord will soon send us another pastor "after His own heart," if His gracious will, and that the church may be kept

together in love and harmony. Above all that it may keep to the good, old-fashioned paths for which Mr. P. contended so earnestly. How vital and necessary this is in the day in which we live when almost anything passes under the name of religion, when men seek to bring in a new religion and new views of the Bible, and when people for the most part are satisfied with a form of religion and something that pleases or tickles the flesh! How solemn and God-dishonouring! I am not speaking too strongly or over-rating the subject. I have been disgusted at things I have heard out here of some services. How we need to “beware” and to be on our “watchtower.” What a great mercy it is to be blessed with a saving knowledge of the truth in any humble measure! I much enjoyed reading Mr. Prince’s sermon in the September *Gospel Standard*. How ably he denounces “creature power and merit.” I must leave off. I had no idea when I commenced this letter of writing like this.

[The rest of the letter is missing]

France, October 5th, 1918

This letter was written by Mr. E.J. Wilkins, who was serving in France during the First Great War, on hearing of the death of his pastor, Mr. Picknell. Edwin Picknell was for forty years pastor at Station Road Chapel, Redhill.

Mr. Wilkins, who was a young church member at the time, was for many years deacon at Station Road Chapel, Redhill, and died in 1971.

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## THE DEAF AND DUMB DISCIPLE

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

This remarkable account was written by Richard de Fraine in 1850. For over forty years he was pastor at the Strict Baptist chapel at Lutterworth, Leicestershire, where his ministry was much blessed. It is recorded of his preaching that “he constantly exalted a precious Christ, and laid the sinner low.” He died on February 19th, 1882, aged 79. In the following account he certainly appears as a wonderful pastor.

Mr. de Fraine was dearly loved by J.K. Popham, who was baptized by him and received as a member at Lutterworth in 1868. His preaching was made a great blessing to Mr. Popham in his early days.

My young friend, John Paddy, was born in the year 1823, and was deaf and dumb, in early life painfully manifesting that he was born in sin and conceived in iniquity. Yet, from the affectionate influence of God-fearing parents and friends, he was preserved from those outward acts of immorality common to youth. His natural affliction, acting upon the feelings of his kind parents, caused him to be the subject of much anxiety to them, and many petitions were put up to the Lord for his temporal and eternal interest.



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

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

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

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

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

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

His dear friends were melted into tears of joy and thankfulness to the God of all grace at the sight, and very soon the subject was named to me. I must confess I was very jealous lest parental kindness should lead them to think more favourably of him than of another in the same state of mind. I therefore determined to receive nothing but what I received directly from himself. His dear sister offered to put any question to him I wished to ask. I said, "Ask him if he would object to correspond with me?" He replied, he should feel a pleasure to receive a note from me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He continued in the feeling of his first love for about nine months. But "grace, though the smallest, must surely be tried," and so our brother found it. Clouds and darkness came over his soul. The corruptions of his nature began to break forth, and his evidence of interest in Jesus was hid. Many doubts and fears and temptations tried him. I remember asking him about this time, "What is the state of your mind?" He took the Bible and showed me Psalm 40. 12: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." The Lord helped him wonderfully at times; the Holy Spirit applied some precious portions of the Word to his soul, and he was comforted. I well remember his showing me Revelation 7. 16, 17: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." He signed, "The Lord applied those words to me last night when I was in bed, and then I was happy." Yet many sore conflicts with self, sin and Satan made him "groan in his tabernacle, being burdened." He had great

sympathy for the deaf and dumb and would sign, “If it were the will of God, I should like to be made useful to them.”

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

I never met with a person more decidedly separated in heart from dead, formal, fashionable professors of religion. He once wrote, in reference to this sort of profession, upon a piece of paper, “All this vanity may be compared to a large snowball thrown into a copper of boiling water.”

*(To be continued)*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**The Dairyman’s Daughter**, by Legh Richmond; paperback; 163 pages; price £6.50 plus £1.11 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from 12(b) Roundwood lane, Harpenden, Herts., AL5 3BZ.

We are glad that this Christian classic is back in print – very beautifully produced, with colour photographs and information on visiting the places mentioned in the Isle of Wight.

Legh Richmond (1772-1827) was curate in the Isle of Wight from 1798 to 1805 and recounted the Lord’s wonderful work in the hearts of a number of poor people – The Dairyman’s Daughter, the Young Cottager, the Negro Servant. First published as *Annals of the Poor*, the book had remarkable popularity, and was translated into several European languages. Thousands of copies were sold. No doubt much of the cause of the success, under God, was Legh Richmond’s inimitable style and ability as a writer.

A former generation was very familiar with *The Dairyman’s Daughter* – but we fear it is not known to the younger generation. We commend it to them.

**When God Made the World**, by Daniel and Naomi Sayers; paperback; 20 pages; price £1.95 plus 51p postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications.

This is certainly a new venture for Gospel Standard Trust Publications, but what a delightful book! The story of creation is told, simply and reverently, day by day, with the Bible text and lovely colour pictures.

*When God Made the World* is ideal for young children. The smallest can have it read to them, and those slightly older should be able to read the clear, large print easily.

We feel the publication is better than similar ones obtainable in Christian bookshops. Can we expect more to follow?

**A Reformation Guide to Scripture: the Prologues from the Geneva Bible 1560;** paperback; 128 pages; price £5.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

We love our Geneva Bible! We find it not just of historical interest, but really profitable – its notes, illustrations, etc., make it the first “study Bible.”

The Geneva Bible had remarkable beginnings, being translated by the group of exiles who had fled from Britain during the cruel persecution of Queen Mary. Their sincere desire was to produce an accurate translation, which they asserted they did “with fear and trembling,” and witnessed that in no place did they seek to do anything but give the real meaning of the inspired words.

By its excellence the Geneva Bible drove the Great Bible and the Bishops’ Bible from the field. It was so popular that it went through more than 150 editions. It was the Bible of the Pilgrim Fathers, of Shakespeare and of the early Puritans.

*A Reformation Guide* consists of the prologues to each book of the Bible, along with a letter to the Lord’s people in England and a dedicatory epistle to Queen Elizabeth I, urging her to continue the work of the Reformation and be fervent, like Zerubbabel, in building the temple of the Lord.

The book is suitably edited without foolish modernisation, but with the explanation of lesser-known words. It will be specially welcome to those who are interested in the Reformation, but in addition the prologues are spiritually profitable. Perhaps we should warn younger readers that it is not *the* book if they are looking for an excellent summary of each book in Scripture. (For instance, “Zechariah” does not really deal with the contents at all.) But it is rather the graciousness of the translators, a link with those favoured times and a feeling sense of what to look for in the ensuing Bible book.

We append the beautiful comments on “An Excellent Song which was Solomon’s”:

“In this Song, Solomon, by most sweet and comfortable allegories and parables, describes the perfect love of Jesus Christ, the true Solomon and King of peace, and the faithful soul of His church, which He has sanctified and appointed to be His spouse, holy, chaste and without reprehension [reproof].

“So that here is declared the singular love of the Bridegroom toward the bride, and His great and excellent benefits wherewith He enriches her of His pure bounty and grace, without any of her deservings.

“Also the earnest affection of the church, which is inflamed with the love of Christ, desiring to be more and more joined to Him in love, and not to be forsaken for any spot or blemish that is in her.”

**Prayers on the Psalms: from the Scottish Psalter of 1595;** small paperback in the Pocket Puritan series; 150 pages; price £3.25; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Where do Banner of Truth find these hidden gems? Of the many editions of the Psalter produced in Scotland, the 1595 edition was unique in containing a prayer for each Psalm. These are profitable and gracious, and obviously are intended for use in private meditation.

It was long believed that these pages were Scottish in origin but it is now known that they were written by the Huguenot pastor Augustin Marlorat and translated. There is thus a beautiful connection between the Scottish Covenanters and the French Huguenots.

Sensibly, archaic words have been replaced: “hope” for “esperance”; “powers” for “puisances,” etc.

A special note is added by the publishers on the so-called “imprecatory Psalms,” i.e. those that pray for vengeance on David’s and Israel’s enemies. It can well be understood how the Huguenots felt, being so bitterly persecuted by their enemies. They longed to see them overthrown. It is noteworthy that Augustin Marlorat himself was martyred for his faith in 1562.

The prayers do not, as might be expected, put the language of the Psalms into prayerful language. Rather they are a gracious soul’s response to the Psalm just read.

Highly commended. (We give as an example the short prayer following Psalm 46):

“O Lord, the only refuge and strength of all them who put their trust in Thee, we beseech Thee of Thy goodness to fortify us, and to destroy the devices of the wicked in such sort that we may live in quietness of spirit; that we may serve and honour Thee all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen.”

**Catholicism: East of Eden** by Richard Bennett; paperback; 323 pages; price £8.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This is a book of great value. At a time when writings on things Catholic abound, here is a book written not by an outsider looking in, but by an Irish-born Roman Catholic, educated and grounded at a Jesuit school, followed by eight years of theological instruction, and then for over twenty years serving as a devoted parish priest. After fourteen years of contrasting the teachings of Rome with biblical truth, he formally left the Roman Catholic Church in 1986.

Through study of the Scriptures, Philippians 3. 10 became the cry of his heart, “That I might know HIM, and the power of His resurrection.” Eventually he was able bravely to proclaim to a congregation of 400 that “the absolute and final authority in all matters of faith and morals is the Bible, God’s own Word.” Three days later he was called to the office of the Archbishop, officially silenced and forbidden to preach in his archdiocese.

The book traces his struggle with Mary, the saints, the renouncing of church tradition, and his separation from his dearly-loved Catholic brothers. Slowly he came to realise that his fellow labourers in the Catholic church were not biblical believers. “They were for the most part pious men taken up with devotion to Mary and the rosary and loyal to Rome, but not one had any idea of the finished work of salvation – that Christ’s work is done, that salvation is personal and complete.”

Readers will find in this book many little-known facts concerning the Roman Catholic Church and her doctrine. Some of the information supplied is

probably unavailable, or at least difficult to access, outside the priesthood. There are extensive quotations from Vatican Council Documents, Catholic catechisms, conferences and other sources. In spite of this, the book is not wearisome, and is interspersed with many telling Scriptures (all A.V.), showing the grievous errors to which the Catholic church has succumbed. A chapter is devoted to the history of the papacy. Most chilling is the chapter headed *The Mass as a Sacrifice*. Just one example (of many) of pure blasphemy propagated by Catholic writers is given below:

“When a priest pronounces the tremendous words of consecration, he reaches up into the heavens, brings Christ down from His throne, and places Him upon our altar to be offered again as Victim for the sins of man. It is a power greater than that of monarchs and emperors: greater than that of saints and angels, greater than that of Seraphim and Cherubim. The priest speaks and lo! Christ, the eternal and omnipotent God, bows His head in humble obedience to the priest’s command.”

The book is subtitled *Insights into Catholicism for the Twenty-First Century*. It is up-to-date and authoritative, but not written harshly or vindictively. Rather the author’s desire is as Paul’s was for his fellow Jews: “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for my Catholic brothers is that they might be saved.”

T.H.W. Scott, Harpenden.

**A Memento of Reuben Weeks**:, edited by Matthew J. Hyde; paperback; 154 pages; price £7 including postage; published by the editor, and obtainable from him at 5 Hawthorn Cottages, Appledore, Tenterden, Kent. TN26 2AH.

Reuben Weeks was pastor at Jireh Chapel, Tenterden from 1884 up to his death in 1922. The editor, having come into possession of quite a few of his letters, felt it would be profitable to transcribe them, primarily for the benefit of the congregation at Tenterden and for Reuben Weeks’s descendants, but with the hope that they might be a blessing to others too. The book contains a brief biographical sketch, notes of two sermons and an address, twenty-six of Mr. Weeks’s letters, several photographs and other fragments.

Whilst neither highly gifted nor deeply led into doctrinal truth, Mr. Weeks was evidently a blessing and help as a pastor, though, unusually, carrying on a business as a carpenter at the same time. The letters reflect the exercises of a child of God in the mundane matters of everyday life, but with surprisingly little reference to his ministry. Yet perhaps in this “sameness” some might find an echo and be constrained to be “followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

John A. Kingham, Luton

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## OBITUARY

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**Clement Arthur Wood**, beloved minister of the gospel, and for many years pastor at Tamworth Road Chapel, Croydon, passed away in the Studley Bethesda Home on November 30th, 2010, aged 90. “Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”

## NEW YEAR THOUGHTS

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Within the year that just has closed,  
 Can we not trace the hand  
 Of our beloved Friend and Guide,  
 In this dark, barren land?  
 How oft He did for us appear,  
 Supply our wants, dispel our fear.

Yes, our Beloved was at hand,  
 And underneath He laid  
 His everlasting arm of love,  
 And on that are we stayed;  
 O what a Rock our Jesus is!  
 How rich are all His promises!

Anon.

Tomorrow, Lord, is Thine,  
 Lodged in Thy sovereign hand,  
 And, if its sun arise and shine,  
 It shines by Thy command.

The present moment flies,  
 And bears our life away:  
 O make Thy servants truly wise,  
 That they may live today!

Since on this wingèd hour  
 Eternity is hung,  
 Waken by Thy Almighty power  
 The aged and the young!

One thing demands our care:  
 O! be it still pursued!  
 Lest, slighted once, the season fair  
 Should never be renewed!

To Jesus may we fly  
 Swift as the morning light,  
 Lest life's young golden beams should die  
 In sudden endless night!

Philip Doddridge, 1775

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To know God in Christ, to know Him as a covenant God, to know Him as our God, is to possess all the sources and secrets of true peace in the midst of surrounding storms and tempests.

*Thomas Reade*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
FEBRUARY 2011

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

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**MADE NIGH IN CHRIST**

*Sermon preached by John Raven at Shaw's Corner Chapel, Redhill,  
on July 2nd, 1950*

**Text:** "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2. 13).

One cannot but be impressed by the number of times we have in this epistle such expressions as "in Him," "of Him," "through Him," and so on, in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ; and I have thought how essential it is for us that the Lord Jesus Christ should have that place in our religion, in our faith, in our affections, that He has in this epistle, that He had in the religion, the faith and the affections of His servant the apostle. The apostle declared, "Christ is All and in all," and all the blessedness that the people of God are ever to know is theirs in Christ Jesus and Him alone. Everything connected with their salvation is secured to them in Jesus Christ and only in Him, and so here the apostle says, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

The apostle has just referred to the solemn state that these Ephesians were in before Christ came to them. They were dead in trespasses and sins. I do not know whether we can fully appreciate all that that means, "dead in trespasses and sins." Dead to God, dead to everything that is holy and spiritual and heavenly, dead in trespasses and sins, bound hand and foot by the cords of our sins, immersed in the pollution of sin, the enemies of God by wicked works. The apostle goes on, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (verses 2, 3); and there is not one in this little assembly of whom these words are not true. As in a state of nature, as unregenerate, these words are true of us.

Then in the words preceding our text he says, "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (verse 12). Peter says, "Ye were as sheep going

astray.” What a hopeless, helpless thing a straying sheep is! It cannot of itself find its way back to the fold and to the shepherd. It must be sought after and found. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.” *Without Christ*. How very solemn a thing it is when one is brought to feel that this is one’s case, “without Christ”; to be faced with this as one’s condition, “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having *no hope*, and without God in the world.” I remember how this was impressed upon my heart and conscience as being my own state, “without Christ,” alien, “having no hope, and without God in the world.” What a condition to be in! A condition in itself hopeless, a far-off condition, a helpless condition. O how utterly helpless one feels when this condition is made a reality, unable to do a single thing to rectify it, far off from God, unable to take one step towards Him.

Then the apostle says, “But God, who is rich in mercy.” O is not this attractive to some of us? “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, (by grace ye are saved)” (verses 4, 5). “Behold, what manner of love!” O the wonder of it, that God should have such love to sinners, to ungodly wretches! As Rutherford said, “O that such lumps of sin should get such love for nothing!” We are by nature hateful and hating one another, full of enmity to God, and if the enmity does not burst out into open hostility, it is there; it takes the form sometimes of sheer indifference.

I remember a young woman coming before the church where her own father was the pastor, and in giving in her experience she said how that often she had heard her father speak of sinners in a state of unregeneracy being filled with rage and enmity against God. “But,” she said, “that was not the case with me. I was too indifferent even to feel rage and enmity,” and I think it taught her good father a lesson. I believe it is often true of many people in these days that they are too indifferent even to manifest enmity. The attitude of some people is just a good-natured sort of indifference to the things of God and to the gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is enmity; it is enmity in a very subtle form.

Then the apostle says, “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, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (verse 6). It pleased God to give His people an interest in Christ. He blessed them in Christ, and blessed them in His own divine purpose before the worlds were made. All these blessings are secured to them in the Person of Jesus, and when Christ was manifest in the flesh, His people were virtually in Him as their covenant Head and

Representative. All He did in His obedience to the law and in His suffering even to the death of the cross, was for their sakes as their Surety and their Representative. "He bare," said Peter, "our sins in His own body on the tree."

Well, this was the love of God and His rich mercy flowing towards His people. He Himself provided this precious channel of mercy, His dear, incarnate Son, that mercy might flow down to sinners in a rich and copious stream. God "who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins." O think of it! While "we were yet without strength ... Christ died for the ungodly." "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," said the apostle in Romans 5. Even when we were dead in sins, He pitied us; when enemies He pitied us, when following ungodly courses, when fighting against Him, when we hated His truth. O if we are His, He loved us then, and "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus, when Jesus died, His people died in Him, but He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, and they rose in Him. Such is the union between Christ and His people; when He took His seat in heaven they took their seat there in Him virtually, "and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (verses 7, 8). You see, it is entirely of His grace, and grace in the very nature of things excludes all idea of human worth and human merit. If human merit had a hand in it, it would be no more grace; if the works of the creature had some hand in the matter, it could not be of grace; but "*by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.*"

I have been glad of this word, "and that not of yourselves," because had I been told that faith was something which I must produce, that I must work myself up to a kind of believing, this was what I could not do. I found in my heart nothing but black unbelief, infidelity and atheism, but faith is the gift of God, His precious gift. "For 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" (verse 9). And it is remarkable how the doctrine here so clearly stated has stirred up the enmity of the human heart; how proud men, self-righteous men, hate to hear it. I have had it said to me, "I cannot believe it and I will not believe it." But when men have said and done all, the truth still stands: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Grace saved the Apostle Paul, and his, humanly speaking, was an impossible case. Who could have saved that proud Pharisee, but the God of all grace? Ah, the apostle had reason to exult in the word that he wrote,

“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.” How he declares emphatically, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” “The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” The apostle renounced all his own works. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (verse 10). And this is true of every real believer, “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (verses 11-13).

“But now in Christ Jesus.” We would look a little at the Person here. “In Christ Jesus,” the God-Man, Immanuel – God with us, the Man who is the fellow of the Lord of Hosts. “But now *in* Christ Jesus.” As I said, in the purpose of the Father all His people were in Him, given an interest in Him before the foundation of the world. He was appointed the Surety of the everlasting covenant and the great Head of the Church, and all His people are in Him by covenant union. “But now *in* Christ Jesus,” in “*Christ Jesus*,” in Him as He walked upon the earth, magnifying the law and making it honourable; as He did always the things that pleased His Father, they were in Him, and all that He did in His obedience to His Father’s law was on their account.

“But now in Christ Jesus.” And then again, in all that He suffered, they were in Him. What He suffered, He suffered for their sakes. When He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, they were in Him, and He suffered as their covenant Head, as their Surety and Representative. “Who his own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” And when the Christ of God offered Himself thus without spot unto God, how satisfying, how delightful to His Father was that great offering. It may be said, God smelled a sweet savour when His dear Son offered Himself thus upon the accursed tree. What an acceptable offering! Ah, the Father, as a God of justice,

“Viewed with perfect approbation,  
All the Saviour did and bore.”

So Christ made an end of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He brought in everlasting righteousness, He overcame the sharpness of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and in Him His people are made nigh unto God. They, who by nature were far off, the enemies of God by wicked works, in Him were brought nigh, in Him reconciled. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ," and that which was done virtually in Christ, as they are interested in Him, is done in their own hearts and consciences.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off." Well, these people, I believe, were brought to realise the solemnity of their condition as being "far off." How unspeakably solemn and awful a thing it is to be far off from God, to be, so to speak, at the ends of the earth, to be destitute of everything spiritual! These people in their far-off condition are made to hear the voice of sovereign grace and mercy, and what does mercy say? O, mercy says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." The blessed Spirit of God, who opens the sinner's eyes to see his own sad and evil case, reveals to him somewhat of Jesus Christ, of what He is and what He has done. The Spirit of God will take such a word as that in Romans 5, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"; the Spirit of God whispers such a word as this, "Christ is the Friend of sinners," "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." "O," says the Lord, "come to Me, poor sinner; come to Me just as thou art, with all thy heavy burden of sin and inward pollution, with thy far-off condition, with all thy ignorance, with everything that witnesses to thy lost state, come to Me with it." And so a poor sinner is enabled in the desires of his heart, in his confessions and petitions, in the hungerings and thirstings of his soul, to come to Jesus. O, do you know what it is to be drawn to Christ? to come to the Christ of God as a poor lost sinner, with this cry in your heart, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean"?

"If Thou, dear Lord, so base a wretch wilt save,  
Then all the glory shall redound to Thee;  
While here, and when I reach beyond the grave,  
My soul shall sing salvation full and free."

Do you know what it is to look upon your sinful life and inward pollution, perhaps upon your bed at midnight, with the burden of your wretched, sinful case lying upon your heart? Is there an endeavouring to lay it before Him, and is there a striving to get to His feet? Do you seek to make your confession and tell Him what a sinner you are, how lost you are, how helpless you are, how wretched, and how you are the prey of innumerable evils, and beseech Him to have mercy upon you?

“Depth of mercy, can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?”

And the Lord Jesus has said, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

Well, this poor sinner, for all his far-off feelings, is really in the experience of being made nigh. The Spirit of God is bringing him near; the blessed Spirit is leading him to Jesus’ feet, leading him to the Father through the Son, and “now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” It is a great matter to be made willing to be saved by Him, willing to be saved entirely of grace, free, sovereign grace, willing for the Lord Jesus Christ to do everything for you. This is a great point – why, it speaks of reconciliation. It reveals something of the enmity of the natural heart being broken down when you are willing to be saved by grace, when you are hungering and thirsting for the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. There is reconciliation in that.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh.” But there is something further. There is a sweet experience of being made nigh to the Father by the blood of Christ. As I speak there comes before my mind an occasion you have so often heard me refer to, when one night I retired to rest in a friend’s house, and was just about to pray for the forgiveness of sins. I was stopped; something within me said, “I have it,” and instead of asking for forgiveness I could only thank the Lord for His mercy, and I remember saying to Him very simply, “Lord, do let me love Thee and serve Thee and be near to Thee, and not wander from Thee as I have done.” And as I laid my head upon the pillow that night I had these words singing within me:

“I’ll lay me down and sweetly sleep,  
For I have peace with God.”

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ,” *“by the blood of Christ.”* O how precious to a believing heart is Christ and His blood! There are numbers of people who profess the Christian name, who would eliminate all reference to the blood of Christ. They expunge from their hymn books every reference to the blood of Christ, they will have none of it, but the true believer could not endure the thought of being without it; it is to him precious blood, invaluable blood. And when God fills the believer’s heart and conscience with the power of it, O how it fills his heart with love and gratitude! “Made nigh by the blood of Christ,” for that blood of Christ is that which washes away their sin and the sins of the whole church of God. “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins.” “Their sins and their iniquities will I

remember no more.” When Jesus died, all the sins of His people were cast into the depths of the sea, the sea of total and everlasting forgetfulness, and therefore the great barrier between the sinner and God is broken down; sin is taken out of the way. Not only is the guilt of sin taken out of the way, but this blood of Christ cleanses. The Lord does not merely deliver His people from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ, but from the reigning power of sin. “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

The effect of a sight of His redeeming work will cause love to spring up in the heart and flow out to Him. And when you get some inkling of what Christ has done in putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, it will cause you to love Him – you cannot help loving Him. O how your soul will adore Him for the riches of His grace, the greatness of His mercy and of His compassion.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh” – made nigh unto God, favoured with access to the Father, every barrier broken down, everything that hinders the sinner’s approach taken out of the way. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near.” When the power of this is upon the heart, there is a drawing near. I remember Bunyan said, “I know of nothing goodlier than to be before God with Christ in my arms.” It is a wonderful point to be brought to, for a sinner to be enabled to plead the atoning blood, to plead the infinite merits, the perfect righteousness of Jesus, to lay claim to His high-priestly intercession for his acceptance with God, to realise union with the Father in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ through His blood and His righteousness.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh.” “Nigh?” Yes,

“So near, so very near to God,  
Nearer I cannot be;  
For in the Person of His Son,  
I am as near as He.”

“Made nigh by the blood of Christ.” May we be helped, then, to draw near. May the blessed Spirit so impress these things upon our hearts concerning Jesus Christ, that we shall be emboldened to come to the throne of grace that we may “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

And the apostle goes on, “For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” – there was in the temple, you know, a partition beyond which a Gentile

might not go – “having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain” (of elect Jews and elect Gentiles), “to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (verses 14-16). You remember the Lord Jesus said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring ... and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (verses 17, 18). O I would that we might not rest short of a living experience of this reconciliation in our hearts. O see what these people are brought to! We have noticed what they were brought from, what a dreadful condition they were brought from. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (verses 19-22).

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### THE MIGHTY GOD

*From a discourse by William Dyer in London  
during the Great Plague, 1665*

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“He is altogether lovely” (Song 5. 16).

Doctrine: That Jesus Christ is infinitely and superlatively lovely.

I finished the second title which is given to Christ in Scripture, King of kings. I now proceed to a third, and that is, Mighty God. One of Christ’s titles is, The Mighty God; you have it there in Isaiah 9. 6, He is called The Mighty God.

Beloved, I have showed you from the second title that Christ is a King, a King above all kings, and a King over all kings, and the King of kings, and that His laws are most equal, His subjects most happy, having no other tax laid upon them than love and fear.

But now this title holdeth Him forth, not only as a great King, but as a great God, before whom all kings and kingdoms are but as little drops, or as small dust (Isa. 40. 15). From this title, The Mighty God, I shall lay down this proposition: that Jesus Christ is true and perfect God. That is the point I shall insist upon.



There are two sorts of people in the world that deny my doctrine, who deny the Deity of Jesus Christ, who say the second Person of the Trinity is not God.

First, the unbelieving Jews. If Christ had come as the Jews dreamed, as a great monarch, treading upon nothing but crowns and sceptres and the necks of kings, and had all the potentates of the earth to attend His train; I say, had Christ come in this worldly glory and pomp and power, then it may be the Jews would have believed on Him; maybe then He should have been their God. But now, beloved, because Christ came poorly and meanly, and made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, as the Scriptures saith (Phil. 2. 7), He took none of His gallantry, none of His bravery upon Him, but made Himself of no reputation, and therefore the Jews slighted Him and disowned Him. The Turks mock us at this day with our crucified God. O, say they, you worship a crucified God! And some of the heathens say they would not believe in a hanged God. O blessed Jesus, thus art Thou reproached and despised by the unbelieving world because Thou camest poorly and died shamefully for our sins. They who despise the death of the Lamb shall surely feel the wrath of the Lamb. They who turn away their ears from hearing Christ's voice now, Christ will turn away His ears from hearing their cries then.

Secondly, there be others that deny the Deity of Christ, and there are some seditious ones in this nation who say that Christ is but a mere man and that every saint is as much God as Christ. And further they say that to equal Christ with God is high blasphemy. They that will not own Christ in His first coming, Christ will not own them at His second coming. They that will not obey the truth of God revealed from heaven unto them shall suffer the wrath of God revealed from heaven against them.

O ye blasphemers, ye say the Son is not God; the Father saith He *is* God. Now, who speaks truth, God or you? Let God be true, and every man a liar. That it is so, I shall give you more clear proofs. Express scripture speaks it forth that Jesus Christ is true and perfect God. Titus 2. 13, saith the apostle there, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God." Mark, Christ is here not only called God, but the great God. O saints, He that came from heaven to make us righteous will also come from heaven to make us glorious. "Looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ." Not only so, but Christ is also called Mighty God; nay, not only Mighty God, but again, "God blessed for ever." Christ is God blessed for ever (Rom. 9. 5). Not only blessed for ever, but the true God (1 John 5. 20). Jesus Christ is there called the true God, not only the true God, but a God for ever and ever (Heb. 1. 8). Mark there, "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne ... is for ever and ever."

The Father He calls the Son God Himself, and therefore well may we. Unto the Son He said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Thus you see the doctrine fully proved, that Jesus Christ is the true and perfect God. But beloved, because the Deity of Christ is so much questioned at this day, and this being one of the serious and chiefest points in divinity, therefore I shall give you some considerations or demonstrations or arguments to fortify you against this great error before named.

First, that Jesus Christ is true and perfect God. He is for time, co-eternal; for nature, co-essential; for dignity, co-equal with His Father.

1. For time, co-eternal. "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17. 5). You see here, sirs, Christ was before the world was; Christ was from everlasting, from the beginning. Proverbs 8. 23, speaking concerning Christ: "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." And therefore Christ is called the Everlasting Father (Isa. 9. 6). So in Revelation 1. 8, Christ there, speaking of Himself, saith, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Mark, sirs, Christ is the same before time, in time and after time, which was, and is, and is to come. Now beloved, none can be eternal but God; but Christ is eternal, and therefore He is God, and co-eternal with His Father.

2. He is for nature, co-essential: "I and My Father are one," saith Christ (John 10. 30). "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these Three are One." Mark here, they are one (1 John 5. 7). When Philip desires to see the Father, "Shew us the Father, and it is enough" (John 14. 8), saith Christ, in the ninth and tenth verses, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." How so? "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." So that you know Christ is more than mere man; He is one with the Father. O sirs, He is *Theanthropos*, God-Man. If you make the Son mere man, you must make the Father so too.

3. He is for dignity co-equal with the Father. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2. 6). Christ thought it no diminution of His Father's glory to be equal with His Father in glory. And you shall further find that all the honour which belongs to God, the Father hath commanded us to give it to the Son. You have a full text: "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father" (John 5. 23). Therefore it is clear to every eye that Christ is for dignity co-equal with the Father, for the Father hath commanded us to give the same honour to Christ which is due to Him; so that it is no blasphemy at all, certainly, to equal Christ with God, for in Him are the riches of the Deity and the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him,

as you may see (Col. 2. 9). This is the first argument. He is for time co-eternal, for nature co-essential, for dignity co-equal with the Father.

Secondly, I shall lay down this argument to prove the Deity of Jesus Christ: consider the work of creation. Surely He that made heaven and earth must needs be a God; you will yield to this. So saith the Lord Himself, All the gods that have not made heaven and earth shall perish from the earth and from under heaven (Jer. 10. 11). But now, beloved, Jesus Christ made the heavens and the earth and all things therein, and therefore He is God. See a few scriptures for this. "All things were made by Him" (John 1. 3); mark, this is by Christ. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ... all things were created by Him, and for Him" (Col. 1. 16). So again, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (John 1. 10). Now beloved, had Christ been less than God, He could not have made heaven and earth, and therefore He is God of glory, the great God that now sits upon the throne, for He created the heavens and the earth and all things therein.

Thirdly, That Christ is the true and perfect God appears if you consider the works and miracles which He did in the days of His flesh. Here is another unanswerable argument to prove the Godhead of Jesus Christ. The winds and the seas obeyed Him, the devils came out of the possessed, the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, lepers were cleansed, the dead were raised, the sick were healed. O who could do this but God, as you may see (Matt. 11. 5). But you may say, the apostles did great miracles, and yet were not gods. Why, it is true they did great miracles, but in whose name did they do them? Was it in their own names and by their own power? No, beloved; they themselves confess the contrary. They tell you it is not in their own power, but in the name and power of Jesus Christ. So in Acts 4. 10, "We do in the name of Christ." So that, beloved, this is a strong argument to prove the Deity of Christ. They did great miracles in His name, and by His power His disciples did great miracles. And with this Jesus satisfied the disciples of John: "Go and tell what things ye hear and see, how the lame walk, and the blind receive their sight; go and tell John." Now I say, these great things could be done by none but by a great God, and therefore Jesus Christ is not only the Son of man, but the Son of God, even God blessed for ever.

But fourthly, consider divine worship is due unto Christ. Now you know, worship is proper only to God. "Worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea," said the angel (Rev. 14. 7). Worship only is proper to God alone. Now beloved, all the acts of worship that belong to God the Father are given to the Son Jesus Christ; both angels and men

are commanded to worship Him, as well as we. "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1. 6). And in Philippians 2. 10: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth." Mark, sirs, things in heaven, as well as things on earth, must worship Christ; and Christ Himself saith, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14. 1). Mark, sirs, speaking of those that believe in God, saith He, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Now, beloved, we are commanded to pray to Christ, to glorify Christ, to believe in Christ, to honour Christ, and worship Christ; and therefore the saints have prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," as Stephen did. So that you see worship is due to Christ both from angels and men, and therefore He must needs be God.

Fifthly, there be clear promises of the coming of Christ under the Old Testament. No sooner was man fallen, but Christ was promised: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." All the prophets foretold of the Messiah (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Daniel, Malachi and the rest of them), how falsely He should be accused, how basely He should be used, and this will be enough to condemn the unbelieving Jews and make them speechless in the great day of accounts. I might give you the sayings of the same prophets, but you may find them yourselves. Search the Old Testament, and you shall find them all speak more or less of Jesus Christ.

Thus I have clearly proved by express Scripture and undeniable arguments that Jesus Christ is true and perfect God.

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### **CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

*This is a chapter from the new book on Zechariah (see page 61)  
dealing with the third chapter of Zechariah's prophecy.*

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The glorious truth of Christ's righteousness being imputed to the sinner and received by faith is the sacred theme of the Epistle to the Romans. Burned into Luther's heart, it was the truth which by the Spirit of God brought about the Glorious Reformation. Here it is beautifully prefigured in Zechariah's fourth vision.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had to learn their fig leaves were no covering for their nakedness; but "unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Blood must be shed.

Isaiah sweetly spoke of "the robe of righteousness," while Jeremiah prophesied of the Saviour's name as "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," and soon afterwards spoke of this as being the name of His beloved bride also (ch. 33. 16).

But how clearly this is portrayed to Zechariah! Here is Joshua the high priest standing before the Lord, with Satan accusing him (verse 1). “Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel” (verse 3).

We realise that, historically, Joshua was the representative of the Jewish nation, now so despised and brought low (the “filthy garments”), but a glorious transformation is to take place: joy for sorrow, light for darkness, victory instead of defeat, liberty for bondage, success instead of disappointment – the temple rebuilt; all symbolised by the change of raiment, the glorious garment.

But all this points to gospel days. It is noteworthy that Joshua does not speak a word throughout; he is silent, a sinner, visibly self-condemned; God holy; himself filthy and defiled. What hope is there for him? He cannot answer the accusations of Satan. He awaits his sentence.

But what a scene of matchless grace! “He answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment” (verse 4). A blessed transformation takes place as the filthy garments are replaced with the beautiful robe, and then, to crown all, a fair mitre set upon his head (verse 5).

The doctrine of Christ’s imputed righteousness is one of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith. A righteous God demands a perfect righteousness from all His creatures. They cannot provide it. He gives them a perfect law. They break it. He has a perfect right to demand a perfect righteousness in obedience to the law, though the sinner has lost the ability to provide it.

O the wonder of wonders! In covenant the eternal Son of God undertakes, as His people’s Surety, to provide what they can never provide themselves. This He does by His perfect obedience to the law, which is reckoned to the sinner’s account as if it is his own, and then by laying down His life in death, that His blood might atone. So His precious blood cleanses, and His righteousness covers. “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.”

As a point of gracious experience, every sinner born of the Spirit of God is brought to feel that he has no righteousness of his own, and if saved, must be saved by the righteousness of another. Their desire is, 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, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

“The best obedience of my hands  
Dares not appear before Thy throne;  
But faith can answer Thy demands,  
By pleading what my Lord has done.”

This is the only religion that can take a guilty sinner to heaven, and this truth is beautifully revealed in the case of Joshua – stripped of his “filthy garments,” and then clothed with change of raiment.

But why should this be? Did Joshua, did Israel deserve it? Do we? Right at the beginning it is all ascribed to the free grace and unmerited love of God: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” (verse 2). Every sinner saved by grace is a brand plucked from the burning.

In the days of Whitefield, a Red Indian brave who loved the Lord was speaking of God’s great salvation and His unmerited love. One or two, almost sarcastically, asked him what he knew about God’s love. Without speaking a word, the Red Indian placed a few sticks in a circle, put a worm in the middle, and then lit the sticks. As the fire began to burn more brightly and nearer to the worm, the worm began to wriggle – when the Red Indian stooped down, picked it up and held it near his heart. “That is what I know of the love of God in salvation,” he said – a brand plucked from the fire!

Before the end of the chapter there is a clear prophecy of Christ: “Behold” (it is God who is speaking), “I will bring forth My Servant the BRANCH” (verse 8). Jeremiah had already used the same expression, writing of the coming Messiah: “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.”

But why “the BRANCH”? Because in His humiliation, as the Man of sorrows, “He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground” – not descending from heaven in great pomp and glory as He will at the time of His second coming. (Later, in chapter 6, we again hear of “the BRANCH.”)

But then follows a most mysterious verse, but we are sure it speaks of Christ. “For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (verse 9). What does it mean?

Well, like Moses with the serpent, we would “take it by the tail,” begin at the end, and without a shadow of doubt this speaks of the Saviour’s death at Calvary. Who else could “remove the iniquity of the land”? It speaks of the complete removing of all the sins of all God’s

people when Christ died. He bore their sins, and for ever He bore them away. When He cried, "It is finished," they were removed.

It is interesting how often in the Old Testament, in looking forward to the death of Christ, it is the complete removing of His people's sins which is set forth. For instance, all that was typified in the scapegoat; and then such scriptures as these:

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

"Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back."

Joshua was the high priest. As long as he lived he would have to go on year by year "offering the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins," but only typify the Saviour's death. "But this Man" – our great and glorious High Priest – "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" – in "one day," the day of atonement – "sat down on the right hand of God."

Then what of the beginning of the verse? Joshua had seen the foundation stone of the temple laid. The temple must have been continually in his thoughts. But here was a greater temple and a greater foundation stone – "a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." It was upon this stone, this foundation, that Joshua's salvation rested, and the salvation of the whole Israel of God, the blood-bought church of Christ.

Upon this stone Joshua saw "seven eyes," seven, of course, being the number of perfection. God's eyes are upon Christ; so are Satan's; and so are the eyes of every sinner saved by grace, "looking unto Jesus," in dependence, in hope.

And there was engraving on it, as in ancient times foundation stones sometimes were engraved. "Behold, I will engrave the graving thereof." What does faith see engraved upon that glorious foundation where the sinner's hope rests? Things like this. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

But then all the unworthy names of all God's people are engraved there, Joshua's included. And if engraved, it means they are there for ever. None can destroy them, none can remove them!

What a glorious vision and chapter!

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the view that is here given us of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, who is both the propitiation for our sins, and our Advocate before the throne. For His sake, may all our iniquities be done away, and may we be accepted in the Beloved, clothed with His righteousness, and sanctified by His blessed Spirit. May we look to Him by faith continually, and be more and more brought into a conformity to His blessed likeness, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Amen.

John Fawcett (1740-1817), from his commentary on the Scriptures

## MAN'S LOST INNOCENCE

*By Thomas Boston (1676-1732)*

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Here was a stately building; man carved like a fair palace, but now lying in ashes. Let us stand and look on the ruins and drop a tear. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation. Could we avoid weeping if we saw our country ruined and turned by the enemy into a wilderness? If we saw our houses on fire and our property perishing in the flames? But all this comes far short of the dismal sight – man fallen as a star from heaven. Ah, may we not now say, “O that we were as in months past!” when there was no stain in our nature, no cloud on our minds, no pollution in our hearts! Had we never been in better case, the matter had been less, but they that were brought up in scarlet do now embrace dunghills.

Where is our primitive glory now? Once no darkness in the mind, no rebellion in the will, no disorder in the affections. But ah! “How is the faithful city become an harlot! Righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Our silver is become dross, our wine mixed with water.” That heart which was once the temple of God is now turned into a den of thieves. Let our name be Ichabod, for the glory is departed.

Happy wast thou, O man! Who was like unto thee? No pain nor sickness could affect thee, no death could approach thee, no sigh was heard from thee, till these bitter fruits were plucked from the forbidden tree. Heaven shone upon thee and earth smiled; thou wast the companion of angels and the envy of devils. But how low is he now laid who was created for dominion and made lord of the world! “The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us, that we have sinned!”

The creatures that waited to do him service are now, since the Fall, set in battle-array against him, and the least of them, having commission, proves too hard for him. Waters overflow the old world; fire consumes Sodom; the stars in their courses fight against Sisera; frogs, flies, lice, etc. become executioners to Pharaoh and his Egyptians; worms eat up Herod. Yea, man needs a league with the beasts, yea, with the very stones of the field (Job 5. 23), having reason to fear that everyone that findeth him will slay him.

Alas, how are we fallen! How are we plunged into a gulf of misery! The sun has gone down on us, death has come in at our windows; our enemies have put out our two eyes and sport themselves with our miseries. Let us then lie down in the dust, let shame and confusion cover us.

Nevertheless, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Come then, O sinner, look to Jesus Christ, the second Adam. Quit the first Adam and his covenant; come over to the Mediator and Surety of the



new and better covenant, and let your hearts say, "Be Thou our ruler and let this breach be under Thy hand." Let your "eye trickle down, and cease not, without any intermission, till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven" (Lam. 3. 49, 50).

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### SUPPORT IN TRIAL

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My precious and beloved M.,

Your dear letter and sweet gleanings came so acceptably this morning, and formed quite a portion for my soul, and made me feel how happy and how blessed God's people are in every circumstance, and under every dispensation, adverse or smiling. With them all is well. Yes, when they go down into the depths, and do business in great waters, when the stormy wind lifteth up the waves of the soul, and they are at their wits' end, "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still."

This affliction that has come upon me has not happened by chance, neither has it sprung out of the ground, but it has come from God's almighty hand, and He knoweth the why and the wherefore. When it first came upon me, I trembled, and feared the waves and billows that seemed to come faster and faster and to run higher, until my soul sank within me, when they were gently hushed into a calm by these words: "Be still, and know that I am God." I instantly felt the blessedness of that portion, "As one whom his mother comforteth." O what a quiet resting-place is the arm of everlasting love! But we must go down into the depths and be blessedly brought up again that songs of deliverance may be ours, and I would not be without the bitter cup and miss the sweet indulgence of my heavenly Father.

I am too weak to enter into anything, and my mind too feeble, but, "Let not your heart be troubled," my beloved one, the Lord will bring me among you again: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," and I would not have one thing altered, or one trial removed, until He speak the word.

Best love to all the dear ones, and to all whom I desire to remember in my poor prayers, and whom I would should remember me.

Your affectionate Mother,

M. Tanner

May 9th, 1864

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## **GRACIOUS ADVICE TO PASTOR AND PEOPLE**

*Address given by Mr. J.W. Tyler at Tamworth Road Chapel, Croydon,  
on March 23rd, 1961, at a service to mark the beginning of  
Mr. C.A. Wood's pastorate.*

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**Texts:** "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4. 1, 2).

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess. 5. 12, 13).

Beloved friends, the hour has now come when we must prove whether the Holy Spirit has given us a word in season to utter on this occasion. I feel that my mind has been directed in a dual manner, firstly, very lovingly and meekly to seek to address a line of exhortation to our dear brother, the esteemed pastor of this church and congregation, together with all of us in the ministry of the gospel, anointed, we trust, of the Spirit; followed by, as the Lord may graciously help, a message of admonition to this church.

Let us proceed then to draw your attention to that Scripture addressed by the aged Apostle Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, awaiting his suffering death, yet favoured with the glorious expectation of eternal glory, to his son in the faith Timothy. We would understand that this word which I now name to you, "Preach the Word," bearing the weight of divine inspiration, was also by the Spirit the fruit of his mature and very gracious experience, living exercise and sober reflection as he looked back over his long ministry and all the way God had led him. Being close to eternity, and to the time when he must give an account to his divine Master, the awesomeness of the responsibility of being God's mouth was greater to him than ever before. Therefore he is moved to write to Timothy and to all the ministers of Jesus Christ, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word." He seeks to bring Timothy face to face with the judgment seat of Christ, and his solemn accountability to his Master concerning his office, and the function of that office, the ministry of the Word.

Let me say immediately that the office of a true minister, one divinely anointed, sent by the Trinity to be as God's mouth, is the most solemn responsibility in the whole earth; nothing is comparable with it in any walk of life, to stand before fellow dying sinners, professing to be His ambassador, delivering His Word and having to do with immortal souls. Nothing can be more solemn and sacred than this. I thought just now that the sight of such a large congregation as this produces a sense

of awe in one's mind, and we may be prone to fear man, but O to have in view this judgment seat of Christ where we must one day stand to render an account of our stewardship.

Now what is it, as we believe, to preach the Word? It means, we humbly suggest, negatively to seek a complete and permanent gracious immunity from error; a favour much to be sought, never to be left to utter one syllable or sentence that is inimical to the mind of Christ; also to pray to be preserved from empty notion, novelties, speculations and lightness, indeed from everything that is destitute of the sacred weight, unction and power of the Spirit of Truth.

What is it positively? "Preach the Word." It is to seek by the anointing grace, unction and power of the Spirit to deliver His whole counsel, whether men will hear or forbear. And what is it to preach? Certainly something very different from mere talking. It is publicly, with the divine authority of Jehovah, to discourse upon the Word of life, delivering God's messages and standing before the people in His name. It is to seek by the help of the Spirit to declare the precious truths concerning God's eternal Son, the essential Word, who is the incarnate Word, and His written Word in perfect holy oneness and agreement. It is as Paul says to the Corinthians, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4. 5).

My friends, we have in the sacred Scriptures a clear direction to His ministers respecting the true method of preaching the Word. John informs us in his first Epistle, chapter 1. 1 and 3: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you"; this is that living, vital, gracious, saving and sanctifying experience in our own souls of the truth as it is in Jesus, which is for our personal good and the salvation of those that hear us, even as "many as are ordained to eternal life." I am positive of this, that this edifying ministry is supplied by a living spring, and unless we have frequent communion with the Lord Jesus Christ in secret, and fresh revelations of His glory, and the inflowing of this heavenly unction, our ministry will become vapid; it will become unprofitable.

This then is how we are to seek to preach the Word, to desire the living, holy experience of it in our own souls, so that we speak not merely from the head, but warmly from the heart. How many times when standing before God and the people have I mentally prayed thus: "Give me, O Lord, a gracious, present experience of the precious truths that Thou wilt have me now deliver in Thy name to the congregation"! And then how we need the Lord kindly to give us fresh matter for the ministry, so that faith may partake of substance, satisfying the souls of the hungry with living bread. When the Lord comes into our poor, unworthy hearts in secret, and sanctifying trials and bringing us to His feet, favours us to behold His glory, do we not in spirit run to the pulpit

to deliver the good tidings, saying, for substance, with Christ's harbinger, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"? If we are favoured to bring Christ in our hearts to the pulpit, my friends, we shall "preach the Word."

Then the spirit in which we preach the truth is so very important. It is possible to preach correctly, according to sound doctrine, yet to be in a wrong spirit. A man may think himself most faithful, yet we need to examine this vital point: are we seeking to speak the truth in love to God and immortal souls? We do all things in vain, unless we do all things in love. I will allow myself a personal word. After now a long union with my own people, I believe I may speak of this very morning, when meditating on the goodness of God, and feeling a touch of His power, my heart waxed very warm in love to Him, and went out in a special manner and degree to my own dear flock. Now a pastor needs that. O the love felt to those precious souls; how you value and esteem them, as purchased by blood, and in this gracious spirit, seek to preach Christ to them. We are not sent to entertain hearers, but to feed the church of God. "Preach the Word." This embraces the whole of God's counsel, the sound, living, vital doctrines of grace relating to the things surely believed among us. We are also to contend for a gracious experience of sound doctrine, followed by the preceptive word, and seeking that there may be perfect balance, holy harmony and sequence in the ministerial laying of the foundation doctrinally, with insistence upon vital experience of the truth in the heart, as the Spirit makes application thereto followed by the declaration of His preceptive word.

Thus it embraces warning, admonition, rebuke and comfort, even all God's truth. What is this "Word"? Whatever God gives us to speak, the preaching that He bids us, searching, solemn and faithful, necessarily at times, most cutting; then as repentance is bestowed, very comforting, healing and building up; preaching the Word will embrace all this. God's ministers are made as nurses tenderly to cherish their children, as fathers to administer a measure of discipline and compassion, and for the feeding of the church of God with food convenient for them according to their spiritual growth and status. Whatever is suitable to the condition of His dear people, He will give a good pastor wisdom to dispense to them. I cannot believe that where God sends a pastor to a people, there will be one exercised person amongst the flock who will eventually lament, "There is no food for my soul." We believe a gracious, God-approved under-shepherd will be given provision for every member of the living family under his pastoral care, and that not one will be left out.

"Preach the Word." How we do feel to need a deeper experience of the sacred Word of life, with more holy light, gracious liberty and spiritual enlargement. I am thinking of a question which I believe was addressed by some students, evidently much impressed by his preaching,

to the late Mr. J.K. Popham. They asked something like this: "How do you obtain these sermons?" The good man replied, "Gentlemen, here in this study, on my knees." That is preaching the Word, my friends. In secret receiving from the Lord in answer to fervent, wrestling prayer, that which we shall deliver to our people ministerially.

Here, then, is the Lord's charge by His holy Apostle Paul to those in the most important office of the ministry. The Lord kindly help our dear brother in this, as we trust he may be spared to you for many years, and each one of our ministerial brethren, that we may be enabled with divine power, heavenly unction, holy love and gospel faithfulness to preach the Word, coveting only the smile, approbation and blessing of God. People who have itching ears will turn away from it unless the Lord makes it mighty in their hearts, but there are yet a few, and may the Lord graciously increase the number, and I believe many of you here in Tamworth Road Chapel who have a God-wrought capacity in your souls to appreciate, highly value, dearly love, and feed and thrive upon this precious Word of life as proclaimed from this pulpit.

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Now I offer another brief word from the other aspect of this solemnisation concerning the responsibility that devolves upon this church, and indeed upon every gospel church, particularly those favoured with a God-given pastor: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." "Know them" – you might hear a minister over a period of years and not know him, but to "know" means this: to see and receive him in Christ, and with personal experience of power and savour in his ministry, esteem him as God-commissioned. Thus as John saw them as stars in the right hand of Christ, His dear people will be taught to love and receive them as the Lord's valuable gift to His church. Also this, to know them at the throne of grace, by meeting them there.

Dear friends, may I just name this to you. If you are spared together, pastor and people, as we sincerely hope you will be, you will be gathered in this house of God frequently, but a most important meeting is necessary as between minister and flock in secret, and that is at the Lord's dear feet in confession and earnest supplication. As the Spirit grants access, you will then meet in public in a much better and deeper manner than beholding the flesh; you will meet in Christ, and in union and communion with Him.

"Which labour among you." The ministry is a labour. The whole of one's strength spiritually, physically and mentally is expended, and we are constrained to give ourselves to the Lord in that way. As He thus influences our hearts by His grace, we are willing to spend and be spent, and to lay down our lives for the flock, and this is what it amounts to,

even to sacrifice on the altar of love one's health, strength and earthly prospects, everything for the one thing, and that is to serve God and labour in Zion for the good of souls.

The exhortation continues, "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." One cannot set any value in human terms upon a pastor or true minister of Jesus Christ. You might think of all the gold in the Bank of England but nothing on the natural, human and perishing plane can stand here, for God's most precious truth is eternal. The value of this gift of God, even His beloved Son, and eternal life through Him, and of all God's gifts in Him, is incomparable. Thus may you receive your dear pastor from the hand of Christ into your hearts, loving him, as in the case of Jonathan and David, as your own soul. Then there will be loving prayers, loving loyalty, loving support, loving tenderness, loving consideration and loving encouragement, and true love burns as brightly in secret as it does in public. Faithful and affectionate church members will not be one thing to their pastor's face and work against him behind his back.

"Esteem them very highly in love," not to idolize, not to eulogize, but to hold tenderly, affectionately and reverently as the gift of Christ to the church, praying that the ministry may be used of God, and that souls may be quickened and ingathered, the church fed and edified, and that all shall redound to the glory of His sovereign name.

I may say in conclusion that it is a real privilege and favour to stand here this night in the Lord's name by the side of my dear brother. I love him because the Spirit has, I believe, joined us together in the gospel, and my heart goes out to him and to you as a people, in fervent prayer that God will bless this union for His holy name's sake. Amen.

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### THE DEAF AND DUMB DISCIPLE

*The Conversion, Experience and Triumphant Death of*

*John Paddy, who was completely deaf and dumb.*

*By Richard de Fraine (1803-1882)*

*(Concluded from page 28)*

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I commenced a journal on the 20th March [1849]. This will show the dreadful conflict and glorious triumph of our dear friend and much esteemed brother.

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

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

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

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

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

*April 4th:* He was very weak, not so happy as on the 3rd. Being my lecture evening, I stayed but a short time, and left him, but his dear sister took him the hymns and text after service; the text, Daniel 10. 18: "Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me." As his sister was signing much of the subject, he enjoyed it very much, and signed, "What a mercy to have an experience of divine things, like Daniel and other saints in the Bible! O I love the Word of God more and more. O blessed Jesus – He is my best Friend."

*April 5th:* Appeared very low, wept much, and signed, "I am afraid I shall not be saved at last." He was reminded of the Lord's immutability. He signed, "I know it, but want more feeling."

*April 9th:* Was sent for late at night; found him very ill; he had fainted when I went in. He opened his eyes, saw me sitting by him, and signed, "I am lost," closed his eyes again, and in ten minutes looked at me, and signed, "I am lost." I had time before he closed his eyes the second time to sign to him, "You will never be lost while Jesus lives." In a few minutes, he looked at me again, and the third time signed, "I am lost. I have no interest in God's grace. You are come to see my death, and you will see." He then closed his eyes, and appeared dying for a quarter of an hour; and, O what a solemn, affecting scene – his dear friends weeping around him; and the last few signs he had made – *I am lost – I am lost* – piercing a tender father's heart. Weep not, my dear

friends, he will not die in this state; he will give us another glorious testimony of God's free grace and mercy before he dies. He roused up from his fainting fit, and I reminded him of one of the Lord's former visits to his soul. He signed, "Give me the Bible." He found the words, Revelation 7. 15, 16: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat," and was comforted. Who among us, that witnessed this dear young friend in this awful conflict, and then with the Word of God in his trembling hands combatting the powers of hell, sin and unbelief, can forget it? Truly this was a night to be remembered.

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

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

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



*Lord's day evening, April 15th:* Called on my dear young friend and son in the faith. He was very low in his mind. He had been reading about Bunyan's man in the iron cage; was very fearful he should prove like him. He had also been thinking much of Esau, and feared he should be nothing after all but a reprobate. He signed, "Did Esau repent?" I endeavoured to explain to him Hebrews 12. 16, 17 ("Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"); that God never gave Esau a spiritual blessing, therefore he never possessed one; and that Esau never did in the fear of God desire a spiritual blessing. He showed great interest in the exposition, and signed, "I understand – I understand; but I often fear I am not honest." After some interesting communion, I left him with much hectic fever and very high pulse.

*April 16th:* Found my dear friend reading God's Word and very comfortable in his mind. He showed me Psalms 1 and 2, and very much enjoyed Titus 2. 13, 14: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He fixed his finger upon the word "purify," and signed, "Ah, that is what I want." This was a very pleasant visit, and I left my friend satisfied of his interest in Jesus, and his faith fixed upon the Rock of Ages.

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

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

*April 23rd:* Found him very weak in body, but with his faith firmly fixed upon the Rock of Ages. Asked him if he was satisfied of his interest in Jesus? He signed, "Yes – yes!" I again signed, "Have you no doubts and fears about this important matter now?" He replied, "None at all. I can commit all to Jesus. He will take good care of me in life and death, and I will 'crown Him Lord of all.'"

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

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

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

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

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

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

and with much feeling, and a sweet smile, pointed to the eighth and ninth verses: “Is He a Fountain? there I bathe,” and, “Is He a Fire? He’ll purge my dross.”

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

*April 27th:* Went in at six in the evening. He held out his hand, and very soon signed, “I am going home.” I signed, “Do you long to go?” He replied, “Yes – yes; I long to see precious – precious Jesus.”

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

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

A little before seven, he was carried up to bed in a dying state, and then commenced such a solemn, interesting, glorious and triumphant scene I never witnessed before. Deaf and dumb as our beloved brother was, and almost past signing, yet he lay with his soul full of glory. I signed, “Is Jesus precious now?” “Yes – yes, He is very – very precious.” He fixed his eyes upon his dear sister, who had been his kind, faithful and affectionate nurse. She signed, “Jesus is all.” He made an effort, raised up his hands, and signed, “MY BELOVED.” This was the last sentence he was able to sign with his fingers, and he took hold of his father’s thumb, with both hands, moving it up and down for about a quarter of an hour, meaning, “Good, good; I am safe, father; I am happy.”

He then caught sight of me, and took hold of my thumb to assure me he was safe and happy; then in triumph raised his arms, and clapped his hands above his head, while his countenance appeared illuminated with the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. After many gestures that we understood to signify the transport of his soul, the dear, dying youth in a very solemn manner put out his arm, in the form to mean, “Truth, truth,” while his look at me and his dear friends was to signify, “Hold it fast; contend for it. Truth will support you as it does me.” After lying quiet for some time, his last effort to signify to us the glorious prospect before him was by taking hold of the bedclothes, making them into a banner, waving it over his head as an emblem of Victory! Victory! Victory! O my dear reader, I must leave you to form some opinion of the feelings of his God-fearing friends, who witnessed this wonderful triumph of free grace.

He took a very affectionate farewell of his dear father about twelve o’clock, and soon after five in the morning of April 28th, 1849, his ransomed spirit entered heaven to behold his precious Jesus, and to possess the fulness of immortal glory which the Lord had given him the earnest of, when the Holy Spirit applied these words to his soul, “They shall hunger no more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” [He was 24 or 25 years old.]

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

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

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

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

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**According to Mine Heart – The Collected Correspondence of J.K. Popham**, edited by Matthew J. Hyde; 419 pages; hardback; price £18.00 plus £2.84 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from Harpenden or local agents.

This book contains 187 letters written by Mr. Popham, sorted in date order into eight sections, the first seven being the seven decades from 1870 to 1937, the date of his death, and the eighth being undated letters. This covers almost his whole life as a minister of the gospel; he first preached among the Strict Baptists in April 1869, which means that he was upheld in that sacred office for over sixty-eight years. During this period he held two pastorates, the first at Shaw Street Chapel, Liverpool, for over eight years, and the second at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, for almost fifty-five years.

Dr. M.J. Hyde as Editor has added footnotes to the letters wherever he felt this to be necessary for present-day readers to understand the references contained in the letters. This means that his editorship in no way intrudes into altering the original wording of the letters. He has also given the source of each letter. The book also contains: A Foreword by Mr. J.R. Broome; A brief Biographical Note of James Kidwell Popham by Mr. S.F. Paul; An Introduction

to the Letters by the Editor, Dr. M.J. Hyde; and Biographical Notes of Correspondents and People Mentioned in the Letters. There are seven appendices which give added background information which the Editor has researched. They are: 1. Mr. Popham's Letter to the Editor of the *Gospel Standard* dated October 4th, 1875 – this relates to the review of a sermon by Septimus Sears. 2. The God-Honouring Movement of 1934. 3. Mr. F.H. Wright and his friendship with Mr. Popham. 4. The Baptism of a Young Man on December 27th, 1933. 5. To The Readers of the *Friendly Companion*, monthly letters written by Mr. Popham as Editor of that magazine. 6. Mr. Popham on The Office of a Pastor, being an address given to Mr. Jesse Delves at a Church Meeting held at Galeed when Mr. Delves resigned his office as deacon due to his acceptance of the pastorate at Clapham. 7. Mr. Popham's Scottish Connection.

This valuable collection of letters gives a unique opportunity of entering into the private, church and denominational life of an esteemed minister and pastor who also held the office of Editor of the *Gospel Standard Magazine* for thirty years.

His humility and low views of his own importance plainly stated in the letters are pearls of great price in his character and do much to disprove the reputation given him by some, that he was proud and unbending. By grace he was able to preach and stand fast for the truth, but his walk and conduct proves his utter dependence on His God for all needed help.

We unhesitatingly recommend this book to our readers.

J.A. Hart, Chippenham

**Christ in the Book of Zechariah**, by B.A. Ramsbottom; paperback; 77 pages; price £3.25 + £0.81 postage and packing; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from Harpenden or local agents.

The minor prophets are an often-neglected part of Holy Scripture, some people mistakenly assuming that the word "minor" refers to a lesser importance, whereas it refers to the fact that the prophets were not so well known, for example, as Isaiah and Jeremiah, and that their prophecies are briefer than those of the major prophets.

We can be sure, however, that when the Lord Jesus Christ preached the sermon to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, that the prophecy of Zechariah was included in the sacred discourse, as the word distinctly says, "And beginning at Moses and *all* the prophets, He expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

The prophecy of Zechariah is in fact a series of visions which the prophet was given, particularly to encourage the faith of the Jews who had returned from the captivity in Babylon, but who were confronted with great mountains of difficulty especially in the rebuilding of the temple. To the believing Jews, who were waiting and watching for Christ's coming, these revelations would have been a great strength as they were led to contemplate the greater, holy temple of Christ which was to be accomplished in the incarnation.

Mr. Ramsbottom has ably and succinctly brought out these gospel tidings of Christ in those parts of Zechariah which concern His glorious Person and work. It is not in one sense a commentary on the whole prophecy as chapters 5 and 6 are not included as they do not speak of the coming Saviour.

As the style ably combines depth of doctrine with simple exposition, this little treatise will be prized by both older and younger readers who desire to see “Christ in all the Scriptures.”

At the end of each chapter there is a quotation from the *Devotional Family Bible with Notes and Illustrations* by John Fawcett, which beautifully complements the exposition.

May it be our desire to know Christ personally and savingly in the Book of Zechariah as the postscript aptly exhorts the reader.

It is a pleasure wholeheartedly to recommend *Christ in the Book of Zechariah* to the readers of the *Gospel Standard* and we hope our Editor might feel constrained to put his pen to paper in this way again.

G.D. Buss, Chippenham

**Faith Unfeigned**, by John Calvin; hardback; 189 pages\*; price £14.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

We found this nicely-produced book interesting both historically and spiritually. It consists of four sermons preached by Calvin in 1549 and prepared by him for publication in 1552. The texts are Psalm 16. 4, Hebrews 13. 13, Psalm 27. 4 and Psalm 27. 8. An appendix contains a letter from Calvin to King Edward VI of England along with an exposition of Psalm 87; a letter to an unidentified friend; and a letter to Nicolas Duchemin, future assistant to the Bishop of Le Mans.

Robert White of Sydney, Australia, has performed a labour of love in newly translating the sermons directly from the French. His style is very simple, and easy to read and understand, in places even colloquial – we wonder if purposely so? Calvin in quoting Scripture translates directly from the original, though the texts at the heads of the sermons read rather strangely to us. Would it not have been a good idea to print them as in the Geneva Bible?

The great point of the sermons and letters is: how to confess Christ and maintain the integrity of faith in a hostile situation with the possibility not only of persecution but of death itself. The translator makes an interesting point in his introduction: that we look back and take for granted the glorious success of the Reformation while Calvin himself was fearful that the dreadful opposition might succeed.

Calvin’s main point is that true belief must show itself outwardly – so that a covert or private practice of faith (“God only requires worship in spirit”) is compromising the truth. This theme runs through the whole book.

Apparently there were many in days of severe persecution who went to Mass and outwardly joined in Roman Catholic worship while claiming that they were faithful to Reformed truth in their hearts. Calvin is very severe on this, speaking in the strongest terms of the blasphemy of the Mass, and how the Lord calls for entire obedience. His points are valid and true – but we should have liked to have seen a little more of where the grace and strength to stand comes from! In his letter to “an unknown friend,” Calvin is much milder. (Strangely, Calvin accepts the validity of Roman Catholic “baptism.”)

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\* In the brochures and advertisement forms sent to us, we cannot understand why the number of pages stated is invariably so many more than actually appear.

This is specially a book for lovers of Calvin, and there is much valuable teaching in *Faith Unfeigned*. We cannot altogether follow the publishers' stress that the sermons are "as contemporary now as when first preached." There is certainly a need to stand firm ("Be thou faithful unto death") but the issues and background seem to be different.

**A Way to Pray**, by Matthew Henry; edited and revised by O. Palmer Robertson; hardback; 417 pages; price £14.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

It is just over three hundred years ago that the famous commentator Matthew Henry produced a lovely book, *A Method for Prayer and Scripture Expressions Proper to be Used under Each Head*. He even interrupted his commentary on the whole Bible to do this. Chapter after chapter appears, using the very words of Scripture as prayer. In fact, much of the book consists of scriptural language suitably used.

For instance, right at the beginning on "Bring before your mind some of the glorious aspects of this great God" – with sub-headings,

1. He is an eternal God who has no beginning of days, end of life, or change caused by the passing of time.

2. He is present in all places and at all times with all glory. (Six sub-headings altogether.)

And so on. There are prayers for the spread of the gospel; for mealtimes; before the Lord's supper; for the family; for children; for those with spiritual problems – dozens of them, in fact, for almost every known occasion.

The compiler writes from a deep love of the book, which has been his companion for over fifty years. Sadly, we found that he had modernised the book far too much! He speaks of "wanting to update the language of the book"; he describes it as "revised, edited and updated." "The present revised and edited work has made an attempt to speak the language of prayer in today's mode of expression." We are sorry it has; we do not think Matthew Henry would be pleased.

We are surprised to read concerning the author's own translation of the Word of God: "It falls more in the category of 'dynamic' rather than 'literal' renderings of Scripture. This approach is justified in large part by the fact that the effort is being made to make the reading as natural as possible in the language of today."

**A Day's March Nearer Home**, the Autobiography of J. Graham Miller; edited by Iain Murray; hardback; 312 pages; price £16; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This is the remarkable and interesting story of the long life of a New Zealand Presbyterian minister, written by himself for his own family. Graham Miller was born in 1913, dying at the age of 94 in 2008. It is nice to have a *modern* biography.

Many were Mr. Miller's roles during his long life: lawyer, missionary, preacher, author and intercessor. Apart from preaching in Australia and New Zealand, he served for some years in the New Hebrides, and was so highly esteemed that when he died a day of national mourning was appointed there!

The one point that stands out is his unflinching loyalty to the infallibility, inspiration and inerrancy of the Word of God, and his loyal stand, almost alone

at times, against Modernism. There are, though, things with which we cannot agree – some of his associations. (The Editor of the book himself confesses he cannot agree with everything.) The only excuse made is that, at that time, they had the same commitment to his own Biblical view. He himself was committed to the theology of Calvin and the Westminster Confession and loved the Puritan and old Scottish divines.

It has been said: “This is a modest and unselfconscious story of personal, domestic and ministerial godliness.” *A Day’s March Nearer Home* will be of special interest to those with Presbyterian views. The title, of course, is taken from James Montgomery’s well-known hymn, “For ever with the Lord.”

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### THE GOSPEL

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And does thy labouring bosom heave?  
 Thy heart for Jesus sigh?  
 Though guilt and doubtings make thee grieve  
 Still for His mercy cry.

If there’s a space within thy breast,  
 That none but Christ can fill;  
 He died, and therefore, can give rest;  
 He’s true, and, therefore, will.

Did ever sinner sink to woe,  
 Thirsting for pardoning grace?  
 Ten thousand voices answer, No!  
 None die that seek His face.

Go then, poor leper, cast thy soul  
 Down at His nail-pierced feet;  
 He’ll raise thee up; He’ll make thee whole,  
 And all thy foes defeat.

His word, His cross, His blood, His pain,  
 His rising from the grave,  
 Ring through the earth again, again,  
 He’s willing now to save.

*Clifton Hymnal*

We have been told that F.C.P. Pearce composed the tune *Hillborough* especially for this hymn.

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The eye may be watery and the heart flinty. An apricot may be soft without, but it has a hard stone within.

*Thomas Watson*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
MARCH 2011

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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 VOICE OUT OF THE CLOUD**

*Sermon preached by Mr. R.J. Moore at Hope Chapel, Horsham,  
on June 22nd, 1986*

**Text:** “While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him” (Luke 9. 34, 35).

Possibly some of you have wondered why the transfiguration of Christ took place. We have often read this passage – you have, I have. And I hope the thought has been provoked, namely what does this mean, what is the teaching of the Lord in this glorious appearance of Jesus Christ upon the mount? What are we to learn from it? What was the intention of the Lord in bringing this to pass? And I think it good to enquire in this way, and as we attempt to do that, I trust with the Lord’s help we shall notice this, that the glory of Christ is here bound up with His sufferings.

We have here Christ in His glorious appearance; the fashion of His countenance was altered when He was in prayer and His raiment was white and glistening. Things were very different from what they were before this occasion. These disciples had never seen Christ like that before. And these disciples, Peter, James and John, although they had doubtless often thought about Moses and Elias – that is Elijah – and were acquainted with the law that was given by one – Moses – and the prophecy which came by another, and the wonderful works too, even Elijah, but to see them appearing in glory with Christ in that glorious appearance which He assumed must have been a wonderful experience. But what did it mean? I believe His sufferings and His glory which is derived from and connected with His sufferings are bound up together. I believe this was a preparation for the cloud that was to overshadow these disciples and others at the time of Christ’s sufferings and death, when He would be taken and subjected to a mock trial and an entirely false accusation and be put to death with malefactors. They were not to lose sight of His glory in His sufferings. And if they could not trace His glory in those sad hours, when His hour – Christ’s hour – was come, they were to see it very soon after. Besides that, may we not believe that this occasion was one of preparing His disciples to enter into glory at the

appointed time? Here was, as it were, a glance of heaven and of Christ crowned with glory and honour for the suffering of death. Here was something which they were to enter into more fully and indeed eternally at God's appointed time.

One may ask, Why the cloud? Why did this cloud appear and overshadow them? And what does that set forth? Well, as we have, I think, already said, the sufferings of Christ. Because at the time of the sufferings of Christ, the disciples of Christ were really in a cloud, enveloped by it. They were in darkness; they were terrified; they were mystified. Think of the two on the Emmaus road and how they replied to the Lord Jesus who drew near and went with them. These things which had so recently happened, indeed just three days previously in Jerusalem. "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done." They were of a sad countenance. They were in the cloud; they were fearful; their hopes were dashed, as they thought, to pieces and could not be put together again. But they were. They were put together again. They were made whole again; their hopes were renewed. They did see Jesus. And how they were blessed when they saw Him, when Jesus made Himself known to them, especially in the breaking of bread! And as soon as they saw Him, He vanished out of their sight. On this occasion, when Moses and Elias in that glorious form in which they appeared, vanished out of their sight, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

Now, verse 34. "While he" – that is Peter – "thus spake." How did he speak? We read that Peter said to Jesus, "It is good for us to be here." I do not doubt that, do you? It must have been good for them to have been there. The Lord Jesus took them there with Him. It was good for them to be there for the spiritual lessons that were taught them and for the glory that was to be revealed in them in God's time. For then Peter says, "Let us make three tabernacles." Notice he does not say temples or synagogues. He associates Moses with the tabernacles and Elijah, or Elias, as well. He is going back into the Old Testament because, doubtless, of the appearance of these two Old Testament men of God. "Let us make three tabernacles." What for? Did they need tabernacles? Moses and Elias were delivered from the tabernacle of this body, the body of sin and death in which they once were. And did Christ need a tabernacle? Of course not. We know that Christ spake of the tabernacle, or temple, of His body which was to be raised in three days, and was. But Peter went astray here, widely astray. He did not know what to say. He felt he must say something, but what he said was wrong. "Let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Possibly he meant something in this way: three monuments or memorials, something to perpetuate the memory of this wonderful and

glorious occasion. He might have meant something like that. But we read also that he knew not what he said.

Then it was that the cloud came. "While he thus spake, there came a cloud." And I am not going to labour this point that the cloud came expressly because Peter knew not what he was saying, but I am going to say this: there are times when we know not what we are saying and as a consequence there comes a cloud. Have you ever had a cloud come over you through something you have said amiss, something you have done amiss? I have, many, many times. I say that to my shame. I have spoken amiss. I have done amiss, I have thought amiss, and a cloud comes. It is very solemn for God's people when they can clearly associate the cloud with their sin. Friends, what are we to expect from sin, but a cloud and darkness and bondage and fear? The Lord is not the author of confusion. Peter was confused over this matter and was more confused when the cloud came because he feared. "They feared as they entered into the cloud." You see one thing leads to another. O how we need the Lord to keep the door of our lips! How we need Him to keep our hearts and our minds through Christ Jesus! How easy it is to grieve the Holy Spirit. Have not some of you said things you wish you never had? We have all done things we wish we had never done. We have thought things we know we should never have thought. We have left undone those things we should have done. And what is the result, the outcome? It is a cloud. Is there a cloud overshadowing you at this present time? Can you see the reason for that cloud? And does this make you pray for the cloud to be lifted? You may say, "Well, I brought this cloud upon myself." That is true. I have brought many a cloud upon my own soul, but I cannot remove the cloud. The Lord can. What a mercy He does!

"While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them." Perhaps young people like old people can be quite frightened with shadows. I remember as a child how frightened I was of certain shadows. Shadows can only be produced by something which is substantial, but the shadow is nought. The shadow is not the substance or the reality. But all the same, one can be very frightened with certain shadows, or shades, or seasons of darkness – when the soul is beclouded and the conscience is weighed down with guilt and the heart overcharged with burdens and trials and grief and sorrow, especially over one's sin. It is no sweet and enjoyable experience then to be overshadowed. Are you overshadowed?

O how the shadow of Satan is seen cast right across our land, and if the shadow is there, he is not far away you may be sure. He casts that shadow over our nation and he casts shadows over the souls of God's people and over their minds. He has such an influence over us. He has over me and I am sure he has over you. If you know your own heart, sinner, then you know something of the power that Satan has over you.

We have wicked and deceitful hearts, desperately wicked. We said recently referring to that Scripture, that awful description we have of the human heart by nature, that one can be ill and one can be desperately ill: and so one can be wicked and one can be desperately wicked. And God says our hearts are desperately wicked. Desperately wicked! And above all things they are deceitful. "Who," asks God, "can know it?" We have such hearts; no wonder we have shadows. Every sin casts its shadow. Is there a great shadow over you at present? Is it the mountain of your guilt? Is it the weight and the burden of your sin? Can you lift that burden? Can you remove that cloud? Well, of course you cannot! If you had strength enough, you would try. All you can do is to pray the Lord to remove that shadow and to do it like this, where He says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins"; "Thy sins and thine iniquities will I remember no more." And that is the gospel!

And next we read this, that "they feared as they entered into the cloud." It is one thing to have a clear vision at eye level, so to speak, even with a cloud above us. It is one thing to be like Elijah's servant who saw a cloud in the distance – "I see a cloud like a man's hand" – that was an omen for good in that time of drought. Three-and-a-half years did that drought last. No rain. You think of it! And then the directions the man of God gave to his servant: "Go again seven times." He came back after a while and said, "I see a cloud like a man's hand," which the man of God interpreted as a message from God saying that there would be an abundance of rain; make preparation for this abundance of rain. That is quite another thing, compared with one entering into a cloud. It is to be enveloped all about with a cloud. And if we were up in the clouds – I do not mean flying above the clouds – I mean if we were on some high peak surrounded by a cloud, what fears that would create in us. We dare not move for fear of going over the edge. We dare not move in any direction for fear of taking the wrong path. We do not know how big that cloud is. It might be much bigger than we think, or not so big as we think. But you think of what it must be to be surrounded in a cloud, I mean literally. And if that is not pleasant naturally, it is much more unpleasant spiritually and terrifying to the child of God.

These men of God, Peter, James and John, feared as they entered into the cloud. This much is certain: they could not stand aside from it; they could not retreat from it; they had to enter into it. The things which God brings upon His people, why, they have to enter into them. They cannot take diversion in any direction to avoid the things which God brings upon them. Have you got a cloud upon you at the present time? Impenetrable, dark, it seems permanent and abiding. Will it ever be

lifted? Do you remember how it came your way? Can you tell why God brought it into your path? Perhaps you can and perhaps you cannot. But at any rate, you fear as you enter this cloud. Perhaps the cloud has been upon you for a very long while. The Lord can lift it; He can speak a word to disperse it.

Think of those characters we read of in Psalm 107, where we have different experiences of God's people and in each case we have this: "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses." In each of those seven instances I think which we have in Psalm 107, in each case these different people, different characters in different situations, they cry unto the Lord in their trouble. Is that what you are doing? You may say, "I have no strength left by which I may cry; my strength is gone; my faith is shattered; my hopes are nil and I can only fear the worst, that this cloud will envelop me throughout the eternal ages." No, it will not. If you cannot cry, can you sigh? If you cannot sigh, can you groan? Remember that sweet and encouraging word in the Psalm where the Lord promises us, He assures us faithfully that He will not despise the prayer of the destitute. Are you destitute? Is your case a hopeless case? Can you see an end to all perfection in yourself? Has the Lord caused your beauty to be turned into corruption?

One of the earliest texts I preached, from – it was at Heathfield Chapel, I remember – was, "When Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth." Then what? That man is turned into corruption in his own feeling; his beauty is gone; his perfection is gone; his self-righteousness is non-existent.

Now those few things I have just named may constitute the cloud which covers someone here tonight. It is a real cloud. It is not an imaginary cloud; it is not a puff of mist; it is not a vapour which appears for a little while and then vanishes away. It is there when we go to sleep at night, if we are able to sleep; it is there when we awake in the morning. It is there, that cloud is with you and over you, overshadowing you as you go through the day. And it is there when you come to God's house. It is there when you read the Word of God. It is there when you would fain approach the throne of grace. If only this cloud would go! The Lord will remove it in due season. He removed this cloud.

These three men of God could not possibly judge how long they would be in that cloud. How could they tell? How did they know by what means this cloud would be lifted? They did not know. Being men of like passion with us, they might well have thought that this cloud had come to stay and would be there when they quit this earthly scene. Happily it was not. How was it removed? We are told here in the Word:

“And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Beloved Son: hear Him.” We are not to understand this, of course, as explaining what the cloud is. The cloud was not the Son of God. It was a voice, a voice from heaven directing sinners in that cloud to the beloved Saviour, the Saviour of Peter, James and John and of all who through grace come to believe in Jesus Christ to receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. There came a voice. We are not told how soon; we would judge that it was fairly soon. But, nevertheless, a voice was heard. Has a voice come to you? The voice of God. Jesus said when upon the earth, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life ... and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” “My sheep hear My voice.” O have you heard the voice of Christ? The voice of Christ is the voice of love and mercy, proclaiming salvation from the heavens. Have you heard this voice? What a precious voice is the voice of Jesus Christ!

I believe for the most part the Lord speaks to His people in a still small voice. You know how the prophet Elijah felt amidst the rending of the rocks, the violent winds, the thunderstorm, and so on. God was not in this, God was not in that. And of course God causes those things to happen. That thunder which Elijah heard was the voice of God, so to speak. “The God of glory thundereth,” as we read in the Scriptures of truth. “The God of glory thundereth.” And then there was the still small voice. After all that, the fire and so on, a still small voice. Now God was in that and Elijah knew that that was the voice of God to him. And then it was that he wrapped his face in his mantle. That had the effect, the desired effect upon him which the others had not. The awful commotion, why, one would think that that would have an effect upon the man of God. But this silent, almost silent, still small voice, this whisper from God, that did it. That had an effect which God designed it should have upon the soul of His servant the prophet.

“There came a voice out of the cloud.” Who can tell? You who are in a cloud now may soon hear this voice. We read in the Psalms that He sent His word and healed them. “O,” you say, “He must do more than that.” Now don’t you be like Naaman. He was a great man with his master, but he was a leper. You know how he came to the man of God for healing: surely he will come out to me and do some great thing. Said God’s servant, “Go and wash seven times in Jordan and thou shalt be cleansed.” He did not like that. So I think Naaman must have gone with certain pre-conceived ideas. “Surely I thought he would come out to me.” He had not even seen the man of God – “He has not seen me and my leprosy; he just told me to do something. Anyway, there are better waters, better rivers than Jordan. May I not go there and be cleansed?” Naaman’s servants were wiser than their master: “If he had bid thee do

some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? Then why not do this lesser thing as the man of God directs?" Which he did, and then he came away cleansed. Why do I quote that? Why do I go back to that event? Because you might be like Naaman, a leper. Sin is spiritual leprosy.

I used to work with a man who was a retired naval commander and he was a nice man, a real gentleman. He was a little older than me I suppose, a church warden in a fairly low church down in Lewes, in Sussex, where we lived at the time and where I worked. And one day he asked me to witness his signature in connection with his navy pension; I had to sign my name and beneath there was a line saying, description – not occupation, but description – and I paused. He said, "Why aren't you writing?" I said, "Well I don't know what to write, whether to put: My name is Legion, for we are many, or, five hundred pence debtor." He said, "O you malign yourself." Well, he did not know much of the Word I am sure. He came to our house once and looked at my books and saw *Bunhill Fields*. He said, "Ah! my grandfather was buried there," and he borrowed the book and had an extract made. Whether other professors agree or not, whether they know anything of this or not, yet God's people know that they are like the mad Gadarene: "My name is Legion, for we are many"; and again, not fifty pence but "five hundred pence debtor." I mention these things to encourage you, if the Lord will indeed make that of encouragement to you.

Out of this cloud poor sinners hear this voice: "This is My beloved Son." Hear and follow Him closely; do not go back from following after Him, as indeed we know some did – they went back and walked no more with Him. Peter and a few more did not go back, Peter saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." You will hear this voice. You may hear these words from God telling you that this is His beloved Son. The experience you are passing through is to bring you to His dear Son, to unite you by faith to His dear Son, to make His dear Son precious to you and to have something of the fulness of Christ conveyed to your soul, because, you know, there is a fulness residing in Him, in our ever living Head. And that fulness is not for Himself, but for sinners. That is why it pleased the Father that in Him, His dear Son, should all fulness dwell. That fulness is for you, poor sinner, for you guilty one, for you, black and vile though you are. You see, Christ came to save sinners, to redeem them from hell. We sometimes sing as you know: "Christ is the Friend of sinners." The next line I believe is, "Be that forgotten never." But it so often is forgotten. Sinners are dear to Christ. John Owen said, and I believe truly, that sinners, yes sinners are indispensable to the glory of Christ. And as a dear friend said, "And a precious Christ is indispensable for sinners." So it is in that mutual way. "This is my beloved Son."

Here we have the eternal Father delighting in His eternal, only-begotten and well-beloved Son. In what way? Proclaiming Him, introducing Him as it were to sinners, setting Him forth as being their only hope, their one and only hope of eternal salvation through His sufferings and sacrifice and sin-atoning death, His precious blood and righteousness. "This is My Beloved Son." Has the Father introduced His beloved Son to you? Or shall I put it another way? Has the dear Holy Spirit revealed Christ to you? Have you had the manifestation of Jesus Christ, of His Person and glory and fulness and riches and atoning blood and spotless righteousness and His heavenly, divine virtues, which are exactly suited to the state and condition of a poor, needy sinner like you and like me? Have you heard anything resembling this voice: "This is my beloved Son: hear Him"? O it is a great thing to have an ear to hear Him. The ear which hears Him is not the natural ear, but a spiritual ear. Have you got a spiritual ear? Have you got an ear for Christ? Even if you cannot say, I have a heart for Christ, I have a love for Christ, have you got an ear for Christ?

I believe the work of grace in some cases may well begin just there. You hear this voice: His voice convicting you of sin, His voice bringing you in guilty and with a dumb mouth. "I opened not my mouth," says the psalmist, "because Thou didst it." Didst what? Convinced me of my sin, showed me my lost and ruined, terrible, devastated condition in Thy holy sight; "because Thou didst it." You are the ones who will hear in due season such a word as this from heaven, I am sure of it: "This is My beloved Son, preached by My servants, set forth in the Scriptures of truth, and whom I have sent to seek and to save that which is lost." "Now," says the Father, "hear Him; hear Him." You have heard of this glorious vision or appearance of Moses and Elias. Now do not hear Moses in such a way as to go back to the law, but hear the gospel – "Hear Him." By all means read the law which was given by Moses, but receive as you are enabled to receive by the Spirit, receive the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. "Hear Him."

Sometimes I think we are so busy, far too busy to hear Him; too preoccupied. I read somewhere a little line like this: "If you are too busy to pray, you are too busy." We lead busy lives, more sometimes perhaps than at other times, and some people more than other people. O what a mercy it is to have time enough, an ear enough, and need enough to hear Him; a case suitable to hear Him, to hear Him proclaiming salvation, free and full, and hear Him proclaiming that all is finished and done and settled for you who believe in Me, that I have made your heaven secure and I blot out your sins and remember them no more for ever. Hear Him proclaiming this: "I will cast all thy sins behind My back." Hear Him proclaiming this: "From all your idols and from all your filthiness will I



cleanse you. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you.” O “Hear Him”!

It is a wonderful thing to have a spiritual ear. A spiritual ear which has opened Christward did not open in vain. There is a time, an appointed time to favour Zion. But do not let that doctrine make you lazy and say, “Well then, I need not bother to listen because there is an appointed time.” That is fatalism. We do not believe in such notions. “Blessed rather,” said Christ, “are those who are watching and waiting for My appearing, for My coming. They shall not wait in vain; they shall not be confounded that wait for Me.”

May the Lord pardon all amiss and add His blessing. Amen.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF GOSPEL PRECEPTS

*By J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)*

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One very simple proof of the importance of the precept is what we may call its *bulk*. Let us examine this point by looking at several of the epistles of the New Testament. We particularly mention these, because as being addressed to Christian churches, the precept occupies in the epistles its distinctive and peculiar place as a harmonious part of the revelation of grace and truth in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Take, then, as our first instance, the Epistle to the Ephesians – the fullest and richest, and what we may perhaps call the highest in doctrine, of all that Paul, under divine inspiration, wrote to the churches. Out of six chapters in this Epistle three are preceptive, mingled indeed with and based upon doctrinal and experimental truth, for in this channel the precept always runs, but assuming the form of clear, positive exhortation, admonition, warning and direction. Consider this point, ye ministers, who Lord’s day after Lord’s day preach nothing but doctrine, doctrine, doctrine, and ask yourselves whether the same Holy Ghost who revealed the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians did not also reveal the last three? Is not the whole Epistle equally inspired, a blessed part of that Scripture of which we read, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?” (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). How then can you be “a man of God perfect” (that is, complete as a minister), and “thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” if you wilfully neglect any part of that Scripture which God has given to be profitable to you, and to others by you?

But let us examine this point a little more closely. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4. 1-3). In the preceding chapters the apostle had set before the believing Ephesians their eternal election in Christ, their predestination unto the adoption of children, their redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of their sins, their sealing by the Holy Spirit of promise as an earnest of their inheritance, their being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and that for a habitation of God through the Spirit. What a cluster of heavenly blessings, and all theirs as saints and believers in Christ Jesus! What then? “*I therefore.*” What a “therefore!” How it throws us back upon those spiritual blessings wherewith God has blessed us in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1. 3), and brings them all to bear upon our walk and conduct! “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”

But not content with this general exhortation, the apostle follows up the precept for three successive chapters, pressing upon their heart and conscience every godly fruit, such as lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, love and union, mutual forgiveness; and mingles his exhortations with solemn warnings against every sin, such as uncleanness, lying, anger, theft, bitterness, wrath, evil speaking, etc. Observe, too, how special and practical he is, taking up not only our individual walk and conduct, but entering also into all our family relationships, urging on husbands, wives, children, servants, masters, every relative duty, and the whole grounded on the highest motives, and based on heavenly and spiritual principles. Thus in this Epistle we have the highest doctrine and the highest practice, the most exalted views of the sovereign, eternal grace of God the Father (1. 3-12, 19-23), of the unspeakable love of God the Son (3. 17-19), and of the quickening, sealing, strengthening work of God the Holy Ghost (1. 13, 17; 2. 1, 18, 22; 3. 16), and following up this full and glorious exposition of the deepest doctrinal truth, we find the closest precept, bringing before our eyes, as the fruit of all this sovereign grace, the most active obedience of heart, lip and life, with every inward grace and every outward fruit.

Look at this point, dear readers. Examine it for yourselves. You have your Bibles before you. You want no learning, no great education to understand this. You only want two eyes – the natural eye, the eye of the body, to read the letter, and the spiritual eye, the eye of the soul, to read the spirit of your Bible. When, then, you are a little favoured in your soul, when you feel your heart softened and melted by a sense of

God's goodness and mercy, get alone for a little while, enter your closet and shut your door, the outward and the inward door (Matt. 6. 6), and prayerfully read the Epistle to the Ephesians; and as your faith embraces with a holy joy and heavenly sweetness the glorious truths of the first three chapters, read on, and by the same faith embrace the wise and holy precepts in the last three, which flowed from the same Holy Spirit who inspired and indited the first.

As there is but "one Spirit" and "one faith" (Eph. 4. 4, 5), depend upon it, if the blessed Spirit enlightens the eyes of your understanding to see the doctrine, and anoints your heart to feel the power of sovereign grace, the same blessed Spirit will anoint your eyes and heart to see and feel the power of effectual grace, and will shine upon the inspired precept as well as upon the inspired promise. Nor will your faith which embraces salvation be less willing to embrace the things which accompany salvation (Heb. 6. 9). We know, indeed, that to do this requires a spiritual mind, but we write for spiritual readers – for those who know something of the power of the Word upon the heart, as well as the meaning of the letter of the Word in their understanding.

Take next the Epistle to the Colossians, which we may call a sister Epistle of that to the Ephesians, as written about the same time (A.D. 61, when Paul was a prisoner at Rome), and dwelling chiefly on the same glorious truths. This Epistle contains four chapters. Of these, two are preceptive, that is, half of the Epistle. Is not this a significant fact? and can it be safe or consistent with becoming reverence to the Word of God's grace tacitly to set aside half an epistle as of little or no moment? Next look at 1 Thessalonians. This contains five chapters, of which the last two are wholly preceptive; and if, instead of reckoning by the chapters, we count the verses, we shall find that somewhat more than half (46 to 43) are devoted to the subject of practice and the claims of Christian obedience.

But an objection may be here stated, that we have *picked* the epistles, and have omitted two of the longest and most important, that, namely, to the Romans, and that to the Hebrews, to neither of which our test of bulk will apply. It is perfectly true that in neither of these Epistles is the proportion of precept to doctrine, measured by bulk, so great as in those which we have examined. But there is a sound and valid reason for this apparent disproportion in both cases. In setting forth, for instance, the grand doctrine of justification by faith in the blood and righteousness of the Son of God, which forms the chief subject of the Epistle to the Romans, it was necessary to be full and ample, that so important a truth might be placed upon a broad and permanent basis. A short epistle, like that to the Philippians, could not have adequately set forth, in all its various bearings, that foundation doctrine which Luther calls the article

whereby the church stands or falls.\* A certain degree, therefore, of drawn out, argumentative proof (for the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Romans is a most masterly and logical piece of sustained reasoning) was necessary to place upon an unshaken foundation the church's grand bulwark against error for all time.

Similarly the priesthood of the Lord Jesus, which forms the subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews, could not be treated in all its fulness and bearings except at considerable length, for it was necessary to trace in it the fulfilment of the Levitical dispensation, with its types and sacrifices, in the Person and work of the God-Man Mediator. We see, therefore, at once, from these considerations, sufficient reasons why these two Epistles form an apparent exception to our test of bulk.

And yet in both of them the precept, if measured not by actual bulk but by weight, by quality not by quantity, which surely is an admirable test, is not less strong and powerful. Read, for instance, Romans 12, 13, 14. What a weight of precept; how condensed, and yet how comprehensive! What firm and strong gospel principles are laid down. The mercies of God (12. 1); the property which Christ has in us (14. 7-9); our membership with Him and with one another (12. 4, 5); the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God (14. 17, 18); the example of Christ (15. 3-6); the claims of brotherly love (13. 8-10); the near approach of full and final salvation (13. 11); and our accountability to God (14. 12); what a foundation is thus laid! And upon this broad basis of Christian privilege what a godly superstructure of Christian precept.

Read from Romans 12. 1 to 15. 7. What a weight of precept. How close and condensed, and yet how full is chapter 12, and with what a weighty, influential principle it begins: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." The body to be presented a living sacrifice unto God; non-conformity to the world; but a transformation of the renewed mind into the image of Christ, with a sensible experience and proof thereby of the perfect will of God. What a foundation for all vital, practical godliness!

Let it suffice for the present to ask ourselves this simple question: "Can it be right, can it be safe, can it be scriptural, to treat all this fulness and weight of precept with no more attention than an obsolete Act of Parliament? or, to speak less harshly, to receive it as the Word of God much as we might do the last chapters of Ezekiel, which we little read

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\* "Articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ;" literally, "The article of a standing or a falling church." J.C.P.

and less understand, though we have no doubt of its being a part of the inspired Scriptures?"

The same observations will apply to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Measured by bulk, the amount of the preceptive part of the Epistle falls short of the doctrinal, but who that reads the two last chapters can deny the weight of exhortation, admonition, warning and direction with which these are filled, but which our limits will not allow us to do more than point out?

But it will be observed that we have merely indicated *bulk* as one proof of the importance of the precept. If our readers feel disposed to follow up our argument, let them examine in this point of view the Epistle to the Galatians, of which two chapters out of six (5, 6) are preceptive; the Epistle to the Philippians, in which precept is so prominent a feature, and so blended with doctrine (1. 6; 2. 5-11; 3. 20, 21) and with experience (1. 21-23; 3. 7-14,) that it may be called a model of preceptive writing; the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, which are nearly all precept; and the Epistles of Peter and James, which are filled with precept from first to last. The amount of precept in the epistles, measured only by the simple test of *quantity*, would surprise a person whose attention had not been directed to that point, if he would but carefully examine it. But it is sad to say how little the Scriptures are read amongst us with that intelligent attention, that careful and prayerful studiousness, that earnest desire to understand, believe and experimentally realise their divine meaning, which they demand and deserve, and which the Word of God compares to seeking as for silver, and searching as for hid treasure (Prov. 2. 4).

Great things are upon the wheel. But though the Lord's path is in the great waters, my path of duty seems plain enough. I am to preach the gospel, mourn over my own sins and the sins of professors and of the nation, and to stir up as many as I can to stand in the breach by prayer. I hope many are thus employed. For the rest, I know that the Lord reigns, that the wrath of man, so far as permitted to act, shall praise Him, shall be overruled to the accomplishment of His wise purposes, and that the remainder thereof He will restrain. All the designs of men, which do not coincide with His, shall be frustrated. In the meantime, He will be a sanctuary to them that fear Him. He bids His people not be terrified. They are warranted to trust in Him, though the earth should tremble, and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea.

Public measures, whether right or wrong, are under His direction. If sword, famine, pestilence or discord go through the land, He sends them. If He take wisdom from the wise, or courage from the bold, I cannot wonder that they do not prosper, when the Lord has forsaken them. Sennacherib and Cyrus were God's servants; no less so, though in a different way, than Moses or Joshua. They performed His commission, and they could do no more.

*John Newton*

## THOUGHTS ON THE 91ST PSALM

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My dear Miss Hudson,

Many thanks to you for your letter. I had not forgotten you. Not a day passes but I remember my flock, and you in particular, in the best manner I am able, before the throne of grace. Be of good cheer; let not either outward crosses or inward trials cast you down, for know the Lord sitteth above the waterfloods. There is nothing that can ever possibly befall them that have fled for refuge to the Redeemer, but it shall work for good to them. However appearances may be for a time, all the promises of God and all the perfections of God are engaged to succour and to save the weakest believer. Ponder, my dear Miss Hudson, that character of the child of God in the second verse of the 91st Psalm, and I doubt not you will be enabled to perceive your own picture in it: "I will say of the Lord, Thou art my refuge" – i.e. to Thee have I fled, an accused, self-condemned, accursed creature – to Thee, as manifesting Thyself in Christ Jesus, have I fled for salvation from the law, from sin, from my own corruptions; and still Thou art all my refuge. "Thou art my fortress." Besieged by the world, by Satan, by my own mighty corruptions, I am kept and defended by Thee alone. Thou holdest me up and I am safe. If Thou leavest me but a moment, I must fall into the hands of my enemies. "Thou art my God." In all my former vanities and in all my former pleasures, I see sin, and I fly from them. I receive not my happiness, nor seek my portion, in the things of sense and time. Thou, O God, art my delight! In Thy favour is life, and in close communion with Thee, whenever I partake of it, is my highest enjoyment. My soul seeketh after Thee: when Thou art absent, and hidest Thyself from me, I am troubled.

Such is the experience, and such the feelings of the faithful in Christ Jesus, and cannot you say, I am a witness, though weak and feeble, of this truth, and in this picture I behold my own experience? Hear, then, how precious in the sight of the Lord thy soul is, and what a complete defence is encompassing thee on every side.

"Surely" – it is not a peradventure, but an absolute certainty; as such you are to receive it – in this confidence you are to use His promise: "Surely the Lord shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler" – from every subtle contrivance and malicious design of Satan. None of his attempts to destroy thee shall succeed but be overruled to thy greater good. "And from the noisome pestilence." Though the world is full of infection, and evil communication, which will corrupt good manners, abounds on all sides; though thy heart is always of itself disposed to receive the infection, and thou mayest think it almost an impossibility to dwell in the world and not to be hurt in thy soul by it, "He shall deliver

thee.” “He shall cover thee with His feathers.” Like the hen, all alarmed and ever intent to protect her little brood, communicating warmth from her body to cherish them, and covering them from every evil she beholds, so shall the Lord bring thy soul near to Him, and manifest Himself to thee, and make thee as sensible He is for thee, and nigh to comfort and protect, as the chickens are sensible they are under their mother’s care. “And under His wings shalt thou trust.” He will give thee the power to believe and depend upon Him. He will create in Thee more and more affiance, in spite of thy natural unbelief of heart. “His truth,” the Word of His grace, the covenant established from everlasting respecting all that are in Christ Jesus, this shall fight for thee and prevail, like the “shield and buckler” which is turned every way by the soldier when in battle to ward off the sword from his body. So will the Lord be jealous for His truth, and lest one jot or tittle thereof should fail those that trust in Him, He will at all times and in all places defend and save unto the uttermost all His people.

Let me entreat you to pray over this scripture – pray to have it impressed, applied and fulfilled in you. Make your complaint against yourself, that you cannot believe these weighty promises, and in thus doing, by degrees the light of life will more and more manifest itself and you will find God is all-sufficient.

I am very happy in meeting with many in London who stand fast in the Lord, to whom He was pleased to make me an instrument of good. I preach generally three times every Sabbath. O pray for me, that I may be supplied abundantly with matter, with sound speech, and with love to souls.

Mrs. K. and my sister enquire with affection after you. They wish you much of the power, presence and comfort of Christ. To Him I commend you, praying He may strengthen you mightily by His Spirit in your inward man, and establish you, so that you may always triumph in Him as your all-sufficient Redeemer.

From your minister always to serve in Christ,

H. Venn

Kensington Gore, July 1st, 1763

Along with Whitefield, Grimshaw and Berridge, Henry Venn (1724-1797) was one of the eminent preachers of the Evangelical Revival. They each possessed a depth of vital godliness.

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A letter has been sent from the Gospel Standard Society to Her Majesty the Queen and to the Prime Minister expressing our deep regret at the way the Pope was welcomed to our country. Formal replies have been received.

## MAKING AN OPEN PROFESSION

*From the diary of Ann Fellows, a member of the church at Birmingham. She died just over three years later, aged 36.*

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May 7th, 1882. It has been my sincere desire for several years to be one amongst the Lord's people, but I felt afraid I never should. However, the Lord has been better to me than all my fears in bringing me through the ordinances of His house today. It is a Sabbath never to be forgotten by me. This morning, when I was thinking about it and begging of the Lord to be with me, these words came: "Them that honour Me I will honour," and I hope I have proved the truth of them, for it has been a happy day to me. Mr. Dennett's text in the morning was Psalm 37. 27. "Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore." Hymns 426, 430 and 427 were sung, which I felt very good, especially the last. What Mr. D. said about departing from evil suited me well. My mind was taken back to the beginning of my religion, and the anxiety I felt to give up everything that was wrong, and to do what was right, so much so that I asked my fellow-servant E. to tell me if she heard me say or saw me do anything that was wrong. When Mr. D. spoke of those that had left father and mother I felt my soul melted within me, for I have been obliged to leave them and everything else of a worldly nature for the truth's sake, but what a great promise it is for such, and what a mercy to be enabled to do so. Mr. D. said that following the Lord in the ordinance of baptism was one of the good things spoken of in the text.

Before Mr. D. baptized me he spoke very nicely of Christ's baptism, also of the eunuch, and the three thousand that were baptized and added to the church at one time, showing that it was the right way into the church, which I believe from my very heart. He also remarked that, "the young person that was about to make an open profession of Christ's name and show to the world that she had come out from it would be watched both by the world and the church, for many eyes would be upon her." My sincere desire is that the Lord would keep me from bringing a reproach upon His name and cause, and that He would bestow upon me much of His grace, and enable me to live continually in His fear, that I may be kept from evil that it grieve me not. Mr. D. said he hoped my baptism might be made a blessing to others who were outside, that they might be brought to follow the Lord.

Before the ordinance of the Lord's supper, Mr. D. said that if one thing pleased the children of God more than another, it was to see an addition to the church, and no doubt the present one was in answer to their prayers, and was an encouragement still to go on praying for Zion's welfare. I felt I could come in with this, for I have often felt Mr. D. and the church on my mind, and have been constrained to pray for both, and



that the Lord would lengthen Zion's cords and strengthen her stakes, that there might be an increase, and that I might be one; and now the Lord has graciously answered my prayers. What an unspeakable mercy to have to do with a prayer-hearing and answering God! Mr. D. said that his desire for me was that I might have much of the grace of God. O that the Lord would grant me this! The portion of Scripture Mr. D. gave me was Job 28. 28. "And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

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### THY WILL BE DONE

*From Thomas Manton on the Lord's Prayer*

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We must go to God for submission to the way God will bring about His own glory; that we may submit to those unpleasing means and circumstances of His providence, that God will take up and make use of, for the glorifying of His holy name. Many times we must be content not only to be active instruments, but passive objects of God's glory. And therefore if God will glorify Himself by our poverty, or our disgrace, our pain and sickness, we must be content.

Therefore we need to deal with God seriously about this matter, that we may submit to the Lord's will, as Jesus Christ did: "Save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12. 27, 28). Put Me to shame, suffering, to endure the cross, the curse, so Thou mayest be glorified. This was the humble submission of Christ Jesus, and such a submission should be in us.

The martyrs were contented to be bound to the stake, if that way God will use them to His glory. Saith Paul, "So ... Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. 1. 20); if my body be taken to heaven in glory, or whether it be exercised or worn out with ministerial labour. We need to deal with God that we may have the end, and leave the means to His own choosing, that God may be glorified in our condition, whatever it be. If He will have us rich and full, that He might be glorified in our bounty; if He will have us poor and low, that He may be glorified in our patience; if He will have us healthy, that He may be glorified in our labour; if He will have us sick, that He may be glorified in our pain; if He will have us live, that He may be glorified in our lives; if He will have us die, that He may be glorified in our deaths: and therefore, "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14. 8).

A Christian is to be like a die in the hand of providence, content whether he be cast high or low, and not to grudge at it, whether He will continue us longer or take us out of the world. As a servant employed beyond the seas, if his master will have him tarry, there he tarries; if he would have him come home, home he comes. So that we have need to deal seriously with God about this submissive spirit.

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### **THE EARLY DAYS OF BRIGHTON BETHESDA**

*Notes by the Matron, Miss Norah Harwood. Miss Harwood died on April 16th, 2001, aged 86*

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In the beginning of 1951, the property at 171 Preston Road, Brighton, was purchased, with quite a lot of useful contents, for about £7,000. Mr. and Mrs. S.F. Paul took over from the previous owners on April 26th, and I arrived about ten o'clock the same day.

The first nine weeks were spent in making preparations to receive our first residents. Only the barest of necessities were purchased, so gifts of all kinds were gratefully received, such as when two friends who visited the Home on April 28th returned with a rug and chair for my bedroom, and the friends at The Dicker kindly collected for a washing machine. Several feather beds were given us, and these we made into pillows and cushions; bedspreads were made into curtains; in fact at one time one could look round the Home and relate where each thing came from.

The fire precaution people required a number of things to be done, such as providing smoke screens and doors, and also a ramp from the garden to the first floor. This ramp was most useful later on for taking wheeled chairs up and down.

Miss Wakeley paid for the relay to be installed, and also the first year's rent. Mr. James did all the work. The main amplifier was in the sitting room, but each room had its own loudspeaker, and later on individual deaf-aids were installed in the sick bay to overcome the various degrees of deafness in there.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul's help during this preparation was invaluable.

By June 20th, we were more or less ready to receive our first residents. They were the Misses Korr of Kilburn, German ladies, who had come to England in their teens because they did not wish to work on their father's farm. They had been baptized by Mr. Ashdown and later became members of Mr. J.E. Hazelton's church. They were devoted to each other, and were one in the things of God. It was very strengthening to one's feeble faith to listen to those dear, gracious women telling each

other of their doubts and fears, hopes and joys, at night after their light was out. Their walk was exemplary. A will had been made for them before they came into the Home, but after a time they felt persuaded that it was the Lord alone who had prospered them, and that all must be left to the Home which He had provided for them in their time of old age. There was no rest until that had been put in order. Then it was plain to all that they just awaited their home call. The elder became ill in December 1951 and failed rapidly. One felt very anxious as they were so inseparable and I wondered what I should do with Miss Rose Korr when her sister was taken, but this was to prove one of the remarkable providences which was managed for me.

January 22nd, Miss Korr's end was very near, but as I had been up all the night before, I decided to go and rest for an hour or so, and was on my way to do this when Mrs. Mulvey (who had a bed in the sick bay) called me and told me she was ill. Within ten minutes she had passed away. It was an awful shock, but the Lord was with me that night as I had not known before. He alone was my Guide and Teacher, and He had done too, what no-one else could have done, made a place for me to put Miss Rose Korr on the following day, so she was not in the room when her dear sister was taken. January 24th, on being told her sister had gone to glory, the dear old lady said, "We have always prayed that the Lord would take me first, but it is not His will. I do hope He will give me grace and patience to wait till He comes for me too."

Of Miss Korr it could truthfully be said, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."

Mrs. Mulvey was a lady of few words, but after her death I heard from a friend who had visited her about a fortnight before, and she related how Mrs. Mulvey had told her of a particular blessing she had had, but which she wanted confirming, and knowing Mr. Delves was to preach on the following Sunday, prayed he might be led to take it for his text. But he did not, and as she knew he usually took the same text twice, she was very down and tried, but in the evening he took "her" text, and she was overjoyed.

Dear Miss Rose Korr was given much grace to bear her great loss, but her poor mind became weak, and she was so forgetful. On April 15th she was so distressed by being told by another resident "that she was nothing but a nuisance." We could not console her, and she collapsed later that day and had to be put to bed, from which she was taken to glory three days later. That day, April 18th, was a wonderful day in Bethesda. There seemed a "hush" on the whole place. Although so ill, she repeated parts of the hymn, "When Thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come," several times, and once she looked at me and asked so earnestly, "Do you think this is the voice of Jesus come to call me home?" and when I

replied I felt it was, she seemed so relieved. In the afternoon she had a severe heart attack and as she was recovering from it, she said, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me," but as if she had complained, she quoted, "But what more can He say than to me He has said?" and then repeated the whole of hymn 329 with such feeling, and I am sure that none who heard her will ever forget it. It was prayer meeting that evening and she followed it through, folding and unfolding her hands as each one prayed. After the service was over, we did what we could to make her comfortable, but realised that the end could not be long. I sat down by her and she took my hand and smiled, and with much feeling repeated,

"Then, loudest of the crowd I'll sing,  
Hosannas to that glorious King,  
And sing of sovereign grace." (The German version.)

She closed her eyes and was gone. What a wonderful testimony she left behind! It came to me as she breathed her last, "Happy are they that endure."

In the early days of the Home, obtaining staff was not at all easy, and it was a great mercy we had no-one who needed real nursing. By the end of the first year we were full and some were very senile. We only had a small sitting room where residents could sit, and as there was no warmth in their bedrooms (and in most cases they were shared rooms too), it added much to the infirmities of old age to have to be so closely together. At one time we had five who were very senile and needed a lot of watching and patience.

Mrs. Lee, who could remember hearing Mr. Philpot and Mr. Tiptaft, celebrated her 100th birthday in December 1951. She enjoyed good health until she fell and fractured her femur in June 1952. This kept her in bed, and in time her mind became affected. She was taken from us in August 1952.

Getting to and from chapel with my increasing family became a big problem. Those who could go by bus had to change buses and then have quite a walk, and the more infirmed ones had to go by taxis which were often most unreliable. So when in 1955 a kind friend provided us with a twelve-seater car, and a rota of young men drove it for us, we felt it to be a wonderful provision.

Mr. and Mrs. Guille were among our first residents. They really came because Mr. Guille was so heavily afflicted, it was too much for Mrs. Guille to manage him alone. They had to break up their home and were so pleased to bring it nearly all to Bethesda, and this was a great help to us. So many little things came like this, such as door mats, clothes baskets, saucepans, etc., etc. It was always a time of great rejoicing when we had helps like these. At first Mr. Guille could get to

chapel, but not for long, and although he could not converse easily, he could let you know when he had heard well, which he often did. He was a very humble man and most appreciative of kindness. His last illness was most distressing, having fits one after the other for hours, but he never complained. After this period he lapsed into unconsciousness for three days, and was taken home on October 2nd, 1952.

A Miss Holland came to us from The Dicker on Wednesday, June 11th, and on Wednesday morning, June 18th, I found she had fallen asleep in Jesus.

Mr. Parker, who had been a deacon at Jarvis Brook, was the next to be taken, on September 21st.

June 1954, we lost a dear little lady who had for many years loved and helped Mr. and Mrs. Kemp, senior, of Biddenden. She was very senile when she came to us, but was a great lover of her Bible and hymn book. On one occasion when she was very restless, I asked her to read to me, and she read a hymn, then looked at me with tears in her eyes and said, "That was good, but I am afraid I know nothing about it." I am sure she had done. She was laid to rest by Mr. Pearson in Bounds Cross Chapel grounds, between her beloved pastor and his second wife.

Mrs. Simkins was our next loss in the following month. She was no talker, but a humble walker and we can but hope, "It is well."

Mrs. E. Haizelden was sorely afflicted, being bent almost in half by arthritis. She was of a very independent disposition, but she had a good religion, which overshadowed the whole, and I had a very sweet testimony of this three weeks before her end. I was getting her up this Sabbath morning, and found she was in a sweet, quiet spirit, so I remarked to her, "You are happy this morning?" and she replied, "Yes! I have had such a good time during the night. That verse which ends, 'And Jesus seals it with His blood,' was so good to me." I found the hymn (no. 83) and read it to her, and we were able to have such a sweet time together, and I could say I loved her for the grace in her. She never lost that sweet frame, and her end was peace on October 27th. To me, hers is a sweet memory.

Mrs. Oakey was a member at Gower Street, but her work (as a children's nurse) took her quite away into the world, and one day she said to me, "It says in the Word of God, 'My people have forgotten me days without number,' and I have forgotten Him *years*, so that is literally true of me." But she was brought back through much mercy, and sweetly testified that the work of grace was real in her. She recovered from a femur operation well, but developed a rare but fatal illness, and was thus gently taken down. The second Sunday in January 1955 (which proved to be her last), Mr. Harwood was preaching at Galeed, and she so earnestly prayed that he might be made the Lord's voice to her. In the

morning his text was, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." It was a very salutary subject to others in the Home (though quite unknown to him), but it was not what poor Mrs. Oakey wanted. In the evening the Lord led him to take, "Certainly I will be with thee," and He spoke it with power to her heart and she had all she wanted. She died the following Friday evening, never losing the comfort of it.

Miss C. Davidson from Worthing came to us in her failing years (92 years old) and although the doctor said she would only live four weeks, she lived four years. The state of her mind sadly hindered us from knowing anything of her spiritually.

Miss Busley came to us in 1954 when she was only 64 years old, as she knew she had an incurable trouble and wished to spend her last days in Bethesda. When she recovered from her operation, she was quite nicely for the first year, able to drive and get out and about, but she spent quite a lot of her time compiling *Durable Riches*, being writings of her cousin. She was a very favoured person, and at times her room seemed almost too sacred to go into. In her last few months, when confined to her room, she had such a wonderful view of the everlasting covenant and the last hymn in Gadsby's was very sweet to her ("What sacred fountain yonder springs?"). As the year 1956 drew to a close, we knew she too was almost at the end of her journey, but on her last day, the enemy of souls was permitted to try her very much, and her cry was, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner," and, "What shall I do if He does not come?" About half an hour before the end, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis visited her, and her last words were to them: "Montgomery says, 'They entered heaven by prayer.'" This was December 27th.

On January 1st, 1957, we lost our dear old Miss Webb, aged 90 years, and on January 9th, Miss Vigor was also taken. Miss Vigor was a quiet, hidden one, but we felt it was well with her, and that was confirmed when, after lying unconscious three days, she suddenly lifted herself on one elbow, opened her eyes which looked with wonder beyond us for a second or two, and then she lay back and she too was gone. So we lost three residents within a month.

Some residents were not with us long or their minds were beclouded and we did not hear any special testimony from them, but what a mercy that does not make any difference to their eternal state.

Mrs. Hoult, who died December 28th, 1958, was the widow of the late deacon of the cause at Edmonton. She was nearly blind when she came to us, and her condition generally deteriorated and she became quite blind and helpless, not even knowing day from night, or any one of us. But on three quite different occasions, I went in to find her sitting up in her cot-bed, looking happy and singing so sweetly. We did not know the tune or the words, the only one was Jesus. She sang each time for

about fifteen to twenty minutes and then would lie down again. Once I said to her, "That was lovely, Mrs. Hoult; will you sing to us again?" and she replied, "I may be able to, one day," and it seemed as if she had joy in her heart.

August 4th, 1959, we lost Miss Bousfield, who at one time was a member of Mr. J.E. Hazelton's church, and a great lover of the truth. She died in hospital following a femur operation.

Two days later we sustained another loss in dear old Miss Drake, a quiet but gracious character. I remember she once had such a good hearing under a sermon on Moses and the burning bush.

It was about this time that friends and residents collected and bought our first hoist. O what a help this was, as at the time we had several heavy and helpless ones.

Now we come to a most unhappy event. Dear old Mrs. Ruth Haizelden, a member at Mayfield, came to us with only one earthly desire, and that was, at her end, to be taken back to Mayfield and buried with her husband, by her beloved pastor, Mr. Sawyer. For this she saved all her weekly pocket money and anything given to her, and gave it to her only son who promised to carry out this wish. She suffered a long and painful illness, and we always shall think the son may have told her on his last visit that he might not be able to carry out her wish, because after that, the poor woman was so distressed and repeatedly said, "But it will make no difference, will it?" To our dismay we found he had arranged for her to be cremated. The main and Home Committee, as well as Mr. Gosden and myself, did all we could to get the son to consent to allow us to carry out Mrs. Haizelden's wish, and pay all expenses, but he would not, and her body was carried out of the Home in a manner which is beyond me to describe, and left us all grief stricken. This was when the forms for residents to sign, stating their wish to be buried and not cremated, came into use.

In 1959 or 1960 we had quite a lot of improvements made in the Home, such as Dimplex radiators put in each room. This was a wonderful comfort, as it meant the residents could at times retreat to their own rooms. Constant improvements were being made wherever they could be, such as dividing rooms, giving us more single rooms, but I have no dates as to when those things were done.

In 1961 the kitchen ceiling fell down while we were having supper one Monday evening, but mercifully no-one sustained serious injury. It was a very distressing upheaval as the rest of the ceiling had to be taken down, and it was three weeks before we could even go into the kitchen. Then it all had to be cleaned and everything put back.

A year or so later, the sick bay ceiling did the same, and later on a bathroom ceiling came down too, so the Committee felt we must have all the ceilings battened, and once this was done, there was no more trouble

from ceilings. It must be remembered that during all these things, our care of the residents had to continue, and often it was most difficult, as when the sick bay ceiling was being done, we had to put three beds in the sitting room and one in the office, and use the dining room as a sitting room too.

Miss Wilcox was at times most distressed mentally, and at these periods very difficult to deal with, and as she got older, they got worse and lasted long. One morning during a bad "turn," I went into her room, expecting to see her in great distress, but found her lying peacefully in bed, and she smiled and said,

"I shall sleep sound in Jesus,  
Filled with His likeness rise."

"I shall; He's told me so." She died in November 1961.

Miss Akers, a member at Galeed, came to us from 91 Buckingham Road, Brighton [the house provided for aged Galeed members in need]. She was one of the most grateful of residents, and always maintained the Lord had provided the Home for her. She died in her sleep, April 1962.

We cared for Mr. and Mrs. Crowter, senior, for about six years, and they were favoured to celebrate their seventieth wedding anniversary with us. On one occasion, dear Mr. Crowter told me with much feeling, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." He was suddenly taken ill, ten days after their anniversary, and spent his last few conscious minutes repeating with Mr. Gosden hymn 472: (*The sweetness of spiritual things*). He was taken home on June 20th, 1963. Mrs. Crowter was much comforted in her last days from the word, "After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Her end was very peaceful on November 3rd, 1963.

Miss Maclean from Scotland was on holiday with a cousin in Worthing when she had a stroke and was taken to a nursing home, but she longed to be among her "own people," and so came to Bethesda. But she was quite helpless and not able to speak much. She was of a sweet disposition and loved by all. After a service, I remarked to her how good it had been, and she replied, "Yes! but it's application we want." Her peaceful end came in August 1963.

Then we went almost a year before our next loss, which was Miss Burling of St. Ives, and she died in hospital on August 10th, 1964.

(*To be concluded*)

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A well-grounded assurance is always attended by three fair handmaids: love, humility and holy joy.

Thomas Brooks



## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal**; large paperback; 273 pages; no price given; published by The Scottish Reformation Society, and obtainable from The Magdalen Chapel, 41 Cowgate, Edinburgh, EH1 1JR.

This book has been sent to us from The Isle of Lewis, requesting we notice it as it is a new periodical. This we are pleased to do, although obviously it is specially intended for Scottish readers.

Edited by Dr. D.W.B. Somerset of Aberdeen, this is an intellectual publication. Articles are on specialised topics, such as, “Was Knox a royal chaplain?”; the authorship of “Queries to the Friendly Advisor”; and three biographies, Alexander Dyce Davidson, David Hay Fleming and James MacGregor.

We are introduced to a fascinating character, “Angus of the Hills,” who is described as “a simpleton,” but a most godly man whose conversation and witness were abundantly blessed. It is almost assumed that the reader will know of him. Many questions concerning him are answered.

To us there is special interest in the long article on “Giving out the Line” – the practice of reading and/or singing the Psalms line by line. This practice still prevails in the Highlands of Scotland, especially at communion seasons. We ourselves have witnessed it at Laide. Comparison is made with the practice in some of our congregations in the past of announcing and singing the hymns verse by verse. Reference is made to Blackboys and Carshalton, the last chapels where this practice continued. In addition mention is made of similar things taking place in the United States of America.

We feel there will be a number of things of special interest to those of our readers who are familiar with the Scottish churches.

There is a well-written and profitable preface by Dr. Somerset. In it he deplores the fact that nowadays much church history is written from a secular point of view. There is great need for a gracious interpretation. If the writer excludes the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, then the church history is sadly deficient.

**Ignatius of Antioch; Polycarp of Smyrna; Irenaeus of Lyons**; new children’s books by Sinclair B. Ferguson; large hardbacks; well illustrated in colour; 40 pages each; £8 each book; published by The Banner of Truth Trust.

Sinclair Ferguson has long been well-known as a preacher and author, and has now written these historical biographies for children – the first in a series, “Heroes of the Faith.” These are serious, factual books, interestingly and simply written and should be suitable as prizes (though the few scriptural quotations are not Authorised Version).

We found these books interesting. No doubt they will be even more so when they come to such men as Athanasius, Wycliffe, Huss, and later Luther, Tyndale, Calvin and Knox.

We are pleased that The Banner of Truth Trust has republished the five-volume set of Charnock’s works. Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) was an eminent Puritan divine, and his *The Existence and Attributes of God* has always been accounted a Christian classic (found in volumes 1 and 2).

Volumes 1 and 2 are available for £28 or the whole set for £70. These are quality, cloth-bound volumes, each containing over 500 pages.

## OBITUARY

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**Clement Arthur Wood**, a much-loved father, grandfather, brother, friend, esteemed minister of the gospel for fifty-three years, and pastor of the church at Tamworth Road, Croydon, for forty-five years, entered peacefully into his eternal rest on November 30th, 2010, aged 90.

The following account is taken from his writings in his own words:

Since knowing that it was required of me to write an account of my call by grace and to the ministry, I have been sorely tried – for who is sufficient for these things? We read also the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. I am made solemnly to ask, will there be anything real left? Indeed it will be His work alone that shall abide, for all that is of the flesh must and will be consumed. May the Lord help a poor sinner, yea, the least among all saints, to write of that which I believe He has done for me and in me, that self may be abased and a precious Redeemer exalted.

“Lord, search my heart; O search it through!  
 Detect, destroy what’s not Thy own;  
 Whene’er I speak, whate’er I do,  
 O may I seek Thy praise alone.”

When I was an infant, only a few days old, my life was despaired of, and I was handed by the nurse to my mother for what was considered to be the last time, but the Lord had decreed that my life was to be spared. I have often pondered over this, and hope I have been enabled to see the Lord’s purpose in it.

I was favoured with godly parents, and I believe as far as memory will take me, that I was always glad to attend the sanctuary services. The Lord has dealt very gently with me, and this is often the source of deep exercise of soul lest my religion should consist alone of upbringing and natural affection, for I cannot speak as some of a certain day, time or place when His work began in my soul. But looking back I believe I can trace through mercy and grace His dealings with me for I was, in boyhood years, made solemnly to feel and to know that I was a sinner in the sight of Almighty God, and when at day school sometimes we used to sing these lines, I believe the Lord fastened them as a prayer in my heart:

“Then O my God prepare  
 My soul for that great day;  
 O wash me in Thy precious blood,  
 And take my sins away.”

This caused me under felt burden of sin to seek His face, especially that He would reveal Himself to me in His Word and in the services of the sanctuary. There was now a desire, a seeking for mercy, a panting after Christ, and there were times when a little hope was raised up in my poor heart. I then attended the weeknight services and prayer meetings, and one Wednesday (December 30th, 1936) the Lord blessed my soul with a little hope, as my late beloved pastor at Rehoboth, Tunbridge Wells (Ernest Brooker whose ministry was richly blessed to my soul) preached from these words: “For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people” (1 Sam. 12. 22).

The war years followed, and I was away from home for over five years. The night before leaving home, I begged of the Lord for a word and that it should be confirmed before leaving home. I shall never forget that night, the wrestling and pleading for the Lord to appear. These words were given in the night (and confirmed as my father read them at breakfast the next morning): "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." (Psa. 32. 8). I proved the promise true. It would not be possible for me to write of all the experiences of those years; a year in Canada, and a year in Singapore. The Lord had laid His afflicting hand upon me when in North Wales and then opened my eyes and stopped me in a friendship with a girl who was not one of our people. O the mercy that the Lord does not leave us to ourselves! Just before the war I had wondered whether, as a people, we were too strict, too narrow. The Lord took me right away from our people practically the whole time I was away from home and as I mixed with other denominations, I was made to long for the old paths. I was not left entirely, for in Winnipeg, one New Year's eve, I felt much sweetness, softening and nearness in these words:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains."

After the war I commenced working for a firm in Brighton, and as I was not married, I stayed in Brighton during the week with a friend who attended Galeed Chapel, and I used to accompany her to the evening services. I believe the Lord at this time deepened His work in my soul, for I felt increasingly the power of sin, felt at times cut off, yet at others caused to hope again. I once heard Mr. Frost preach from the early verses of John 15 and felt I had no real religion. I remember going home after the service that night unable to speak. Yet I felt more and more drawn to the Lord's dear people both at home and at Galeed, and was again encouraged in hearing Mr. J.H. Gosden in speaking from, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee" (Psa. 39. 7).

I received many tokens and helps by the way, but I wanted the Lord to speak the word of peace to my soul. Early in 1947, I was thus favoured under the ministry of my pastor from this word: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine" (Isa. 43. 1). It was that assurance my soul sought after, and I felt though such an unworthy sinner, I had an interest in His atoning blood and love, that I, though of sinners chief, was my Beloved's and my Beloved was mine. I could hold back no longer, but under the constraint of His love was enabled to

"tell to sinners round  
What a dear Saviour I have found;  
I'll point to Thy redeeming blood,  
And say, 'Behold the way to God.'"

When I was baptized, I felt it to be one of the most solemn moments of my life. O for grace, much needed grace, "to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called"! O the need of keeping! Prior to this I had also been tried concerning the Lord's supper for I felt I could not take the cup, but this was sweetly broken down as I witnessed a communion service about two months

before I came before the church, when it was revealed to me that it was for sinners, leading me back to those lines that had some years previous been sweet to me:

“And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.”

The word given me upon joining the church was, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4. 19). I have proved this word true in providence and in grace. It was about this time that one Sabbath evening the Lord had so blessed my soul with token after token of His love to me that I had to say, “Stay Thy hand, O Lord; my full soul can hold no more.” But O the darkness, inward conflict and low places since then! I believe I know the experience of Gadsby’s hymn 295, especially the words of verse 4. “He made me feel the hidden evils of my heart,” having often to groan and cry “Can ever God dwell here?” And to see, the Lord knows, dirt in my tears. Once when very tried in coming to the Lord’s table, I was greatly encouraged with hymn 447, and felt that amongst the children there was room for unworthy me. Later being elected deacon brought added weight. I felt the death of my pastor most deeply, but I was made submissive in hearing these words preached from by Mr. Pilgrem: “O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me” (Isa. 44. 21).

For some years I had been exercised concerning the ministry, and yet I shrank from it, but could get no rest or peace, and I felt the burden to grow heavier. One or two godly friends spoke to me about the matter although I had not uttered a word of my secret exercises to them. I felt led to seek the Lord that he would confirm me in the matter, being encouraged as I read of Gideon that he said, “I am the least,” and that he desired signs (Judg. 6. 36-40). I too desired to seek the Lord that I might be granted grace to know and do His will alone. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” was my constant prayer. At the same time I found that scriptures opened up to me in private meditation, particularly the doctrine of election and the eternal Sonship. I also felt increasingly the awful power of indwelling sin, and unfitness to stand in His name. There was a hanging back because of this, and yet there was a desire to be made obedient unto His voice. The solemnity of the work of the ministry in that it has to do with souls and eternity then brought added weight. All this increased in the passing of time.

In the providence of God, when spending a few days rest on the coast, Mr. R.J. Honeysett of Cranbrook was staying at the same place and I felt led to speak to him of these exercises. He counselled me to wait still upon the Lord, and said that he himself had been exercised concerning me in the matter of the ministry. He had been waiting for this. A year then intervened in which I felt I received from the Lord tokens that He was in the exercises of my soul, and yet I could not move in the matter. We met again the following year (1957) and Mr. Honeysett told me that it had been much laid upon his mind that I should take a Sunday for him at Cranbrook the following October, and he wrote accordingly to me on September 16th, 1957 to ask who was due at Rehoboth on October 20th of that year. I felt I could do no other than spread the letter before the Lord, for in his letter he wrote, “I am perplexed and cannot understand why I have had so many months of prayerful concern about yourself and this date. Do not think by that I am trying to hurry matters. I desire grace still prayerfully to

commit it into the Lord's hands, leaving the issue with Him who works all in unerring wisdom and love...." Going to the prayer meeting, I desired again that if this exercise was of the Lord that there would be word for me. I felt this was in the last hymn (just when I thought all was coming to nothing), Gadsby's hymn 1066, especially the last verse:

"Hast Thou a lamb in all Thy flock  
I would disdain to feed?  
Hast Thou a foe, before whose face  
I'd fear Thy cause to plead?"

I read through the second Epistle to the Corinthians, and had to stop at this word: "Who is sufficient for these things?" (chapter 2. 16). I felt encouraged as I read further on, "But our sufficiency is of God" (chapter 3. 5). But the words, "A door was opened unto me of the Lord" (chapter 2. 12) were applied with divine power, and I felt I could, in going back over all, say, "of the Lord," for I believe the Lord had indeed opened the door. Yet I trembled, and still do, lest I should be a dry breast to Zion. O the tossings and exercise of soul, and yet I had to go back again to those lines:

"E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die."

I spoke to my fellow deacons and arrangements were made that I should give my call to the ministry before the church on Monday, October 14th, Mr. J.W. Tyler of The Dicker being asked to take the chair. How I begged of the Lord that if it was not His will He would stop me and shut my mouth. I desired to commit all unto the Lord and to say, "Not my will, but Thine be done;" to be as nothing, as clay in His Hands. It was a deep concern to me that it appeared that I should be likely to attempt to preach at Cranbrook before speaking before the church at Rehoboth, but this was overruled in a remarkable way. Just before the church meeting, Mr. Tyler said that if the church accepted my call to the ministry, then would I speak before them. This had not entered my mind, but in a moment I felt I could see the Lord's hand and, although faced with the possibility of attempting to speak, yet I felt an inward calm, and I believe I was enabled to commit it all to the Lord. In much fear and trembling I felt help afforded as I attempted to tell the friends of my exercises concerning the solemn work of the ministry, after which I was asked to retire to the vestry. My heart went up to the Lord, that He would appear for me and give me a word to speak.

I was then put into deeper concern as two scriptures were brought to mind. First, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37), and then, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8). This led me to further groanings before the Lord that He would appear and show me from which word I was to speak. I believe He did it for me in an unusual way. I well knew the second Scripture in Hebrews, yet as I opened my Bible I could not find it. I believe the Lord hid it from me. So I attempted to speak from John 6. 37. As I spoke before the church, I felt I had not chosen this path but the Lord was in it. This was confirmed in the help afforded as the word was applied to my soul with

sweet comfort that I, though so unworthy, was one of those sinners given by the Father to the Son in eternity past, and that He would never cast me out as He drew me to Himself.

My call to the ministry and the word spoken were unanimously accepted by the church, and yet I desired the Lord that He would grant me yet one more token from Himself. The following Friday, whilst driving on business in Sussex, these words were spoken with divine power: "This same Jesus," and were opened up in sweet meditation. I could not understand why they were given as I felt the Lord had laid a word on my mind for the services at Cranbrook. That same evening the minister expected at Rehoboth on the Lord's day telephoned to say that owing to illness he would be unable to come. The deacons then asked me to take the evening service, and then I could see why those words were spoken in such power to me that day.

It is not possible to write of all these exercises particularly concerning the ministry which covered many years of waiting, watching and praying. All along the path it has been a gentle leading, "here a little, and there a little," and now I mourn my poverty more than ever. Going into a pulpit with nothing, and as nothing, often tried when in the pulpit as to whether I should be there, and coming out of the pulpit ashamed of self, and yet at the same time amazed at help given at time of speaking, knowing fully that it could only be the Lord that has at times (I speak to His glory) filled my empty vessel and enabled me to speak. This and this alone sometimes gives me a little hope and sweet confirmation that the Lord has placed me where I am; especially have I proved this at Tamworth Road. May the Lord give one grace that at the end we may be enabled to say, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20. 26, 27). I sum it all up in these words:

"I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my All in all."

*Here Mr. Wood's own writings end.*

By the grace of God our dear friend Clement Wood has left a sweet memory in the heart of many of the Lord's people both at home and abroad – a faithful minister of Jesus Christ for over fifty years, a loving pastor at Tamworth Road for forty-five of those years, and a true friend to young and old, especially where he could discern a work of grace. He was one who often strengthened the hands of fellow ministers in their work and was of special help to young men entering into this solemn path. His ministry was both simple and yet profound. Often taking just a few words for a text, he had a gracious ability to bring forth from the context the mind of the Spirit. It can be said of him that he spoke the truth in love. He loved God's people and especially his flock at Tamworth Road, over whom he prayed, wept and rejoiced as all faithful pastors do, as a faithful under-shepherd.

He was devoted to the cause of God and of truth amongst our churches and further afield, serving for many years on the Gospel Standard Committee, the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund Committee and also on the Executive Committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society. His wise, loving counsel was highly valued amongst those with whom he laboured in these spheres.

In 1991 Clement underwent a serious heart operation, at which time he was greatly favoured in his soul, both on the day previous to his entering hospital when Mr. Ramsbottom preached the Harvest Thanksgiving services, and on the morning of the operation when the Lord blessed him with the sweet words of Solomon's Song 2. 6: "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." This was a time of significant favour in his soul which he treasured to the end of his days.

It was our privilege at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, to have our dear friend amongst us as a member for the last few months of his pilgrimage, residing in the Studley Bethesda Home, where he was greatly loved, and up until five weeks from his passing, he preached amongst the local churches with much acceptance. His last sermon was preached at Little Zoar Chapel, Studley, the text being Matthew 28. 5-7: "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you."

He ended his sermon with great emphasis and feeling as he quoted the final words of the chapter: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (verse 20). So ended the ministry of our dear friend, but he being dead yet speaketh! It was evident to those of us who watched that he was being brought down slowly but surely during the last six months of his life. It was a period of great darkness in his soul and powerful temptations beset him from the evil one. However like Gad, he proved God's word to be true: "A troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last" (Gen. 49. 19). As soon as he realised that his end was near, the Lord lifted our dear friend up and set his feet upon the Rock Christ Jesus. He was enabled to witness a good confession of Jesus Christ as he trod the valley of the shadow of death. Many choice sayings fell from his lips, the last discernible words being: "O bless the Lord, my soul. How I love Thee. O bless my soul."

For most of the years of his long ministry and pastorate, Clement was blessed with the prayerful and loving support of his wife Phyllis, who proved to be a most suitable "helpmeet" to him as a pastor's wife. They were married on December 6th, 1947, the same year in which Clement was baptized. Phyllis passed to her eternal rest in December 1996, a loss which Clement often mentioned (see *Gospel Standard* March 1998, page 92). He was a most affectionate father and grandfather, always taking a great and prayerful interest in the lives of his family. The family never felt they suffered from their father's frequent absences, as he always sought to give them time when he was free from ministerial engagements.

Peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones, he passed to his eternal rest in the early hours of November 30th. We are well persuaded that it was with our dear friend as it was with Mr. Greatheart in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: "All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side" as he received those words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But we can almost hear him saying, "Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, O Lord..." and, "Crown Him Lord of all!" "It is all of grace." May we be "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

In the presence of a large company of mourners our dear friend was laid to rest with his late beloved wife, Phyllis, in the Bandon Hill Cemetery, Wallington, where their mortal remains await the glorious resurrection morning, we believe with "sure and certain hope of resurrection to life everlasting."

G.D.B.

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### GRACIOUS LONGINGS

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Lord, to Thee I come in prayer;  
May I hear Thy still small voice.  
Take me now beneath Thy care,  
Let Thy ways be all my choice.  
Tell me, Lord, that I am Thine,  
In the covenant of Thy grace;  
For this blessing, Lord, I pine,  
Do not turn away my case.

Speak Thy precious Word to me  
That for sinners yet there's room,  
That the gospel still is free,  
That the needy still may come;  
May my sins be all forgiven;  
Keep me by Thy boundless love;  
May I be prepared for heaven,  
There to dwell with Thee above.

Show me, Lord, there yet is room,  
Room beneath Thy wings to hide,  
Room at Calvary's cross to come,  
Room to plead the Saviour's blood;  
Room at mercy's door to knock,  
Room before the throne of grace,  
Room for me upon the Rock,  
Room by Him to find a place.

In Thy house, Lord, there is room,  
With Thy saints to worship Thee;  
Help me, Lord, to Thee to come;  
Manifest Thy love to me;  
At the end, O may I prove  
There is room in heaven for me,  
There to dwell with Thee above,  
Room near Thee eternally.

C.A. Wood

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THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
APRIL 2011

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

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As spring time comes round once more, our thoughts are turned to the death and glorious resurrection of the Son of God. What an emphasis there is in the New Testament on the necessity of this, that sinners might be saved with an everlasting salvation!

Pondering these vital things, the cry of our souls is, "We would see Jesus" (John 12. 21). May living faith be given to see the beauty and suitability of the Saviour. "Hide not Thy face from us."

"While walking on the gospel way,  
We would see Jesus every day,  
And see in all His grace;  
See Him our Prophet, Priest and King,  
See Him by faith, and praises sing;  
Then see Him face to face."

We would by faith "behold the Man."

There is an answer: "We see Jesus" (Heb. 2. 9). And the apostle introduces it with a "but": "But we see Jesus." Sadly, there are many things we do not see that we should like to see – in our own hearts and in the church and in the world. Equally sadly, there are so many things we do see which we painfully wish we did not. But what a mercy if by faith we can say, "But we see Jesus" – despite all these things!

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." "Adored by angels, and obeyed, but lower now than angels made." What love in His sin-atoning sufferings! And faith sees the wonders of the atonement! Who can penetrate that deep, solemn, beautiful word: "He hath made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him?"

"Crowned with glory and honour." We see Jesus suffering, bleeding, dying, and we see Him rising triumphant from the dead. If there was a necessity for His death, there was also a necessity for His glorious resurrection. As the risen Saviour declared, on the way to Emmaus: "*Ought* not Christ to have suffered these things, *and* to enter into His glory?"

So we see Jesus risen, ascended, glorified, ever living, ever interceding. "The highest place that heaven affords is His, is His, by right." For years we have seen a beauty in the verses:

“There the Redeemer sits,  
High on His Father’s throne;  
The Father lays His vengeance by,  
And smiles upon His Son.

“There His full glories shine,  
With uncreated rays,  
And bless His saints’ and angels’ eyes,  
To everlasting days.”

Under the sacred influence of the Holy Spirit, may these glorious truths be our meditation this Easter time.

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### THE MARKS OF THE NEW BIRTH

*Sermon preached by John Kershaw at Rochdale Road Chapel,  
Manchester, on June 29th, 1862*

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**Text:** “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1. 13).

The immediate connection in which these words stand is as follows: our Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, came unto His own and His own received Him not. By “His own,” we are to understand the whole of the Jewish nation, which are nationally His peculiar people. He came unto them, but they received Him not, but conspired against Him and said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours.” Peter charges the horrid deed upon them: they “killed the Prince of life”; but “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name.” None ever did, can or will receive Christ, believe in His name, and enjoy their relationship to a covenant God as His sons, but such as are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Paul draws a line of distinction between natural and spiritual Israel: “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel ... but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called”; a remnant according to the election of grace. So that whether Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, if they be the sons of God by eternal adoption, they must in God’s time and way be born again, “not, of blood, nor of the will of the flesh ... but of God.”

Beloved, in endeavouring to make a few remarks from the words we have now read, to the Lord’s honour and our spiritual comfort and consolation, and establishment in the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, we would notice three things:

I. *The necessity there is for a poor sinner to be born again, or he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.*

II. *The power* by which the great change of being born again is effected.

III. In order that we may ascertain whether we are or are not born again of God, we would point out from the Scriptures some of the *marks and evidences* of a poor sinner's being born of God.

I. *The necessity of this new birth.* The necessity of it appears evident from the solemn, important and interesting conversation which took place between Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and our Lord Jesus Christ, which we read for our lesson this morning (John 3). Nicodemus comes and speaks of the great miracles that the Lord had wrought, which were evident displays of His eternal power and Godhead. Our Lord makes no reply to Nicodemus in reference to the miracles that had been wrought by Him, but directs his attention to a great work, in which there is a greater display of His almighty power than in these miracles to which Nicodemus refers, and at once insists upon the new birth: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3. 5).

Nicodemus, though a teacher in Israel, as a natural man understood not this spiritual doctrine, and expressed great surprise: "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" How absurd! how utterly impossible! Our Lord replies, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Then He speaks more explicitly of the spiritual birth: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Here He insists upon the necessity of being born again, and follows it up: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." The kingdom of God is a kingdom prepared by our heavenly Father in which all His saints shall be landed safe and appear for ever in His presence. And this kingdom shall be given to none but to those for whom it is prepared; and while the kingdom is prepared for a people, the people that are to be put in possession of it are prepared for the enjoyment of it. Hence we read of "vessels of mercy ... afore prepared unto glory."

This preparation, beloved, for immortal glory commences in regeneration, in being born again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is impossible in every sense of the word for an unregenerate person to enter heaven; it would be no heaven to him. O no, he sees no beauty, no glory in, no need of, a precious Christ. The spirits of just men made perfect would be no company for him; he could not enter into their joys; there would be no comfort, no happiness, no bliss, no blessedness, no joy in heaven for him. To make this more simple and familiar to some of us, the poor worm in the pulpit can particularly recollect the time when the company

and conversation of God's people, when the assembling of His saints and the preaching of His gospel, were a burden to him. When compelled to attend and confined in the chapel, it was a prison to him, and why? Because when in a natural state we have no spiritual feeling, no spiritual desire, and see no beauty, no glory, no comeliness in a precious Christ. And O my friends, had we died then we had indeed died in our sins, not prepared for heaven, but prepared by our transgressions for destruction.

So, my friends, it is those who are born again of the Spirit of God, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, led by the blessed Spirit to see and feel the need of Him, to believe in Him, to glory in His Person, triumph in His finished salvation; these are the people who are born again, who love each other as members of the household of faith, who unite under the means of grace, and have a hidden melody in the heart, and can sing Hallelujah to God and to the Lamb, and that can also join in the chorus, "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. Amen." They are made meet for heaven by the Spirit and grace of God, prepared for the kingdom, and when death overtakes them they shall enter that kingdom, being absent from the body but present with the Lord.

Before I dismiss this branch of the subject, beloved, a solemn thought presents itself to the speaker. Death and eternity are before us; some of us are getting advanced in years; there can at the most be but a short, a very short space between us and the grave for the body, and eternity for the soul. My friends, the question arises here, in much solemnity: Are we, or are we not, born again of God? Are we, or are we not, in a prepared state for death and the kingdom?

How frequently when musing on this important subject do the following lines drop into my mind:

"Prepare me, gracious God,  
To stand before Thy face;  
Thy Spirit must the work perform,  
For it is all of grace."

We must, beloved, be born of God, or we shall never enter the kingdom of glory and be for ever with the Lord.

We proceed now to the second branch of the subject.

II. *The power* by which the great change of being born again is effected. The evangelist in our text speaks particularly of this power, and in order that the transaction may shine the brighter and appear the more distinct, he couples three negatives with the positive declaration. Let us first notice the negatives, and then proceed to the positive. The negatives are these:

1. Not of blood.
2. Nor of the will of the flesh.
3. Nor of the will of man.

Now then we come to the positive – but of God; exclusively by the power of God, the great Creator of the heavens and the earth. We shall say little upon the negatives.

1. “Which were born, *not of blood.*” Beloved, God’s grace does not run in the blood from father to son. O no. The abominable and filthy thing, sin, that our God hates, it is hereditary; it runs in the blood from father to son. Adam begat sons and daughters in his own image, as a depraved creature. How explicitly David speaks of it; he says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Beloved, how frequently is it seen that gracious, God-fearing parents, parents that are born of God, have profligate sons and daughters. See it in Eli; behold it in David, and in many others among ourselves. On the other hand, there are the most profligate parents, whose offspring, born in actual sin and transgression, have been, by the grace of God, regenerated and made new creatures in the Lord Jesus Christ. See Abijah in the house of an adulterous king, even Jeroboam. So that the Lord has mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and compassion upon whom He will have compassion. Our religion is therefore not of blood, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit of our God.

2. “*Nor of the will of the flesh.*” What are we to understand by the will of the flesh, in this portion of God’s Word? Paul, speaking of this subject, says, “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” His desire was that they might be saved. As a Christian and a man of God he had great desires for the spiritual and eternal welfare of those who were allied to him by nature.

We see this desire shine very prominently on a very memorable occasion. Behold him declaring what God had done for his soul, in the presence of King Agrippa and a splendid earthly court, before which he had to appear as a witness for the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks of the miraculous manner in which he was converted and called to his apostleship; of the revelation of Christ to his soul; of the preciousness of Jesus; and how he was commanded to proclaim the glorious glad tidings of salvation to poor, perishing sinners. He also reviews the birth, sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ, and His ascension to glory; and he declares these things are the records of heaven, and puts it to King Agrippa, who believed the prophets, and knew that these things “were not done in a corner.” Paul’s powerful language has an effect upon the king’s mind, so that he exclaims, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” Now mark the feeling of

Paul's mind: and Paul said, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Now we see the fleshly feeling and desire of the apostle was such that he would, had it been in his power, have regenerated the king and all that were then with him. But he could not reach the case; it required a greater power.

Let us bring it down to our own feelings. Where is the minister that stands up to preach, that is concerned for the salvation of his hearers, who would not, if he could, carry the word with power to their souls and convert them to God? Where is the God-fearing man who has a wife that knows not the Lord, but is concerned for her to know God as her God? And where is the wife that has an unbelieving husband, but is concerned for his salvation? Well, hear the following words: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband." Where are the God-fearing parents who are not concerned for the salvation and welfare of their children? And this is commendable so far as we view it subservient to the good will of Him that dwells in the bush. O my friends, we can do nothing without the Lord; it must be the power of God alone. We cannot renew the will and turn poor sinners from sin and Satan to the living and true God. Let us use every lawful means for the conversion of our families, commend them to the Lord, and leave matters in His hand.

I have known individuals who had godly parents; their parents had been concerned for the spiritual welfare of their children, and their prayers had been bottled in heaven. The parents have died, and in God's own time answers to those very prayers have descended upon the offspring. Some of those offspring have come to me in tears and said, "O that I had those dear parents now, to tell them what God has done for my soul!" Such cases as these, my friends, are an encouragement to use the means, leaving the result in the hands of our heavenly Father. He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Now we notice the third negative.

3. "*Nor of the will of man.*" A great deal is said of man and of his free will. That he has a will, and a free will, we unhesitatingly grant; but what is that will free to do, while in a state of unregeneracy? The will is one of the faculties of the mind, a depraved faculty, so that men willingly drink sin in, like thirsty oxen drinking in water; they lie down, as thousands do – and, my friends, as some of us did, in the sink of sin, and wallow in it, and delight in it, like a sow wallowing in the mire. Man's free will in a depraved sinner leads him from God in the broad and downward road; it leads him to eternal destruction, if not prevented by the free and sovereign grace of God. "O," says one, "has not man a will

to choose the good and refuse the bad; to turn to God, and repent, and believe, and be saved?" We answer the question in the Lord's own way, and propose this question as a reply: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No, it is impossible, for if so, "then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." So then, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Our salvation, our regeneration, is not to be traced to the will of man, but to the sovereign will of God. Mark the notable passage, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth."

Now, my friends, let us look at the positive declaration.

*"But of God."* "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*" Mark! O that we could pronounce this short sentence with the gravity and solemnity that the very nature of it demands – "*But of God.*" All human power must sink and die "as a dim candle dies at noon," and the great and almighty power of Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth be exalted, for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords, above all praise and power, and above every name that can be learned; and at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and tongue confess that He is Lord. Now there are two or three considerations under this positive declaration, "*But of God,*" and we will be as brief as possible with them.

In the first place, whoever is born again of the Spirit of God is regenerated; and mark it, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17). "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5. 6).

Pause here my friends. There is a creation, a new creation. We ask the Christian, Who can create but God? Man can perform wonders if you put something into his hand to work upon; but if he has nothing whereon to display his wisdom and demonstrate his handiwork, he can do nothing. I was forcibly struck with this while walking through the International Exhibition last Monday in London. I beheld many things in the rough state as they were found in or on the earth, and I saw the wisdom and handiwork of man in bringing them forth to perfection, in a way that fills the mind with admiration; but had these men had nothing put into their hands to work upon, they could have displayed no power. So, my friends, none can create but God; and the same God, the same power displayed in the creation of the heavens and earth, is displayed in the producing of this new creation of grace in the soul of a poor sinner.

Paul in speaking of this says, "According to the exceeding greatness of His power." O the exceeding greatness of His power in the works of creation and in the works of providence! But there is a greater display of Jehovah's power in the regeneration of one soul than in all the works

of creation and providence. Now mark it, when the Lord by His almighty power spake the world into existence, there was none to oppose; He spake and the thing was done. But in the regeneration of a poor sinner, there is an allied power fighting against the power of God; there is Satan, the god of this world, in the sinner's heart; there are the allurements of the world all uniting to prevent the Lord from accomplishing the good pleasure of His will. But bless His name, when the appointed time comes, the strong man armed enters the sinner's heart, makes him willing in the day of His power, brings down his lofty looks, abases his proud and hard heart, lays him in the dust and upon the dunghill, at the feet of a dear Redeemer, and He exalts His power, not by creature might nor by creature power, but by the power of God. A poor sinner is regenerated and born again by the power of God Himself. Sinners in a state of nature cannot take unto themselves this power; no, they must be born of God.

Lazarus had no power in himself to arise from the dead, neither had his sisters or friends any power to raise him; no, and we may further say, but with all solemnity, there was no power in the sighs, and groans, and tears of Jesus, as a Man, to move Lazarus into life. No; where is the power then? In His eternal power and Godhead. Then behold it; He speaks the word, "Lazarus, come forth!" and we see the dead come forth, bound hand and foot in the grave clothes. So, my friends, when sinners are converted to God, the Word of the Lord regenerates the heart as in the Day of Pentecost; so that if we are born again it must have been the power of God to begin the work, the power of God to maintain it, and the power of God to complete it; and if we have not the power of God, the soul is dead, religion is dead, and all is dead.

III. Now let us proceed, in the last place, to notice the *marks and evidences* of a poor sinner's being born again; but when I look at the clock I am sorry to see we shall not have the time I should like to have had for such an important subject.

Is it not a subject of vast importance, to know whether we are born again? We all know we must die, and that after death is the judgment, and if we are not born again, eternal destruction will be our destination. Whatever we may know, whatever we may profess, if we are not changed by divine grace we shall never enter into heaven, for the Word of the Lord is explicit here. My friends, we must keep to the metaphor. Some people will have it religion begins in joy, and love, and peace. I have not so learned Christ, neither did Paul, nor the thousands at the Day of Pentecost, nor the Philippian jailor; but more of this as we enter into the evidences of being born again.

1. Look at it in the familiar style in which it presents itself to us. We must borrow from nature. When a child is born alive, as a token of



its birth and the life of the child it is heard to cry. When its cry is heard there is a token, an undeniable evidence of the birth. Just so in a spiritual point of view. Men, before they are born again, may say prayers, make long prayers like the pharisees or like Saul of Tarsus, but Saul never did cry, he never did pray spiritually, till Jesus met him on the way to Damascus, not with offers and overtures that if he would turn, and repent, and believe, and so on, He would save him. Beloved, my soul abhors offers and overtures made in this way, because in the very language of it, it tends to the exaltation of the creature, and to the abasing of the mighty power of God. Christ met him with new covenant blessings in his heart, such as, "I will and they shall." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And He reached his soul with power; His arrow was powerful; he submitted, and lay down at Jesus' feet. "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee" (Psa. 45. 5). Now here we see the power of God. The Lord directs Ananias to go and speak words of peace and comfort to him. Ananias is terrified, for the character the man had borne as an enemy to the church of Christ filled him with fear; but the Lord settles all his scruples very satisfactorily: "He is a chosen vessel"; he is one of Mine, an object of everlasting life; and I will tell thee another thing – behold, he prays. He is a newborn babe in Christ; he is a crying soul. But, my friends, we cannot here enlarge upon it.

All we that are born of God are praying souls; the soul born of God cannot live without prayer. God's sword is two edged, cuts both ways. O that it may be so this morning! Have I any this morning that are careless and graceless? Have I any that are content and satisfied with a form of prayer in words, that pray not in their hearts? If so, God is against you. But if you are born of God you are a praying soul, you have inward sighs and groans because of your sin and sinfulness; you have spiritual hungerings and thirstings after Christ, and you cannot live without pouring out your heart and soul unto God. The Holy Spirit pours down into your soul a spirit of supplication, and you are enabled to spread your case before Him, and your prayer is the prayer of the publican, and it will be your cry on your dying bed, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Lord, save, or I perish!"

2. Let me notice another of the evidences of being born again. The Apostle Peter uses the figure of a newborn babe: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word." Observe, the God of nature has implanted in the very constitution of a newborn babe a desire for the breast and milk of its mother. See her take the babe, and when she finds the child begin to suck, with a mother's heart she clasps it in her arms

and blesses it. This is an emblem; for so in grace, as sure as a poor sinner is born again of the Spirit of God, in the very constitution of that regenerated soul there is a spiritual desire, an inward thirst for the sacred Scriptures, for the preaching of the Word of God, for the company and conversation of the saints of God. Hence, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14).

A person may be a newborn babe in Christ and yet be eighty years old. I have some knowledge of a circumstance relating to this fact. Two men requested a neighbour of theirs, a grey-haired old man, to go and hear their minister.\* He strongly objected and said, "Nay, nay, I was christened at church, confirmed at church, married at church, and I will be buried at church, and that is enough for me." They said they did not want to meddle with his church, but merely as neighbours who had done him many a good turn, wished him to go to their chapel. "Well," said he, "you have done me many a kindness, and as one good turn deserves another, I will go with you." The time came, and they went praying that God would bless the means to the conversion of the old man. Well, the minister drew the bow at a venture; the Holy Ghost caused the arrow to fasten in the man's soul, as a nail is fastened in a sure place. He went home, sat down, said nothing, looked into the fire, but could not open his mouth. His old wife said, "What is to do with ye?" He said, "I cannot tell, but yon man has said words that dropped into my soul." "O," said she, "I thought how it would be; they will make you as bad as themselves; but we will not leave our church." Another Sabbath came, and he went a second time. The Lord worked more powerfully the second time. He comes home at length, holds up his head, and looks at his wife: "I say, find me the old Bible." Here is a newborn babe in Christ wanting the Word of God. She looks upon the shelf, gets the old Bible, and rubs the dust off it. He reads here and there, page after page. At length he cries, "I say, is this the old Bible we have always had?" "Yes," she said, "we have never had any other Bible." "Well," said the old man, "if this is the old Bible I have got new eyes." O yes, my friends, new eyes and a new heart, and the Lord worked powerfully.

Now I know, my friends, as sure as a poor soul is born again of God, there will be a thirst for God; I speak it experimentally. When my father insisted upon my reading a chapter on a Sunday night and insisted upon my going to the house of God, I say it to my shame, I felt as if I could have cursed him in my heart, and I said, "If ever I become twenty-one years of age I will have my own way." But bless the Lord, He will not let us have our own way; no, He will bring them to His feet with weeping and supplications. When the Lord laid hold of me, my friends, what a thirst I had for the Word of God, for a prayer meeting,

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\* John Kershaw is obviously speaking about himself.

and for the conversation of the saints. When we have a new heart, new desires, and new affections, we must walk in new ways. Now see these marks confirmed by the apostle's declaration upon the same subject: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17).

What are these old things that must pass away and the new things to come? When a poor sinner is born again he becomes a new creature; he cannot keep company with old companions any longer; he cannot walk any longer in his own sinful ways. O no, the grace of God has taken possession of his heart, and it never did and never shall fail producing the effect God says it shall produce, namely, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2. 12). The Lord hunts His people out and brings them with a broken heart and guilty conscience to weep at His feet, and His Word sounds in their hearts like an alarm: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6. 17, 18).

O my friends, what a remembrance I had of this very passage last night. After tea I took a walk upon Kersal Moor [where the Manchester races took place], went round the church, and thought of former times, when I tried to run away from God. I got up early in the morning and went to the races. I got on the race ground, but O the misery and wretchedness and great terror my soul felt! I could no more abide in the camp of the wicked than I could cease to exist; necessity was upon me, and I looked to find a field where I might be alone and pour out my soul to God. O my friends, heaven-born souls cannot revel and delight in sin. Sin lives in them, but they hate it and abhor it, for if any man be born again he is a new creature. They are not of the world; God has called them out of the world: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. 14. 2). And they shall, by the grace of God, show forth the praises of Him that hath called them out of darkness into marvellous light.

Now they have new views of themselves, and new feelings and new desires after Christ and His salvation, as the people of God, as His elect. Before my conversion, the people of God appeared to me poor melancholy fools, men of no pleasure and no enjoyment, and their prayers and talk were a plague and torment to me. But after God had wrought this change on my soul, and it was made alive from the death of sin, and I saw my need of a Saviour, I cried, "I will go with you, for I have heard that God is with you." And O what delight I took in the

conversation of these very people I had turned my back upon. Thus there are new connections, new feelings, and new desires; old things have passed away, and all things are become new.

After this change had taken place in my soul, I once heard my mother talking (I had a good mother in a moral point of view, though she had no marks or evidences of being a child of God) to some people about me. She said, "I don't know what has taken place with our John; not long since he would never go to chapel, but now he is always with religious people, always going to chapel; there is quite a change in him." O my friends, the sentence dropped from my mother's lips and sank into my heart, and I believe it will always be there: "He is always most happy when he is going with the old men." O what reason I have to thank God for the desire to go with the people of God, praying to be numbered with them in life and death and to all eternity. I sometimes think when Sunday morning comes, if some power were to compel me back to my old ways, what a hell it would be to my soul. But we must hasten. We are speaking of the evidences of being born again.

3. Now we have another evidence, which will lead us into the marrow of the gospel. We have each a body, and a soul inhabiting that body. Now our bodies are earthly bodies, sensual bodies, for we were originally created out of the dust of the earth. Hence it is that the food the earth produces nourishes and strengthens our earthly bodies. The labouring man following the plough, or whatever labour it may be, perceives his strength fail, and he wants dinner-time to come, that he may sit down at the table, and be refreshed in his body. The food he takes strengthens and refreshes him, and he is again able to follow his employment.

Look at one circumstance in the Bible. The prophet Elijah is fleeing from Jezebel. He comes to the wilderness and sits down under a juniper tree, hungry and faint for want of food, and requested for himself that he might die; but the Lord sent His angel to him with meat, and the angel said, "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God" (1 Kings 19. 7, 8).

My friends, pardon this digression; the power of it on my mind is such that I cannot forbear. O what a many poor people are now in privation and suffering; they have no work wherewith to get a livelihood. O Lord, arise and help us in these things temporally, and make a way for the poor and distressed, that they may have meat, and raiment to put on. But to return to the subject.

A man that is born again of the Spirit of God, can his soul feed and be satisfied with the luxuries the world produces? O no; let him have ever so splendid a table, and ever so much wealth, and heap upon him all

the honours, titles, dignities, that a man on earth can bear, and in the heaven-born soul there is a vacuum, an aching void, that neither gold nor silver, nor wealth, nor dignities can fill. Do you want his song? –

“Were I possessor of the earth,  
And called the stars my own,  
Without Thy graces and Thyself,  
I were a wretch undone!”

What will satisfy a soul born again? O my friends, we have a satisfaction, and that satisfaction is Christ. If we are born again of the Spirit of God, no provision will satisfy us but the bread of eternal life which comes down from heaven. Christ is the provision of the Father’s house, and this provision alone will satisfy a heaven-born soul.

Now in conclusion, if you and I are born again of God we cannot be satisfied with the world and things of it; and if you and I are born of God we are not, nor can be, satisfied in or of ourselves. I firmly believe, friends, from my own experience, that the longer a heaven-born child of God lives here, the more dissatisfied he will be with himself, the more he will sink in his own esteem, loathe and abhor himself, and repent, in his soul feeling, in the dust before the Lord. And on the other hand, if we are born again we shall feel a growing need of a precious Christ, of His glorious Person as the God-Man and Mediator. We need Him as our covenant Head, and to feed upon Him as the mystery of godliness, God-Man in the flesh, and we adore Him. We see Him fulfil the law of ten commands, and we rejoice in His righteousness, and hunger and thirst after it. We also see Him in His blood-shedding, and here we see the work is finished, and our soul feeds upon a finished and complete salvation, all of grace from first to last.

O my friends, there is that in Christ that satiates the soul that is born of God; He is All and in all. It is of importance, my friends, for you and me, and every child of God, to learn that He is our Saviour and Redeemer; but at times I have my doubts and fears whether I am born again. After the Lord had begun with me and convinced me of my sin and sinfulness, I saw if I were not born again, I should never go to heaven. My soul longed to hear some of the marks and evidences of being born again. Now about that time your late dear pastor, Mr. Gadsby, came over to Rochdale, and as the Lord would have it, he spoke upon this particular subject and in his peculiar style as follows: “Is there some poor soul here anxious to know whether he is born again? Now if there is, I will tell you what you are like.” (I had hard work to keep from saying, “I do want to know whether I am born again or not.”) “We read in the prophecy by Ezekiel about a newborn babe being cast into the open field. O how helpless it is; it can do nothing for itself; it must have all done for it. Now,” he said, “poor soul, if thou art born

again of God, thou seest thyself as helpless as regards saving thyself, and washing thyself from thy sins, and clothing thyself in the robe of righteousness, and justifying thyself in a spiritual point of view, as that little child was.” And if we are born again we are like the babe cast out, helpless and crying, bewailing our condition, knowing that no man can help us. But when the Lord passes by, He spreads His skirt over us, and feeds and nourishes us with the bread of heaven, and gives us all that we stand in need of. Heaven-born souls can do nothing for themselves. Christ and Christ alone is All and in all. Amen.

This is a different sermon from the one on the same text that appears in the volume of *Sermons of John Kershaw*, published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications.

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### THE WATER OF LIFE

*By John Bunyan (1628-1688)*

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As there is a great special signification in this term *water*, so there is in this term *life*, water of life. “He shewed me the water of life.” In that, therefore, there is added to this word water, that of life, it is in the general to show what excellent virtue and operation there is in this water. It is *aquæ vitæ*, water of life, or water that hath a health and life in it. And this term shows us,

1. That the world of graceless men are dead, dead in trespasses and sins (John 5. 21, 25; Eph. 2. 1; Col. 2. 13). Dead, that is, without life and motion God-ward, in the way of the testament of His Son.

2. It also shows us that there is not anything in the world, or in the doctrine of the world, the law, that can make them live. Life is only in this water; death is in all other things. The law, I say, which is that that would, if anything in the whole world, give life unto the world, but that yet killeth, condemneth, and was added that the offence might abound; wherefore there is no life either in the world or in the doctrine of the world. It is only in this water, in this grace of God, which is here called the water of life, or God’s *aquæ vitæ*.

3. It is also called the water of life to show that by the grace of God men may live, how dead soever their sins have made them. When God will say to a sinner, “Live,” though he be dead in his sins, he shall live. “I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live” (Ezek. 16. 6). And again, “The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live” (John 5. 25). That is, when He speaks words of grace, and mixeth those words with the Spirit and grace of the gospel, then men shall live; for

such words so attended, and such words only, are spirit and life. "The words that I speak unto you," saith Christ, "they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6. 63).

4. In that this grace of God is here presented unto us under the terms of water of life, it is to show that some are sick of that disease that nothing can cure but that. There are many diseases in the world, and there are also remedies for those diseases, but there is a disease that nothing will, can or shall cure, but a dram of this bottle, a draught of this *aquæ vitæ*, this water of life. This is intimated by the invitation, "Let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17) And again, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21. 6). This is spoken to the sick, to them that are sick of the disease that only Christ, as a physician, with His water of life, can cure (Mark 2. 17). But few are sick of this disease, but few know what it is to be made sick of this disease. There is nothing can make sick of this disease but the law and sin, and nothing can cure but the grace of God by the gospel, called here the water of life.

We come now to discourse of the second thing with which we are presented by the text (Rev. 22. 1), and that is the quantity that there is of this water of life. It is a *river*. "He shewed me a river of water of life." Waters that are cordial, and that have in them a faculty to give life to them that want it, and to maintain life where it is, are rare and scarce, and to be found only in close places and little quantities; but here you see there is abundance, a great deal, a *river*, a river of water of life. In my handling of this point I will show you what a river of water of life this is.

1. It is a deep river. It is a river that is not shallow, but deep, with an "O the depth!" (Rom. 11. 33). "I will make their waters deep," saith God (Ezek. 32. 14). And again, they "have drunk of the deep waters" (Ezek. 34. 18). A river of water of life is much, but a deep river is more. Why, soul-sick sinner, sin-sick sinner, thou that art sick of that disease that nothing can cure but a potion of this river of the water of life, here is a river for thee, a deep river for thee. Those that at first are coming to God by Christ for life are of nothing so inquisitive as of whether there is grace enough in Him to save them. But for their comfort, here is abundance, abundance of grace, a river, a deep river of the water of life, for them to drink of.

2. As this river is deep, so it is wide and broad (Eph. 3. 18; Job 11. 9). Wherefore, as thou art to know the depth, that is, that it is deep, so thou art to know its breadth, that is, that it is broad; it is broader than the sea, a river that cannot be passed over (Ezek. 47. 5). Never did man yet go from one side of this river to the other when the waters indeed were risen; and now they are risen, even now they proceed out of the

throne of God and of the Lamb too. Hence this grace is called “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3. 8) Sinner, sick sinner, what sayest thou to this? Wouldst thou wade? wouldst thou swim? here thou mayest swim; it is deep, yet fordable at first entrance. And when thou thinkest that thou hast gone through and through it, yet turn again and try once more, and thou shalt find it deeper than hell, and a river that cannot be passed over. If thou canst swim, here thou mayest roll up and down as the fishes do in the sea. Nor needest thou fear drowning in this river; it will bear thee up, and carry thee over the highest hills, as Noah’s waters did carry the ark. But,

3. As this river of water of life is deep and large, so it is a river that is full of waters. A river may be deep and not full. A river may be broad and not deep. Aye, but here is a river deep and broad, and full too. “Thou waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water” (Psa. 65. 9). Full of grace and truth. Fill the water-pots, saith Christ, up to the brim. The waters of a full cup the wicked shall have, and a river full of the water of life is provided for those who indeed have a desire thereto.

4. As this river is deep, broad and full, so it still aboundeth with water. The waters, says the prophet, “were risen” (Ezek. 47. 5). Hence the Holy Ghost saith, God causeth the waters to flow (Psa. 147. 18). And again, “And it shall come to pass in that day” – the day of the gospel – “that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim” (Joel. 3. 18). When a river overflows, it has more water than its banks can bound: it has water. “Behold, He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed” (Psa. 78. 20). This river of water of life, which is also signified by these waters, is a river that abounds and that overflows its banks in an infinite and unspeakable manner. Thus much for the river, to wit, what a river of water of life it is. It is a river deep, broad, full and abounding with this water, with this Spirit and grace of the gospel.

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The sense of our Father’s love is like honey at the end of every rod.  
*Timothy Cruso*

Hope is never ill when faith is well.

*John Bunyan*

God hath two hands, a right hand of mercy and a left hand of justice.  
*John Boys*



## THE IMPORTANCE OF GOSPEL PRECEPTS (2)

*By J.C. Philpot*

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The importance of the precept will be evident from another consideration. Were there no precepts in the New Testament, we should be without *an inspired rule of life*, without an authoritative guide for our walk and conduct before the church and the world. We rightly discard and reject the law as a rule of life to a believer. What, then, is our rule? Are we a set of lawless wretches who may live as we list, according to the libellous charge of the enemies of truth? God forbid. We have a divine, authoritative rule of life, a code of directions of the amplest, fullest, minutest character, intended and sufficient to regulate and control every thought, word and action of our lives, and all flowing from the eternal wisdom and will of the Father, sealed and ratified by the blood of the Son, and inspired and revealed by the Holy Ghost.

When, then, it is thrown in our teeth that by discarding the law as our rule of life we prove ourselves licentious, lawless Antinomians, this is our answer, and let God and His Word decide whether it be not a sufficient one. Not so. We have a rule of life as far exceeding the law as the new covenant of grace and truth in the glorious Person of the Son of God exceeds and outshines the old covenant of works, and as much as the ministration of the Spirit, of life and of righteousness excels in glory the ministration of the letter, of death and of condemnation (2 Cor. 3. 6-11). In a word, the precepts of the New Testament, in all their fulness, minuteness and comprehensiveness, are our rule of life.

But mark what would be the consequence if the preceptive part of the New Testament were taken out of its pages as so much useless matter. It would be like going on board of a ship bound on a long and perilous voyage, and taking out of her just before she sailed all her charts, her compass, her sextants, her sounding-line, her chronometer – in a word, all the instruments of navigation needful for her safely crossing the sea, or even leaving her port. But you may say, “If there were no precept, the church would still have the Holy Ghost to guide her safely over the sea of life to her heavenly haven.” It is true; and so the first Christians, as Stephen the martyr, who lived before the epistles were written, had the Holy Ghost to guide them in the absence of the precept. But in those early days, first, the Holy Ghost was poured out in large measure, and, secondly, they had in their midst apostles and prophets (1 Cor. 12. 4-11; 14; Eph. 2. 20; 4. 11, 12), directly and immediately inspired to guide and direct them, which gifts have been withdrawn since the canon of Scripture was closed. Besides which, as the Holy Ghost, who then wrought immediately by the lips of inspired men (1 Cor. 14. 21), now works mediately by the inspired page, the argument is neither sound nor safe that we could do very well without the letter of the

precept as still having the Spirit. The question is not what God *might* do, but what God *does*; not what *we* think, but what *God* says. If God has mercifully and graciously given us rules and directions whereby to walk, let us thankfully accept them, not question and cavil how far we could have done without them.

See too what a wide field would be laid open for wild enthusiasm to range in, were there no direct and positive lines laid down as we now have them in the precept. How every deluded fanatic might come forward as inspired by the Holy Ghost to instruct us how to act, and what to do, and how to live, how many wives he might have, and how much money we must give to keep him and them in luxury and ease. What a mercy for us that we have God's precepts and not man's; God's holy, wise and gracious directions how to glorify Him in heart and life, how to walk in love and union with His dear people, how to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, how to know His will and do it, with His own blessed approbation in our conscience; and thus, by taking heed to our way according to God's Word (Psa. 119. 9), not become the prey of every vile Mormonite, every sleek impostor, every wily monk or crafty nun, every Papist, Puseyite or sister of mercy who might seek to impose upon us with their pretended revelations, or bind us hard and fast with their stern, austere rules of fleshly holiness. What heavy burdens would they fasten on our shoulders, as we see in the case of the Pharisees of old, who made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions, and in the self-imposed austerities of the Trappist and Carthusian orders among the Papists, and the Fathers and the Brothers Ignatius now amongst us, with their sandals and Benedictine dress, like "a rough garment to deceive."

Left to such blind or wilfully-deceiving guides, we should, but for the precept as the rule of our lives, as the inspired guide of our steps, have no word of the Lord to set against their delusions or their hypocrisies, and should pass our lives in continual bondage and fear, awed by their pretended revelations, or bowed down by their austere regulations. We have enough, God knows, of these would-be teachers and directors of conscience, some coming with their crafty impostures to deceive, others with their forms and ceremonies, preparations for the sacrament, manuals of religious instruction, practices of piety, aids to devotion, all drawn out to rule and pattern, to teach us how to live and how to die, and all as full of error as a blind understanding can devise, and as full of legality and lip-service as a superstitious, self-righteous, Pharisaical heart can make them. What a torrent of Popery seems fast coming in under what is now called "ritualism"; that is, a setting up of rites and ceremonies, mediaeval observances and traditional rules, instead of the doctrines of grace and the precepts of the gospel.

What a mercy, then, for the living church of God that we have not only the Holy Ghost as our inward Teacher to show us by His divine light these errors and delusions, but that the same blessed Spirit has given us in the Word of truth the sweetest, soundest, safest directions to lead us into and keep us in the way of eternal life, and that He from time to time sheds upon them His own benign unction, grace and savour to make them spirit and life to our soul, and thus become a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. What a holy, happy liberty, what a free service, what a tender, affectionate, filial obedience do the precepts of the gospel set before us, as far removed from legal exactions and Pharisaic righteousness as from Antinomian licentiousness and loose, careless ungodliness.

O you, who see and feel these things, and have tasted the blessedness of serving God in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (Rom. 7. 6), lift up your heart and hands with the writer of these lines, and say with him, "Bless God for the precept." May grace be given us more clearly to understand it, more carefully to heed it, more closely to obey it.

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### GODLY CONTENTMENT

*By Thomas Jacomb (1622-1687)*

"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4. 11)

We are to consider contentment as it imports calmness and composedness of mind in every condition – stillness and sedateness of spirit under all occurrences of providence. When a man likes whatsoever God doeth *to* him or *with* him, this is contentment. There is a great *affinity*, though not a perfect *identity*, between contentment and patience. It is opposed to all vexing, fretting and murmuring, to all undue perturbations of mind under God's dispensations toward us, though they be never so cross to our natural desires. Unquestionably, this was one thing, if not the main thing, intended by our apostle when he saith, "I have learned in every state to be content." It is as if he had said, "I am brought to this – always to think well of God and of every state into which He is pleased to bring me. Whatever pleases Him pleaseth me, be it imprisonment, poverty, sickness, reproach, death itself. Let God's will be done, and I am content. I am taught to bear all things with great steadiness of mind or evenness of spirit."

The question then will come to this: "How may we and others get this excellent frame – to have the heart calm and quiet in every state,

without being disturbed and discontented under anything that doth befall us?" Resolving this question will be my present work.

It is good advice in Ecclesiastes 7. 14: "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider." When we meet anything that runs cross to our desires – that makes it a "day of adversity" – did we but sit down and consider the matter, it would much tend to the quieting of our spirits. Consideration is an excellent help to contentment. He who is not thoughtful will never learn the lesson of the text. Discomposures of mind are not kept off by spells or charms, but by solid and judicious consideration. Would you know what that special and proper matter is that your consideration is to work upon to further contentment in every state? Consider,

Who it is that orders the state: surely, the supreme, sovereign, all-disposing God. "My times are in Thy hand" (Psa. 31. 15). It is so with every man in the world and with everything *about* every man. All is in God's hands. There is a hand *above* that directs all events here *below*. He that numbers our hairs orders our state. Good and evil do not come by chance or happen in a casual and fortuitous way. Both are disposed by God's providence according to His will. This we seem to give a full assent unto, and yet in practice we do either wholly forget it or flatly deny it.

My advice, therefore, is this: When at any time your hearts begin to storm and fret at your condition, sit down and seriously consider who it is that orders that condition. Let your thoughts dwell upon that, and see if it be not to your advantage for the suppressing of all undue perturbations of mind. David tells us, while he "was musing the fire burned" (Psa. 39. 3), that is, "the fire of passion," as many expound it. There is indeed a musing that tends to heart-disquietment: when all our thoughts are taken up in poring upon that which troubles us. But the musing that I am now urging hath quite another effect. It will *quench* the fire, not kindle it.

Methinks that Christian should not easily be disturbed at what befalls him, who considers – let it be what it will – it is all of God. Is it fit for the creature to be angry with God, as Jonah was (Jonah 4. 9)? Shall man dispute with God? Shall the clay say to the potter, "Why hast thou made me thus?" (Isa. 45. 9; Rom. 9. 20). Must Providence be arraigned at our tribunal and *our* will clash with *God's*? By no means! There is all the reason in the world that whatsoever pleaseth God should please the creature. "It is the Lord," saith Eli, "let Him do what seemeth Him good" (1 Sam. 3. 18). "The Lord gave," saith Job, "and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1. 21). I do not know a more effectual help to stillness of spirit than the consideration of this: *all is ordered by God*. But here in our considering, in order to have

the heart smooth and calm, it is good not only to think that all is ordered by God, but how and in what manner all is ordered by Him. O this, if duly weighed and digested, would be of great efficacy to further contentment.

Now, take an account of this in four things:

1. All is ordered by God *irresistibly*. “I will work, and who shall let it?” (Isa. 43. 13). It is applicable to God’s providential dealings with every single person in the world. These are carried on with such a mighty power that it is a vain thing for any to go about to resist and hinder God in what He will do. There is no contending with Him. “Should it be according to thy mind? He will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose” (Job 34. 33). If God bestows it, thou shalt have it. If He withholds it, all thy earnestness and striving will do no good.

Or thou wouldest fain have an affliction removed: contending with Him will not do thy work! If God will take it off from thee, there is an end of it. If He will continue it, thou must bear it still. Humble contentment may do much, but proud contending will do *nothing*. God knows what He hath to do, and He will not be hindered in what He sees fit to do.

Pray, therefore, whenever passion begins to rise in the soul. Think of this speedily. If it be that the tide of providence will have its course, that there is no hindering of the almighty and sovereign God – “He doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him” (Eccles. 8. 3) and “worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1. 11) – then our reason and judgment will tell us that it is best to yield and submit to this God and to comply with that which we cannot alter.

2. All is ordered by God *righteously*. He is righteous, and He doeth nothing but what is righteous. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18. 25). “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psa. 145. 17). “Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints” (Rev. 15. 3). “Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne” (Psa. 97. 2). This is an excellent subject for our thoughts to dwell upon when anything troubles us.

Well may there be our contentment in every state when there is God’s righteousness in every state. Providence may sometimes be dark and mysterious, yet it is *always* just and righteous. God may sometimes cross us, but He never *wrongs* us. He doth not see it good in all our desires to gratify us; but it is good for us in all His dealings with us to declare Him just (Psa. 51. 4; Lam. 1. 18).

Doth He remove a mercy that we have not forfeited? Doth He lay on an affliction that we by sin have not deserved? If so, doth it not become us to be silent before Him? “Wherefore doth a living man

complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" (Lam 3. 39). Proverbs 19. 3 is a smart passage: "The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord." We provoke God to afflict us, and then we are angry with Him! We have reason only to be angry with *ourselves*, our own sins being the procuring cause of all our miseries.

We often have just grounds of being troubled with our own hearts because of their pride, carnality, unthankfulness, unbelief, etc. This is *good* discontent! But we never have *any* just grounds of being disturbed at what God doeth – He is holy and righteous in all His actings. Bring it to this in your consideration: "Such a good I lack; such an evil I feel. But is God unrighteous in either? Surely, no. For do I deserve the one, and do I not deserve the other? Why then should I quarrel or fret against God?" In a word, let this heart-quieting consideration be much upon your thoughts: God has righteously ordered all; therefore, you must contentedly undergo all.

3. All is ordered by God *wisely*. As God at the first made all things with infinite wisdom (Psa. 104. 24), so He doth also dispose and govern all things with infinite wisdom. This holds true, not only with respect to the whole creation in the general lump and mass thereof, but also with respect to every part of the creation, especially to man. Now, if this was believed and considered, it could not but much conduce to make us contented in every condition. Certainly, it must be most absurd folly in us to find fault with or dislike that which God does in admirable wisdom!

Shall we not contentedly rest in what He sees to be fittest and best for us? "For vain man would be wise" (Job 11. 12). He thinks he could order things better than God doth! He will be finding faults in God's disposal of him; but this, his wisdom, is the highest folly.

What a wise choice doth God always make for men! The saints shall see it when they go to heaven, if not before. May they not, therefore, quietly resign themselves to Him, saying, "Thou shalt choose our inheritance for us" (Psa. 47. 4)? On the other hand, what a sad choice men make for themselves, when they will be their own choosers in their discontent! Rachel must have a child or she dies (Gen. 30. 1). She had her desire, but it cost her life (Gen. 35. 16-19). Jacob cannot await God's time for the blessing – in what a world of troubles did he involve himself by such hastiness! (Gen. 25-28). Poor creature! Thou needest nothing more to undo thee than to be left to choose thy own condition! Didst thou but consider this, wouldest thou not be contented when the wise God chooseth for thee?

Reason thus with thyself in secret, "Did God know how to make my person? Doth He not know how to order my condition? He that hath

wisdom enough to steer the great vessels of the world and of the church – hath He not wisdom enough to steer my little boat? He that hath by an unerring providence brought so many saints safe to heaven – doth He not know the best way to bring me safe thither also? Shall He, who was never guilty of the least mistake in all the works that have passed through His hands, make a mistake in my case?” I say reason thus, and it is to be hoped this will calm all storms of passion. O what a blessed serenity of mind should we have in every state, did we but live in the steady belief and serious consideration of God’s unsearchable wisdom!

4. All is ordered by God *graciously*. “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies” (Psa. 25. 10). Do you have poverty, pain, sickness, loss of relations, worldly crosses? All is given in mercy or given in order to bestow mercy to God’s covenant people. Afflictions come from God’s love and for mercy, God designing good by them and nothing but good to them that love Him.

This is a special thing to be thought of by those who belong to God. Others have the sovereignty and righteousness of God to awe them; but saints have the mercy and goodness of God to work their hearts to a quiet submission to His will. And how much is there in this for the furtherance of such a frame of heart in them, could they but draw it out and work it home upon the soul by consideration! What! A child of God to vex and fret at this or that, when all is intended for his good and shall be for good to him (according to that great promise, Romans 8. 28)? God always knows what is best for His – such is His wisdom! He always doeth what is best for His – such is His mercy!

What a heart-composing meditation this is! There is much in the other attributes before mentioned to suppress inward perturbations, but there is more in this which I am now upon. Are mercy and goodness the ingredients in every condition? Then be it never so bitter, the sense of this must sweeten it. Is all ordered in love by a Father – not to hurt men, but to do them good? O why then should I give way to discontent? The truth is, it is too low for the saints in every state barely to be content. There is something higher that they should come up to, namely, to “rejoice in the Lord alway” and “in every thing give thanks” (Phil. 4. 4; 1 Thess. 5. 18).

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“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.” A wandering, backsliding, double heart can never enjoy peace. To possess the blessing of peace, the mind must be stayed upon God. This is the same as “abiding in Christ,” being “steadfast in the faith,” “rooted and grounded in love.”

*Thomas Reade*

## THE EARLY DAYS OF BRIGHTON BETHESDA

*Notes by the Matron, Miss Norah Harwood.*

*(Concluded from page 88)*

Another year, and we lost dear Mrs. Adams in July 1965. She was with us quite a little while, but she was blind and almost stone deaf, and completely crippled with arthritis. Mr. James had befriended her some years before she came into the Home, and as soon as she was in Bethesda, he was able to build a special little amplifier to suit her deafness, and she would be radiant with joy when you gave her the earphones at the time of service. She was always so patient and cheerful, yet in constant pain, and one day I asked her how it was she could be so, and her reply was, "Well, my dear, I want for nothing, for body or soul; you see, I am shut in with Jesus." This was true of her.

I think it was about 1965 or 1966 we had a lot of alterations which were very necessary. The need for a sluice for the sick bay was great, and the old conservatory was in a bad condition, and so it was decided to take that down, and build in its place a sluice, an emergency room and a large sun lounge. About this time too we had washbasins put in all the bedrooms, as up to this time we only had one hot water supply for at least ten people. This was a very expensive job, but its benefit was a constant pleasure, and a continual cause of thankfulness, especially to those who had been with us so long, as the Misses Parsons, who were always speaking of its benefit.

Another one from 91 Buckingham Road, Miss M. Piper, was very thankful for Bethesda, and she left a good savour behind when she was taken in October 1965.

March 31st, 1966, we lost our dear Miss Packwood, who came from the Fenlands, and was a very quiet, grateful resident and one who truly feared God. She was a great lover of prayer meetings. Her end was peace.

Now we come to one of the most humble yet gracious characters we have had in the Home, dear Miss A. Paine. She was with us twelve years, an example to us all. I see in my notes that Mr. Gosden said of her, "She was like the box of ointment which Mary poured at the feet of Jesus, and the odour of it filled the house." How true this was of her! Two days before her end, when very senile, she had to be taken to hospital as she had fallen and fractured her arm, and when the surgeon came to see her, she thanked him so sweetly, and then said, "I do want to be thankful, because it says in the Word of God, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.'" He asked me what was her religion, and on being told Strict Baptist, he said he had never heard of them, but wished there were a lot more of them about. So she honoured her God even



when so senile and to the end. Her last prayer was, "Lord, bless my end with peace," and He granted her her request on April 22nd, 1966.

Mrs. Mehew of Worthing was near her end when we had a power cut, and we had to fetch a candle, and she remarked, "I do not need a light; there is no darkness where Jesus is."

Miss E. Bourne died in January 1968. She was most grateful for all that was done for her, and when she could, she followed the services eagerly, but as her infirmities increased she became so weary. She was 98 years old when she was taken home.

Miss Grace Paul came to us, dying of an awful growth, but it was an honour to be able to nurse her. Hymn 769,

"Jesus, o'er the billows steer me,  
Be my Pilot in each storm,"

was made so good to her at the onset of her illness, and was wonderfully fulfilled throughout. Indeed her end was peace.

Mrs. Guille, who had been with us eighteen years, was taken home in June 1969; also Mrs. Mockford, who had been in Bethesda seventeen years, was taken in August 1969.

Miss V. Gurney of Clapham passed away in October 1969. It had been a joy to have her with us. She was indeed one of those "simple folk who have sharpest eyes, and learn to walk the best." Almost at the end, I quoted to her, "Thou shalt see My glory soon, when the work of grace is done." She looked at me for a few minutes, then in her simple way said, "Lovest thou Me? I think I do."

Miss Baugham from Milton-under-Wychwood was another tender walker and most grateful for the provision of the Home. She was not with us long and passed away in January 1970.

Poor Mrs. Rich, who came to us suffering from a terrible carcinoma of the throat, died in March, but she was very supported in all her sufferings and operations, feeling,

"Jesus, o'er the billows steer me,  
*He's my Pilot in each storm.*"

She very much valued the services as relayed from Galeed.

June 1970 was the first indication that I had of any thought of moving the Home, and it came as a real shock. At first I felt I could not do it, but from the first time of seeing the proposed site, I felt irresistibly drawn to it.

Mrs. Buckland was only with us eleven months and was so interested in the new Home, but one morning early I found she had had a stroke from which she did not fully regain consciousness, and passed peacefully away three weeks later, November 1970.

Miss Evans was heavily afflicted mentally and physically, but one has a good hope it is well with her. Her desires were right. She died of cancer, April 29th, 1971.

Our dear Miss Parsons, who had been with us nearly twenty years, and who with her remaining sister had been an invaluable help and support to the Home in so many ways, was bedridden five years, and gradually became quite helpless. But, with the aid of the hoist, her sister was able to do a lot for her at first, as it was always their wish to do all they could to help. During her illness, the dear old lady had one or two very sweet times when she was overwhelmed at the Lord's mindfulness of her. She was naturally a very sweet character, loved by all who knew her, and I am sure no one could appreciate Bethesda more than my two Misses Parsons. She celebrated her ninety-fourth birthday on December 1st, 1971, and just after breakfast next morning, just fell asleep in Jesus. A great loss to her dear sister and myself, but it proved again the Lord's mindfulness of His children's need, for the poor dear would not have stood being moved to the new Home, but was quite ready to be taken to her eternal home.

Others know, and can tell more ably than I, about the purchase and building of our new Home. Sufficient for me to record how wonderfully the Lord enabled us to pack up and close down the old Home and prepare the new. We can only say, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes"; also, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

On December 14th, 1971, all the residents were moved to our new Home by ambulance or friends' cars, and by 12.30, thirty-two people were able to sit down to a lovely dinner. During the afternoon of that day, the last of the furniture was moved, and four o'clock the dear old Home was closed.

At our usual time, five o'clock, thirty-four residents and friends were ready for tea, and this was followed by a service of thanksgiving which I am sure came from our hearts. The weather had been perfect, and there were no mishaps at all; mercies abounded. Psalm 40. 5 puts it well: "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."

The new Home is a wonderful provision. Everything possible has been provided for the comfort of residents and staff. One remarked to me that the Home (naturally speaking) is like,

"We are a garden walled around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground;

A little spot enclosed by grace,  
Out of the world's wide wilderness."

Of course, the early days were not easy, as it was all so new to us all, but we were soon able to overcome little things and get into a routine again, and it was not too long before it was running quite nicely, and everyone enjoying the benefits.

February 2nd we sustained our first loss in the new Home, dear old Mr. Longley. He had been bedridden some months, but to a few days before the end was about as usual. I asked him one morning early how he was, and he waited a little while, then replied, "Yes! I to the end shall endure." On February 1st, he suddenly became very tired, and he was so gently taken home. His was a long life (94 years), but he left a good savour, as our pastor so often puts it.

By the end of 1971 we realised our dear Sydney Rolph (who at one time had been our gardener at the old Home) was failing. Although very poorly, he would be brought to the dining room to join in the singing of some hymns on Boxing Day evening, at the end of which he said, "I would like the doxology." He was in such a happy state, although quite aware of his approaching end. Then a few days after this, he seemed to lose his comfort and was very troubled, but only for about three days, and then his hope was renewed, and from then he was able to hold fast his hope in the word he believed the Lord had spoken to him some eighteen months before: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." He was so wonderfully favoured one can only tell a little of his testimony. One day he said, "There are many mansions in heaven, and I believe there is one there specially for me." Making his pillows comfortable one morning, I found he was crying, and on enquiring the cause, he said, "I have a bed of love, but He only had a cross to hang on, and that for a wretch like me. A sight of that will make you cry." The times he would say with much feeling, "My precious Jesus." I heard him in prayer once so earnestly beg, "Come now, Jesus, yes now." He so often wanted hymn 462 (his hymn as he called it) read to him, but one day very near the end he repeated the last verse with such feeling:

"Songs of praises,  
Songs of praises,  
I will EVER give to Thee,"

remarking, "I don't wonder what I shall praise Him for." His one theme was "his wretched self and his precious Jesus." As Mr. Gosden said at his funeral, "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise." He patiently suffered much the last few weeks, and so

longed to be taken home, and the Lord granted him his desire on March 16th, 1972.

Two days after this we had the open day for the new Home, and again we were favoured with lovely weather, and I believe it could be said, with the Lord's blessing. It is certainly a day which will long be remembered. There was a prayer meeting at 11 o'clock when the Home seemed almost full. About seventy-five people had dinner, and at 2 o'clock the Home was open to about 450 to 500 people. During the afternoon tea was served. This was followed by a service at Galeed in the evening when the collection realised about £580.

We noticed Mrs. Marshman failed from soon after our move, but it was so gradual until the last few weeks. She seemed to enjoy peace, and on one occasion she asked me if I thought she was wrong to pray to be taken home, because she so longed to be there. On September 17th she was safely landed. She was buried with her husband who had died in June 1966 very soon after their entry to the Home.

Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin came to us in November 1966 on account of Mrs. Baldwin having had a severe stroke. With the aid of the hoist we were enabled to get her up and into a wheeled chair. Mr. Baldwin took her out whenever it was possible and this afforded them both much pleasure. She was delighted with the new Home and so grateful. In fact one of the last things I remember her saying to me was, "You know I am grateful, don't you?" Of course it was a heavy trial to her to be so helpless, as it was something she always dreaded. We can say of her, she loved the truth and was always at the house of God when she could, and then valued the relay when in the Home. In the providence of God I was not permitted to care for her at the end as I was in hospital, but her dear husband has told me that the last word he could hear her say was, "Mercy," and when he realised she was gone he felt able to say, "It is well."

Mrs. Ellis who was 93 years and had been in Bethesda ten years failed rapidly the last few months. When I was able to visit the Home during my convalescence, I saw a marked deterioration, and on the day of our first anniversary she came to the table for the last time. On December 19th she was taken from a poor, weak, weary body to the rest which she had been prepared for, and to be for ever with the Lord.

So in our first year at the new Home, we had sustained five losses.

Before I conclude my few notes, I would like to tell what kind support and help one has had from our Home Committee. Mr. Delves has been our Chairman almost all the twenty-two years. Mr. Paul, Mr. Banfield and now Mr. Lewis have been the Secretaries, and we still have Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Tyler who were on the original Committee. Mr and Mrs. Banfield once stayed at the Home for a month while I had

to be away, and Mr. and Mrs. Lewis have had the heavy end of the work of the new Home, and during my absence through illness. I owe them all a great debt of gratitude, but I am grateful.

I mentioned early in my notes that at the beginning, obtaining staff was a problem, but before I end I feel I must mention that, although staff is always a problem, we have been favoured with some very loyal friends. Some served Bethesda seven or eight years, one nearly eighteen years, and one daily helper fifteen years, and the present staff have all been with us quite a long time, and are most kind and loyal.

January 1973. We have just been told that the new Home is completely paid for. Words fail.

To date we have had eighty residents; fifty-four have been taken home from here, and seven having left for various reasons, and several short-stay people.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**The Life of Charles Hodge**, by A.A. Hodge (his eldest son); 655 pages; hardback; price £17; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and available from Christian bookshops.

Charles Hodge (1797-1878) was the grandson of Andrew Hodge, who with two brothers emigrated from Northern Ireland to America soon after the death of their mother, which loss occurred in 1730. They settled in Philadelphia where they became successful merchants. The grandfather had fifteen children and the eighth child (fourth son) Hugh was Charles Hodge's father. Hugh married Mary Blanchard of Boston and became a surgeon. After an epidemic of yellow fever in 1793, through his exposure to this his constitution was impaired and he died after protracted suffering in 1798, aged 43.

Hugh's wife Mary (nee Blanchard) was left to care for five children, two boys and three girls, the youngest two being only two years and the other six months old. Charles, the subject of this book, was the youngest. Mrs. Hodge lived frugally and sacrificed much to ensure that her two sons were given a good education.

Charles Hodge graduated from college in 1815 and commenced studies at The Princeton Theological Seminary the following year. Three years later he was given a full certificate, having passed the complete theological course. In 1820 he was appointed a teacher at the Seminary and in 1822 the Board of Directors elected him Professor of Oriental Language and Biblical Literature. He held the office of Professor in differing subjects for over fifty-five years.

Charles Hodge had many gifts as a teacher, as a writer and a public speaker. He was regarded by some with Jonathan Edwards as the greatest American theologian. For many years he edited *The Princeton Review* and his greatest work was the three volumes of *Systematic Theology* which was recommended by Mr. J.K. Popham in one of his letters recently published. He lived in troublous times including the American Civil War, the assassination of President Lincoln

and the introduction of liberal thinking into the Presbyterian Church of which he was a member.

This biography, whilst not a spiritual book in itself, gives an insight into the early history of the churches in America.

J.A. Hart, Chippenham

**The Kendal Hymnbook**, originally edited by James Allen and Christopher Batty; hardback; c. 330 pages; price £19.95; published by Matthew Hyde and obtainable from 5 Hawthorn, Appledore, Ashford, Kent, TN26 2AH.

Lovers of hymnology will be delighted to see the appearance of *The Kendal Hymnbook*, the hymnbook of the Inghamites published in 1757, and till now virtually unobtainable.

The Inghamites were a denomination that appeared, largely in Lancashire and Yorkshire, during the Evangelical Revival. Benjamin Ingham preached along with Whitefield and Wesley, and was brother-in-law to Lady Huntingdon. William Romaine said of the Inghamites: "If ever there was a church of Christ upon earth, that was one!" Later the church became badly affected by Sandemanianism. An account of their history appears in *Benjamin Ingham – Preacher among the Dales, Forests and Fells*, by H.M. Pickles (1995). We ourselves remember being invited to take the anniversary at one of the Inghamite chapels some years ago.

The Inghamite hymns in Gadsby's are numbers 41, 158, 415, 741, 950 and 952. Hymn 158: "Sweet the moments, rich in blessing," was specially loved by William Gadsby. These hymns appear, with considerable variations, in *The Kendal Hymnbook*, where most of the authors are Inghamite hymnwriters.

As in those appearing in Gadsby's, most of the hymns are on the cross of Christ and the bleeding Lamb of God. Some are very beautiful, expressing self-abasement and longing for the Saviour. One or two, as the introduction explains, include sentiments with which we would not agree, and there is the Moravian tendency in one or two to be over-sentimental on the wounds of Jesus.

There is a lengthy introduction to *The Kendal Hymnbook*, written by Matthew Hyde, who has edited the book. An attempt has been made to authenticate the author of every hymn.

*The Kendal Hymnbook* is printed on good cream laid paper, nicely bound, while the old lettering has been preserved. The price may appear high but, of course, only a small number of copies has been produced.

**Wait Till You See the Butterfly, and Other Short Stories for Boys and Girls**, by Doreen Tamminga; 256 pages; paperback; price £7.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and available from Christian bookshops.

This new children's book has been highly acclaimed. It consists of forty-four chapters each telling a very interesting story and using this as an illustration of a biblical truth. The unusual title is the title of the first story which nicely sets forth the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

There is so much which commends this book. The text illustrated, at the head of each chapter, is always Authorised Version. The doctrinal truth is set soundly before the children. One chapter strongly warns against Romanism. Another speaks of the sanctity of the Lord's day. The final chapter is very beautiful on substitution.

But we have some difficulties in reviewing *Wait Till you See the Butterfly*. In at least two or three places the children in the stories (obviously with approval)

do things we should not be happy with. But more than anything else we were troubled by the “Americanisation” of the language. We ourselves have visited North America a few times, but there are a number of words and expressions which we could not understand. But, especially, the American slang used by both parents and children in the stories is just not acceptable in Christian homes in this country.

We feel the book could be useful, if used wisely and carefully – read to the children with the appropriate amendment here and there.

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### **GOSPEL STANDARD MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CHURCH WORKING FUNDS**

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At the last two annual general meetings of The Gospel Standard Trust, mention has been made of the requirement to register in 2012 with the Charity Commission a constitution for each church. (Please see the reports in September 2009 and 2010 *Gospel Standards*.) This is distinct from the Trust Deed relating to the chapel premises. We have been working on a Model Constitution which, if approved by the Charity Commission, would be available for each Gospel Standard church to adopt as a basis for their own constitution and so aid and simplify the registration process.

The Grace Baptist Trust Corporation has already obtained Charity Commission approval to a model constitution for their churches and they kindly made that available to us, which was a significant help. Our model Constitution deals with the objects of the church as a separate charity, trustees of the church (who will normally be the church officers) and their responsibilities, proceedings at meetings, application of income, etc. and incorporates the thirty-five Gospel Standard Articles as the Basis of Faith and directs to the Gospel Standard rules in connection with church membership and church meetings.

Our Model Constitution was sent to the Charity Commission on February 1st. The Charity Commission response was favourable and indicated that, with some minor amendments, they felt sure that they would be able to reach agreement and add it to the “approved” list of governing documents. We were advised that, in the current economic climate, it may be that the lowering of the registration threshold for excepted charities will be delayed beyond 2012. Therefore they have suggested leaving the detailed discussion regarding our draft Constitution until a point in time when a clearer picture has emerged. The current registration threshold remains therefore at £100,000. Unless income is above that level, we suggest that churches note the position but take no action. We shall hope to provide further information when available.

D.J.P.

## CHRIST OUR SUBSTITUTE

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Great was the price to justice due,  
When Jesus would redeem His bride;  
Nothing but precious blood would do,  
And that must flow from His own side.

Yet from the heights of bliss He fled  
On wings of everlasting love,  
And groaned, and sighed, and wept, and bled,  
The mountains of our guilt to move.

How glorious was the work He wrought  
While dwelling in this earthly globe,  
When each good deed, and each pure thought,  
Conspired to weave our spotless robe!

Dressed in this robe, washed in this blood,  
And ransomed from the power of hell,  
We now have free access to God,  
And justice likes the payment well.

Thus Jesus wrought our righteousness,  
Our guilt sustained, our sorrows bore;  
Secured our everlasting peace,  
And triumphed o'er the serpent's power.

And now in heaven He lives to plead,  
Before His holy Father's throne,  
What He has suffered in our stead,  
And sends us gifts and graces down.

And soon will this dear Saviour come,  
In majesty and glory dressed,  
And take His ransomed children home  
To seats of everlasting rest.

Joseph Swain (1761-1796)

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Never had the throne of grace so little to encourage an address to it as when the King of grace was dying on the cross. Never had a sinner less encouragement to come to the throne of grace than when the Saviour was nailed to one tree and the sinner to another. Marvellous faith! A dying sinner, dying for his sins, employs a dying Saviour for salvation. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." How little did Christ, nailed to and dying on the cross, look like a King? How strong was the man's faith to believe that Christ, through death, was going to His kingdom, and that Christ's gracious thought of him would save him? "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." As if our Lord had said, "This is thy first and thy last address to Me; verily it shall be heard."

*Robert Traill*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
MAY 2011

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

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Recently the whole world has been shocked by the devastation caused in Japan by the earthquake and the tsunami. How suddenly a nation can be plunged into confusion and distress! Again we are reminded of the message of the Book of Daniel, that “the Most High ruleth.”

Yet we must not be judgmental. How the Lord Jesus Himself condemned this when the tower of Siloam fell, causing such havoc! It was not right to conclude “that they were sinners above all men.” “I tell you, Nay,” said the Saviour, “but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13. 3). There is a voice in these things to us personally. Rather we should be filled with a spirit of sympathy for those who are suffering bereavement, pain, homelessness and hardship.

But as more often these days we hear of such terrible calamities, we cannot help remembering the Lord’s words: “Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars” [Libya and the Middle East]: “see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes” [Japan], “in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24. 6-8).

If the Word of God speaks of “the removing of those things that are shaken,” it also blessedly speaks of “those things which cannot be shaken” (Heb. 12. 27). These are the things of God made known in Christ, and it is our mercy if we have a saving interest here. “Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea” (Psa. 46. 2)

“Then let the wildest storms arise;  
Let tempests mingle earth and skies;  
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,  
But all my treasures with me bear.”

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The world cannot see our faith, but it can see what that faith does. It cannot understand the union between Christ and His people, but it can understand good fruit when it grows on the vine. The Lord, therefore, said to His disciples, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

*J.C. Philpot*

## THE CONVERSION OF MATTHEW

*By Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778),  
the author of "Rock of Ages"*

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"After these things He" – Jesus – "went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him" (Luke 5. 27, 28).

Divine grace is the same thing in all ages, and when conferred in an equal degree, has the same effect in all persons. The reason of this is evident: namely, because the spiritual and moral depravity that flows from original sin being as great now as it was the day Adam fell, the very same efficacy of grace is still requisite to subdue it that was requisite from the beginning. The primary disease continuing, the primary remedy is as absolutely necessary now as it was at first.

Besides, the blessed Spirit of God, who is the moral Physician of souls and the Author of all that is heavenly and spiritual in the human heart, is the same yesterday, today and for ever, and so are His ordinary operations. Sin and grace are things unalterable in their nature; the revolution of ages makes no difference. Man is as much a fallen creature at present as he was four or five thousand years ago, nor can less suffice to his renewal now than was necessary to his renewal then.

This exertion of supernatural grace upon the soul in regeneration is what divines mean by "effectual calling." All mankind without exception, God's elect as well as the rest, are by nature dead in sin and alienated from the love of Christ and heavenly things; nor is the human will, though free enough to sin, free to spiritual good, until the arm of the Lord or almighty power from on high is revealed in the soul and regenerates it after the image of God. In the article of first conversion, man is nothing and grace does all.

What has been hitherto observed is a natural introduction to that concise but comprehensive piece of sacred history now under consideration. "After these things" – *i.e.* after the Son of God had been preaching to the Pharisees, and among other miracles, had wrought a supernatural cure on the person of a bedridden paralytic – "after these things He went forth" by the seaside, as we learn from Mark, "and saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom," at the custom house, or tax-office, erected for the payment and receiving of the toll imposed by the Roman government on all that passed and repassed the Sea or Lake of Galilee. In this place, and to receive this toll, sat Levi, or Matthew, the same who was honoured with a subsequent call to the apostleship, and who wrote the Gospel which at this day bears his name.

Methinks I see the busy officer, with his book of entry before him, receiving and noting down the payments of the thronging passengers,

when lo, in the midst of the hurrying employ, the Son of God comes by. Matthew perhaps at first looks up, and, mistaking the Lord of life for a common passenger, holds out his hand, expecting to receive the usual tax. But the blessed Jesus had a design in coming which Matthew little thought. He came to make the publican a saint and an apostle. Our Lord's going that way was casual and accidental to outward appearance, but the true reason of His going was to call and convert a sinner whose name was in the book of life. Matthew was one of the sheep of Christ, given Him by the Father and marked out for glory, and who was therefore to be called by grace, from the darkness of unbelief, and from the servitude of sin into the light of faith and the liberty of holiness. And now the blessed moment was come. The time of love before appointed, the season in which he was to be savingly turned to God was arrived; and the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit made its way into his heart when Christ accosted him with that unexpected but resistless word, "Follow Me."

When Christ thus addresses Himself to the soul of man, divine grace at the same time lays hold of the heart and captivates the affections into a sweet and willing compliance. It is most absurd in theory, and evidently false in fact, to suppose that when God speaks internally, He may speak in vain. So far is this from being true, that no word of His shall fall to the ground nor return again empty, but assuredly accomplish the end for which it was sent. No one who entertains a becoming idea of the great God will venture to deny the freeness, the efficacy and the independency of His operation, and that when He will work, in vain do the potsherds of the earth set themselves in array against Him.

But though the event is thus infallibly secured, and when the influence of grace is savingly exerted, conversion, as the effect, must necessarily and surely follow (since it is simply impossible that the purpose and the agency of an all-wise and all-powerful Being should be defeated and miscarry); yet this infers no sort of violence on the human will, since all God's dealings with His rational creatures in a way of grace are wisely and wonderfully suited to the faculties with which He has thought proper to endue them. In regeneration, the will of man is not forced, but renewed; it is not compelled, but amended and set right; in consequence of which it spontaneously directs its future motions to God, heaven and things divine.

When our Lord said to Matthew, "Follow Me," though an invisible power accompanied the word to the heart, as the plumage wings an arrow to the mark, yet there was no compulsion on Matthew. He was not forcibly compelled but, by grace, willingly and effectually inclined to follow the Lord that called him. He was not dragged, but drawn, and being drawn, he ran.

From this view of the case, I cannot for my own part but be of the opinion that the laboured attempts of some learned men to reconcile the efficacy of God's grace with the liberty of the human will, are to the full as needless as the methods they have frequently taken to do it, are unscriptural and dangerous. For to make a show of reconciling what were never at variance is needless, and to represent the divine will as depending on that of man is fundamentally subversive of those high and great apprehensions of the Deity which even the religion of nature dictates. We know that every reasonable creature is endued with a will, or faculty of disliking, on one hand, and of desiring on the other. By virtue of this essential power, the will chooses that which is most agreeable to it, and delights in what it chooses.

But then this choice is determined to good or evil, according to the moral and spiritual state in which a man is. In a state of unregeneracy, his will and desire are carried toward that which is evil, since, as is the fountain, such is the stream; and the man himself being morally corrupt, his faculties and his actions must be so too. In a state of grace the bias and inclination of the will are to that which is spiritually good; the man himself being formed anew and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, the prevailing tenor of his actions must, of course, bear the impress of heaven, since as is the tree, so is the fruit.

Hence it appears that in the work of converting sinners to Himself, God is so far from impelling them as machines, or dragging them blindfold and against their wills into happiness (though I do not see where would be the injury of even that); but this is so far from being the case, that the eyes of our understanding are then, and not till then, opened to discern where our happiness lies, and in what our real interest consists: even in the knowledge, love and resemblance of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. And this no sooner discovered to the soul, than the will, from that moment, chooses and aspires after the divine favour, the divine image, the divine presence and the divine glory.

Here, you see, is not the least encroachment on human freedom. The will continues free or unforced at the very time that grace is all in all. Here is sovereign efficacy without violence, and invincible energy without compulsion. There is no force (but that of love), and there needs no other. The soul that has once had but a distant glimpse of the ravishing beauty and goodness of God, the infinite excellency of holiness, the exceeding greatness of the Redeemer's kindness, the fulness of His merit and the immense riches of the salvation procured by Him, the soul that has once seen and tasted these needs no compulsive force in order to love Him who is the fountain of good, and to aspire after that good of which He is the fountain. The transcendent power of the sacred

Spirit by which His influence is made invincibly effectual to conversion is no more inconsistent with liberty of will (truly understood) than the shining of the sun is inconsistent with the liberty of seeing.

Was there but this single instance of converting grace on record in Scripture, this (I mean the instantaneous conversion of Matthew, mentioned in the passage before us) would be sufficient to put the point out of all doubt. He was a person who sustained the character and discharged the office of a publican, or tax-gatherer for the Romans, an employ, above all others, odious to the Jewish nation, and at the same time, infamous to a proverb. We may suppose that it was a principle of covetousness and attachment to the world which induced Matthew, who as both his names declare, was an Israelite by birth, to engage in a way of life which could not fail of rendering him hateful to his countrymen, who considered every publican, and more especially if he was a native Jew, as a tool to foreign tyranny, and a betrayer of his country. Notwithstanding the odium and detestation he was sure to incur, Matthew, previous to his conversion, accepted of the office, and in all probability was as avaricious and oppressive in the execution of it as the rest of his hireling brethren. To see such a man, and in the very midst of his actual employ, wrought upon at once, by a word speaking, so wrought upon as instantly to leave all, rise up and follow that blessed but despised Person who had not where to lay His head – all this evidently shows that a conversion so speedy and so total, and of such a person too, could be effected by no less power than that which is omnipotent, and may vie with the greatest miracles which the Son of God performed.

It is true, indeed, there was something extraordinary in the call of Matthew. He was called not only to be a follower of Christ, but (ultimately) to be an apostle likewise, and it was this that justified his forsaking all secular employment that he might be more at liberty to attend his divine Master, and then to diffuse His gospel. But I apprehend that with regard to the conversion of Matthew as a Christian, the grace and power by which it was brought about were neither more nor less than must be exerted by the good Spirit of God in order to the conversion of any person whatever.

Besides, it is more than probable that Matthew's call to the apostleship was subsequent to that call of which the text speaks. For aught appears to the contrary, this history simply relates to his conversion as a man, not to his mission as a public minister; for (except in the single instance of Judas) Christ made men believers before He sent them forth as preachers. It should seem that when the Son of God said, "Follow Me," a call to faith and sanctification was chiefly meant, which graces are equally necessary to the salvation of one as well as another. Hence

our Lord declares concerning all His people without exception, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." And Paul exhorts us to be "followers," or imitators, "of God, as dear children." For it is certain that the Saviour of sinners says, in effect, to every sinner He saves, "Follow Me," in holiness, in love, in every good word and work. And that grace which stands connected with everlasting life never fails of inducing those who partake of it to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world, to be ornaments to the gospel they profess, and to walk in the blameless footsteps of Him who hath redeemed them unto God by His blood, and by whose power and grace they are called to glory and virtue.

We are not indeed required, like Matthew, to renounce our temporal vocations, and bid adieu to that lawful state of life and honest labour in which providence hath placed us, for we may rise up and follow Christ without doing that. Nay, it is our indispensable duty to be industrious and diligent in our civil employments, and he that worketh not should not eat; the drones should be driven from the hive. Religion is so far from being a plea for idleness, that idleness is absolutely incompatible with true religion. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," says the apostle. i.e. Let every man continue in the same secular calling, and carry on the same lawful business after conversion, that he did before.

The reason why Matthew was in the literal sense made to forsake all and throw up his employ as a custom-house officer was, as I observed but now, that by being at perfect liberty to attend on the personal ministry of Christ, he might be thoroughly qualified both to preach the gospel afterwards and to write that evangelical history of what he had seen and heard. But this affects not us. The case of the apostles, as such, was peculiar to themselves. We can have no such motives to forsake all, and he must be a madman who now thinks he has.

There are other ways of forsaking all. We are to forsake all, not in a secular, but in a spiritual sense. Forsake iniquity, forsake the love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; forsake all dependence on our own righteousness; forsake all sinful connections, all unscriptural doctrines and unscriptural practices; nay, in point of affection, forsake even all things, and give up our hearts to God. This is the forsaking to which we are called. Thus rise up and follow Christ. Pray for grace to make you happy in the love of God, and holy in all manner of conversation and godliness. Beg of the blessed Spirit to raise you up from the death of unbelief and sin to the life of faith and righteousness, and to make you follow Him in the regeneration. So shall we immediately on our dismissal from the body follow the Son of God

into the glories of His kingdom, and lift up our heads with joy when flesh and heart fail.

Nor shall death finally detain our mortal part. If by grace we have these evidences of our belonging to Christ, these marks of our interests in His merits and of our renewal after His image, He will say to our sleeping dust in the morning of the resurrection, "Awake and follow Me." Then shall He call and we shall answer; He shall seek us and each shall say, "Here I am." We shall hear the voice that shakes the earth and wakes the dead. We shall forsake the grave, rise up from the tomb at our Lord's command, leave all our imperfections behind us, and follow Him, follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, and be for ever with the Lord.

In the meanwhile, let us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, whether we have reason to trust that the power of converting grace hath begun to work effectually upon our hearts; in a word, whether we have ever experienced in a spiritual sense anything similar to what the text relates. Though we are not called to be apostles, yet all who shall appear with Christ in glory are called to be saints. And what is a saint? One who is hallowed or set apart by divine grace for the use and service of God; one who is made a partaker of that faith which relies, singly relies on the blood and righteousness of Christ for justification with God, and who is a subject of that holiness without which none shall see the Lord; one who leaves all things, so far as they consist not with faith and good conscience; who counts all that earth can give but dross and dung when compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and with the privilege of being found in Him; who rises up into the moral likeness of God, and follows the Lord that bought him in sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. Such persons have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. They have a manifest interest in the favour of the former and in the merits of the latter. Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, they are built up into temples of God; their grace, their peace, their joy are multiplied.

After surveying this picture of a saint, next look into your own heart and see if you can discover any resemblance of it in yourself, any corresponding features, any traces of the divine image there. For as face answers face in a glass, so the experience of one saint is in general nearly similar to that of another. Some indeed may have a stronger likeness of their heavenly Father than others, but every true believer does, in a greater or less degree, resemble God. Bring yourself therefore now to the test of God's Word. Try your state and experience by the touchstone of the text. Has Christ ever said to you by the still small voice of His good Spirit, "Follow Me"? If He has, you do follow Him, for His will is effectual and His command is ever accompanied with power. But is the unbeliever, the impenitent, the unholy, a follower of Christ? Surely, no.

He only is a follower of His who resolves the whole praise of His salvation into the grace of God and the atonement of the cross, who is grieved at heart for all that he has done against Jesus, and whose desire is practically to walk worthy of Him unto all well-pleasing.

Hereby you may know whose image and superscription you bear. These are the outlines of that divine resemblance, in a restoration to which consist the dignity and the happiness of man. Let this then be your prayer: "Try me, O God, and search the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any wickedness in me, any root of bitterness yet undiscovered, and lead me in the way everlasting. Show me the true state of my soul. Bring me out from every false refuge. Strip off every deceitful covering, every covering that is not of Thy Spirit. Forbid that the anchor of my hope should be cast, or the house of my dependence built, on any but Christ, the Rock of Ages. Forbid that I should rest short of that repentance which is Thy gift, and is connected with life eternal, and forbid, O forbid, that I should sit down without aspiring to that conformity unto Thee in righteousness and true holiness, abstracted from which, repentance is false and faith is dead."

Such are the breathings of the soul that is born of God. If this, O man, be not the language of thy inmost heart, thou art far from Christ; thou art yet in thy sins; thou hast not forsaken all; thou hast never been made to rise up and follow the Lamb of God. But if this is thy wish and thy prayer, I am bold to say that it is the echo of effectual grace and that God hath begun that good work in thee which shall be carried on to the day of Christ, and be found with honour and glory at His appearance. That Spirit of regeneration, who hath drawn the outlines of His sacred image upon thy soul, will go on to improve the imperfect draught until He hath touched it with the perfect likeness of His blessed self. What He hath begun in this life shall be completed in the article of death, the dawn of grace, the morning of consummate sanctification, when thou art taken up to shine at God's right hand.

Until then, look incessantly unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith. Even while the penitent sense of thy past offences and of thy remaining imperfections humbles thy soul and overwhelms thy conscience with a holy blush. Let glowing gratitude, aspiring love and unlimited confidence in the blood of sprinkling exalt thy heart and wing thy affections to the throne. And beware of ascribing any part of thy conversion to yourself, for the work was God's, and so should be the glory. Do not rob God, by putting free will for free grace, but remember that you never would have risen and followed Christ if He had not, by the effectual call of His Spirit, said to your heart, "Follow Me." For it is no thanks to you but to Him. If you love Him, it is because He first loved you. Man's will was never yet beforehand with God. "Herein is love,"



says the apostle, "not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Under such impressions, David's devout aspiration will be the counterpart of yours: "Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments, for therein is my desire. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee!" A prelude this to that still more triumphant song which the spirits of the just are now singing before the throne of God and the Lamb: "Blessing, and honour, and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

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## THE CHARACTER OF A GODLY MINISTER

*By J.C. Philpot*

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*John Grace (1800-1865) of Brighton was an eminently godly minister, much used by God. J.C. Philpot had the highest opinion of him, and in reviewing his memoir, gives a most beautiful description of his life as an example of what a true minister should be. He was especially impressed by his spirituality, his amiability and friendliness, and his humility.*

It is rather more than ten years since we so far knew the late Mr. Grace as to become personally and, indeed, we may say, intimately acquainted with him. We were supplying at Eden Street Chapel, London, in the summer of 1854, when one morning he quite unexpectedly, and without any mutual friend or other introduction, walked into our lodgings to make our personal acquaintance. For though well known to each other by name, we had never met but once before, in the year 1838, and that only for so short a time as to afford no opportunity for anything beyond a little conversation. One very marked feature of his character was that he was "a lover of good men"; and believing, we suppose, that the unworthy writer of these lines was one of these "good men," he felt desirous to form his acquaintance. He therefore came and introduced himself. We at once fell into spiritual conversation, and a mutual union was, as we have reason to believe, found and felt, which not only subsisted without break, but, we may say, increased rather than diminished up to the time of his removal from this scene of sin and sorrow.

All who had the privilege of his friendship will long remember his open, cheerful, affectionate manner and address; his peaceable, tender spirit; and that where he had once formed a spiritual friendship, how firmly and uninterruptedly he maintained it by correspondence or

conversation. He would often come out of his way on his journeys to the north, just to spend a few hours with us, and generally entered the room with such words as, "Let brotherly love continue." Divine things were uppermost with him in heart and tongue, and so at once we usually got not into carnal, worldly conversation, or a long rigmarole of outside work, but into some sweet living and daily experience, into which we could see eye to eye and feel heart to heart. The life of God was much kept up in his soul, and therefore freely flowed out of his mouth (John 7. 38; Matt. 12. 35). He was not resting upon dry doctrine, nor even a past experience which, for want of continual renewings, had become stale and mouldy. A daily life of faith in the Son of God, daily exercises from a body of sin and death, daily communications of grace and strength out of the fulness of a risen Mediator, and all kept up by a spirit of prayer and supplications was both his experience and his theme. A dead, carnal, lifeless profession was his abhorrence. Life in the soul, feeling in the heart, communion with the Lord – in a word, a daily, living, feeling, spiritual and supernatural religion was what he knew for himself and what he looked for in others; and where he found not this, whatever were the pretensions, however correct the creed, plausible the tongue or consistent the conduct, there as he had no satisfaction, so he had no union or communion.

But with all this there was no cant, no sanctimonious long face, or drawling, whining phrases; no putting on of a kind of mock spirituality, whereby so many try to deceive themselves and others. We never knew a more spiritually-minded man, and yet nothing of this mock spirituality or feigned humility was visible in him. Spirituality, indeed, of mind and of conversation he had, but with all this delight in spiritual things, there was a most pleasing frankness and openness. He would ask about the wife and family, have a cheerful word for the little ones – now with us no longer little ones, the olive-branches round the table, little and big, for he had not only a friendly but a fatherly heart.

Thus he was a welcome guest wherever he went, for without any worldliness or unbecoming lightness on the one hand, or pharisaic austerity on the other, he could so blend spiritual things in his conversation with passing occurrences that there was nothing repulsive in his discourse on heavenly things, even to those who could not experimentally enter into their meaning or their fulness. But what made his conversation to be seasoned with salt was that he had a good experience both of law and gospel, and sometimes at the breakfast or dinner table he would relate with much feeling some very marked and blessed things which he had tasted, felt and handled in his own soul.

The last time that he was with us at our present abode he gave us, after dinner, an account of the sweet deliverance which he received under

Mr. Vinall when he rode so many miles to hear him on a week evening, and the deep exercises of his soul previously, with the fears and faintings of his deferred hope. In a similar way he would often refer to his early days, when he sat under Mr. Vinall's ministry, and whom he loved and valued as his spiritual father, though by no means insensible to his peculiar infirmities. The present low state of vital godliness in the churches, the want of dew, unction and power in the ministry, compared with the days of Mr. Huntington and his immediate followers, as Mr. Vinall, etc., the carnality of professors generally, and the levity both in conversation and conduct which so stamps the generation in which our days are cast, were things which he deeply lamented and deplored. His own soul being kept alive and fruitful, he saw all the more clearly and felt the more deeply the want of life and fruitfulness in others.

And yet with all this, he was not censorious or bitter. We never knew him guilty of that common yet detestable practice of picking holes in other men's or ministers' coats, and under a show of a wonderful concern for holiness of speech and life, slandering and backbiting friends; nor did we ever find him spurring and flogging old nature, as if the creature, by a little extra exertion, could be made to perform spiritual acts. He did not thus belie either his knowledge or his profession. By grace alone he knew he was what he was, and without this grace in others he equally well knew that as there could be no beginning, so there could be no advance in the divine life.

But besides these, there were other noticeable features also in his Christian character which much commended both his profession and his ministry to those who knew and loved the grace of God in him. Amongst them was his great amiability of disposition and readiness to do good. He had naturally an active and, indeed, we may say a business mind, and as this was united to much natural amiability of disposition and was guided and directed by the love and spirit of the gospel, he was always ready for every good word and work. He was favoured also with a large congregation and a liberal people to help him forward, and thus aided and seconded, he was always ready to do good in relieving the poor and needy, and taking up any destitute case which was commended to his conscience. In this way, by the liberality of his congregation during the Lancashire distress [the Cotton Famine], he was able to afford timely help to many places in the north, and took a journey thither to see for himself the real state of things, and to have the pleasure of personally distributing it. Coupled with this amiable and affectionate disposition, we must add that he was possessed of a very liberal spirit, hating everything stingy and mean, and was ever ready to show kindness and liberality to his friends even when not needed by them.

Dropping the editorial “we,” I cannot help mentioning that when he came to see me on his journeys northward, he would generally bring with him a basket of fish caught that morning, or some book which he thought I might like to possess. These things may seem trifles, but trifles, as they are called, often show men’s real spirit more than larger matters, for the former are the free, spontaneous flowings forth of the disposition, whilst the latter are often forced upon men by circumstances. But besides these presents, thinking that I wanted some better table than I possessed for my letters and papers, he named it amongst his friends and, to my surprise, on reaching home one day two or three years ago, I found in my room a very handsome library table, sent free to my door, accompanied by a kind letter, that it was given to me by himself and friends as a testimony to my long labours in the cause of truth. I love to mention these things as a little memento of my esteem and affection for him.

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### THE NECESSITY FOR AFFLICTIONS

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My dear Miss Hudson,

Since I left you, you have never been out of my thoughts. I remember you going out and coming in, rising up and lying down. I remember you, not barely as a friend, but as one of my flock, and of the seals of my ministry, now particularly needing all consolation. [Her brother had just died.] The only reason of my assuring you I do so is that you may judge from hence what manner of love the Father of all spirits must bear towards you. For if I, a corrupted creature, full of such selfish and base dispositions by nature as render me very unfeeling, can thus sympathise with you, what must be the bowels of mercy towards you in that God who has called you by His grace, adopted you for His own child, promised in all your afflictions to relieve you and overrule them all for your greater good?

But your heart is ready to say, “How can this be the case, when not only the hand of the Lord has smitten me so sharply, but under the affliction I behave not as my conscience tells me I ought? I glorify not God in the midst of the fires.” In answer to this objection, you are sufficiently taught to remember that the love of God, as a reconciled Father, has ever been manifested most in the trials of His dear children. Behold Job! – a few days strip him of his substance, bereave him of all his children (of whose conversion there was but little hope), and he sees himself full of ulcers, so that he became loathsome to the wife of his bosom. Yet this is the man, of all upon the face of the earth, dear to God; and because he was so, afflicted in this very remarkable manner.

Look upon Aaron, the priest of the Lord, distinguished above all the tribes of Israel (excepting Moses, his brother) – in a moment he loses both his sons, consumed by the hot displeasure of God! And the time would fail to reckon up the dear and most honoured saints of God who had the bread of affliction and the water of affliction given them to drink.

So that you have not the least shadow of reason to suspect that you are afflicted through any want of love or pity in the heart of God towards you; but on the contrary, knowing what He declares to all the afflicted in His Word, and especially with respect to the household of faith, you have much cause to say, “Of *very faithfulness*, as a part of the new, everlasting, ever-blessed covenant into which I am brought by the blood of Jesus, God has been pleased to afflict me!”

But you may grieve, not only for your great loss – a loss which no one can fully estimate who is not in your place – but as much, possibly, to find your soul so much oppressed by it. In this case, consider also the example of some of the most eminent and approved saints of God. When His hand pressed them sore, they expressed all the same sensibility of their heavy cross as you feel in your heart, for a season. They made their complaint and felt the risings of corrupt nature till, by prayer, divine succours were supplied from the throne of grace. The chastening was grievous to them, and in no sense, for the present, joyous, though afterwards it yielded to them the peaceable fruits of righteousness when they had been exercised thereby. In the Psalms, which contain an invaluable collection of the experience of God’s saints in times of trouble, you will observe (and I beg you will now read them much) how they are vexed, and complain of themselves because they find themselves so very unduly affected by their crosses. “Take away the rebuke that I am afraid of, i.e. for my impatience, for my self-will, under correction! for Thy judgments, Thy chastisements, are good.”

Though, therefore, it argues much corruption, and is a great reason for humiliation and self-abhorrence, to find that, ignorant worms as we are, we have in us a disposition to blame the All-wise for His providence towards us; that, hell-deserving sinners as we are, we can be prone to say, “My grief, if it was now weighed, is heavier than can be borne”; yet this oppression is not to cast us down, as if we had not the faith of God’s elect and dear children.

Consider therefore, my dear friend, that neither is your trial any other than such as is common to the most beloved of God, neither your manner of bearing it, though clouds and darkness for a season rest upon your mind, anything unusual to the heirs of glory. May the blessed God, therefore, the Fountain of all consolation, watch over you whilst you are in the furnace of affliction, and make it mighty of operation, to purge away all your dross! May His presence, grace, love and power enrich

your heart so abundantly that you may, though sorrowful, yet rejoice in the Lord and magnify the God of your salvation!

My love to all your afflicted family. I daily remember them at the throne of grace. My wife, who is but poorly, joins with me in praying for your consolation and in wishing you every blessing.

I remain your sincere friend and minister, to serve your soul in all things, for Christ's sake,

H. Venn

Kippax, March 4th, 1763

Written during his prosperous ministry at Huddersfield to one of the godly in his congregation. Soon after she married John Riland, minister at Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield.

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## CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

*By J.C. Philpot*

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Christian husbands are bidden (Eph. 5. 25-32) to love their wives. The whole of the exhortation is somewhat too long to quote fully, but we will give one verse: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5. 25).

Now look at the foundation of this exhortation. Why should a Christian husband, according to this precept, love his wife? Because it is his duty, or because conducive to his happiness, or because it is what she has a right to as his partner in life? None of these grounds are named, or even alluded to. But this is the foundation of the precept. Christ loved the church as His mystical body and gave Himself for it; therefore as the believing husband holds to the believing wife as her natural head the same relative position which Christ holds to the church as her spiritual Head, he is bound to love her for Christ's sake and after Christ's example. Christ and His church are one; she is His own flesh which He nourisheth and cherisheth. So a man and his wife are one flesh. When, then, he loves her he loves himself; and to nourish and cherish her is to nourish and cherish his own body, as Christ does the church.

Is not this noble, gospel ground, full of the sublimest and deepest truth? Is it not a spiritual, heavenly and holy view of Christian marriage, and does it not baptize that social tie as with the very spirit and love of Christ? What a sanctity it throws round the marriage of Christians! How it elevates it above all worldliness and carnality, and brings down upon conjugal love the pure breath of heaven, more than reinstating to what it was in Paradise in the days of man's primeval innocence!

Now take as a counterpart the precept to Christian wives: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Eph. 5. 22-24). This precept, perhaps, may be less palatable to those to whom it is addressed, for no wife minds how much her husband gives her of his love, but she has not always the same pleasure in giving him her obedience. But let her like it or not, the submission and subjection of a wife to her husband are here inculcated as one of the precepts of the gospel.

But on what high, holy and spiritual ground it is placed. How the precept is based upon and connected with the glorious gospel doctrine of the headship of Christ and the church's subjection and submission to Him as such. When, then, a Christian wife seeks not her own will but her husband's, when she submits to his desires and wishes (and of course the apostle assumes that as a Christian man these would be in harmony with the gospel), her very submission is her glory as well as her happiness. Is it not so in our submission to Christ? Is it not our glory and happiness to know no will but His, and to yield to Him the obedience of love?

Thus ye Christian wives, when you submit yourselves to your husbands in love and affection, you do so after the example of the church. There is no loss of dignity or position in this, no giving up of your rights. When you can respect and love your husband as a Christian man as well as a Christian partner, and you can walk together not only in conjugal but spiritual love, as he will require nothing from you which you may not safely and scripturally yield to him, so will it be your pleasure as well as your privilege to walk with him as his equal in Christ, but now subordinate in present position.

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The boldness of faith hath this in general in it, that it is grounded and bottomed on somewhat without a man, and on nothing in him. It is grounded on Jesus Christ. It is a great mistake in Christians to think that they cannot come to the throne of grace with boldness because of the many infirmities in their hearts and in their addresses. Your complaint may be just and true, but the inference is not good. Do you never, in your counting your infirmities, put in this great one amongst them in your confessions, the want of boldness of faith? For this boldness stands not in anything in us and done by us. We must not come boldly because we can pray well and plead hard; we must not think to be heard in heaven, neither because of our much speaking nor well speaking as the Pharisees did (Matt. 6. 7). The boldness of faith hath a higher and more noble and firm foundation, even Jesus Christ.

*Robert Traill*

## COME WITH ME

*Part of a sermon preached by Robert Creasey (1804-1848)*

**Text:** “Come with Me from Lebanon, My spouse, with Me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Herman, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards” (Song 4. 8).

The beloved spouse of Christ is invited to come with Him from Lebanon. By the word *Lebanon* we may understand everything excellent, pleasant and engaging to the mind, which has a tendency to detain the soul from the precious Immanuel. This place and its tall cedars are often extolled; it appears, therefore, by no means strained to interpret the passage as above. Our friends, estates, gifts, good name and spiritual enjoyments are all included in the comparison, and the dear Redeemer invites us to set light by them all compared with Him. The heavenly Bridegroom is not satisfied with half a heart; He will never suffer the believer to be completely at rest until He obtains the whole of his affections.

We may briefly name three methods whereby our great Lord weans and draws away the heart from all idols to Himself.

1. He makes them prove bitter to us.
2. He takes them from us with His stroke.
3. He reveals His own worth and preciousness more fully to our minds.

1. The good old patriarch Jacob is inordinately attached to Rachel. To check this, the Lord leaves her a great while without offspring, and gives her despised sister Leah a fruitful womb. This so vexes her that she says to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die” (Gen. 30. 1). By which means the patriarch so far discovers the vanity of his idol, and feels disturbed by her conduct, as to call forth the following remark: “And Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?” Here the Lord, in His providence, seemed plainly enough to point out the folly of idol-making, and to proclaim that Himself was the alone stable ground of consolation.

David was a man after God’s own heart, and yet we find his affections much taken with his wicked son Absalom, perhaps greatly admiring his beauty. The Lord presently manifests the evil of being so wrapped up in this child; He soon spake in sufficiently marked characters, “Leave this majestic cedar; ‘come with me from Lebanon.’” What a grievous scourge did this son become to his parent! And besides other things, the Lord takes occasion by His means to chastise the psalmist for his sin with Bathsheba; Absalom goes in unto David’s ten concubines in the sight of all Israel.



When we set our affections too inordinately upon our relatives, Jehovah frequently suffers them by their evil tempers, perverse and wicked conduct, or by sending some sore affliction upon them, to be a great grief and burden to our minds. Whether this was Jacob's case with his children, excepting Joseph and Benjamin, I do not presume to declare; but this is exceedingly evident, the Lord often admonished him in His dispensations neither to trust in, nor fix his heart too much upon them. Reuben defiles his parent's bed; Dinah is defiled; Simeon and Levi disturb their father by their cruel and murderous conduct, and the other sons, being moved with envy, sell the beloved Joseph for a bonds slave. Hence the good patriarch, in the closing scene of his life, does not ascribe his sustenance and protection to the industry and valour of his children, but gives all the glory to God, to whom it was due, in these remarkable expressions: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads" (Gen. 48. 15, 16).

Would the Christian trust to one friend's purse, and to another's abilities, to one person's warm admiration, and to another's large promises? Would he do this without having a special eye to Jehovah, without deeply considering that He alone can render these things a permanent blessing, soon shall Jesus cry, by causing the contents of the one to be turned into another channel, and suffering the other to prove insufficient, by causing the one to abate, and permitting the other to fail, "Come with Me [from these], with Me from Lebanon, My spouse." Whence we hear the repeated warning and declaration, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help"; "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Psa. 146. 3; 118. 8).

The Christian generally learns this wisdom very slowly and with great pain to the flesh. He would fain have someone, some earthly friend to adhere to, and esteem him on all occasions. It seems exceedingly galling that he can securely rely on the affections, wisdom and kind support of none. But beyond this, when he has to experience his greatest admirers to become his bitterest foes, which does not infrequently happen, then perhaps is his heart well-nigh broken with grief. Yet we must continually more or less find the creature to be thus unstable, weak and wicked that we may learn to trust the Creator and Redeemer solely.

The believer has to contend with this fickle and unkind disposition, not only in natural, but likewise in spiritual friends; and this frequently appears more unbearable than all the rest. "If it had been an enemy," he is ready to exclaim, "I could have borne it." A hint to the wise may be sufficient. Therefore,

2. The Lord does not only cross us in our creature comforts, but if this prove unavailing He, at least for a season, quite withdraws them. The Lord often destroys our gourd, takes His gift away, lest we should forget the Giver. Why is the infant cut off from the fond parent's breast, and the husband or wife taken one from the other? Frequently, no doubt, to prevent or chastise for idolatry. Jacob loves Joseph and Rachel above his other wives and children, and the Lord removes these first. Why are our gifts and graces so repeatedly under an eclipse, and to our apprehension entirely lost? To teach us a more pure trust in the free and sovereign salvation of God, and to value Jehovah Jesus, the divine Giver, above all His gifts. Our faith, hope, love, joy, humility, etc., are good so far as they are wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, but they are not our Saviour. Bless God, He is much more stable than they, or our salvation would be very precarious indeed. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and for ever, but the actings of our faith and love are ever varying. Therefore, when the comfortable exercises of our graces decline, the Lord is admonishing us to look out to that covenant, those promises and that full salvation, which are all established in Himself, that can never vary, nor lose any of their worth, and to say to our souls, "Are joy and comfort gone? then let me reflect my Jesus still remains who is the Fountain of all true joy and consolation. Therefore He shall by and by send forth His Holy Spirit to restore these precious benefits and all things that I may need beside."

3. The Lord reveals more of Himself to the believer. This is indeed a blessed and a very necessary means of withdrawing his affections from being unduly fixed on the creature. Here he discovers that which eclipses both it and all that appertains to it, and presents an all-satisfactory portion to his mind. Something more weighty, desirable and glorious must be seen in the Lord than in sin, the world, or any sublunary possession; otherwise the heart will not let go its hold of them for His sake. "Set your affection on things above," says the apostle, and "not on things on the earth" (Col. 3. 2). Let now the revealing light of the Holy Ghost render the super-excellency of heavenly things manifest to the Christian, and presently this exhortation will be complied with. Yea, and this will be done with great readiness and delight, where the discovery is clear and full.

O how the poor, weak and base heart will hang back when it hears the command to forsake earthly for heavenly, carnal for spiritual things, if left devoid of all inward relish of them by the light and power of the blessed Comforter; a bare conviction that this ought to be done will not bring up the spirit to a willing compliance. Hence we may discern the absolute necessity of having the light of life maintained in the mind, in order to walk truly, overcomingly and pleasantly, after the Spirit, and not

after the flesh. And how often, therefore, do we hear of Paul's desire for believers to experience divine light and wisdom in their understandings, to be renewed in the spirit of their minds (i.e. to possess much of that light that directs and influences the whole soul, that moves the will and affections to cleave to heavenly things, rendering a person spiritually minded, etc.). In vain shall we toil in endeavouring to mortify our inordinate, idolatrous and sinful affections, and to place our affections supremely on Christ, without this in some good measure taking place.

Our adorable Redeemer, knowing this to be the case, exhibits Himself to our view in the glory of His Person, love, mediatorial capacity and fulness, offices, blood, righteousness and the like. This attracts, draws, and calls in the heart to Himself. So it is seen in the case of the person who, finding Him the pearl of great price, sells all to possess it; of the one who discovers Him the treasure hid in the field of the gospel, that pursues the like course; and of the psalmist, beside many others, whose case is recorded in the seventy-third Psalm. He had been sadly disturbed at being denied the desirable things of this life, whilst many of the wicked around him enjoyed them in great abundance, until he went into the sanctuary – until he came into the spiritual presence of God, and beheld His glory and the glory of His great salvation; when he not only perceives the wicked are really in a desperate case, notwithstanding their present prosperity, but that his case is very good, though so many temporal things are withholden from him; and he exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." And, "It is good for me to draw near to God" (Psa. 73. 25, 28).

What a deep sense of the folly, ingratitude and sinfulness of cleaving inordinately to creatures the believer feels at seasons when the Lord Jesus thus reveals His glory to him, and how he longs to be more constantly and fully devoted to Him. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa. 51. 10), is the sincere and earnest desire and cry of his soul. He sees a great beauty in walking uprightly with the Lord, and serving Him with deep-laid fervency of spirit. He longs after a continuance and abounding of this endeared, soul-humbling and God-glorifying communion with the Lord, and wonders at the greatness of his stupidity that he is not always intent upon and eagerly pursuing after it. But this he frequently finds is a means of enhancing the long-suffering of a covenant God and the precious worth and efficacy of Jesus' atoning sacrifice in his esteem. These shine with great lustre and glory in his mind, and he now truly worships God in the spirit, rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh, by which he is sweetly evinced to be of the true circumcision.

"Come with Me from Lebanon," saith the adorable Immanuel. As this may serve to evince how apt we are to be tardy in coming off in our

affections from all earthly things to Him, how much our hearts linger behind in this world, as Lot's wife did after Sodom, so it surely proves the value the Lord sets upon our poor love, and how jealous He is of our yielding it to others beside Himself. And this is wonderful indeed, and should move us ardently to desire to give our whole hearts to Him. It is said, "My son, give Me thine heart." Truly when the Lord Jesus is pleased spiritually to open this matter to our hearts, we cannot but yield up our affections to Him.

The Lord invites us to come with Himself, by which He discovers how ready He is to walk and talk with us, to hold fellowship and communion with us, to reveal to us His secrets, according as it is written, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant" (Psa. 25. 14). The recollection of the blessedness of past seasons of communion may well stir us up earnestly to covet after a present compliance with this sweet and endearing invitation. Besides He here shows how ready He is to hear the confession of our sin, and John affirms, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9) – and the account of our miseries, and to remove them: "Call upon Me," He hath said, "in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psa. 50. 15) – and of our enemies, and to make known a glorious refuge from them, He declares by His Spirit in the Word, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" (Deut. 33. 27).

The Lord Jesus does not invite us to forsake our earthly endearments and comforts and friends, to go into a wilderness, or to be left to a state of utter destitution. No, blessed be His holy name, in calling us to fellowship with Himself, He calls us from earthly to heavenly things, from circumscribed enjoyments to those which are boundless indeed, from friends that may prove false and that cannot help us in every time of need, to One that loves at all times, that never leaves nor forsakes, and that is able to save us to the very uttermost. Jesus is well able to make up the loss of all earthly sweets we give up for Him, and this we experimentally find at times, when we see and feel Jesus and the meanest situation in life, Jesus and a prison or a wilderness, is far preferable to all the earth can yield without Him. He fully supplies whatever finite shelter, support, foundation, encouragement, etc., we turn from to put our whole trust in Him; as in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, all communicative fulness. He is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. We are said to be complete in Him, and He hath said in allusion to Himself, "Upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 18).

Do we forsake all creature worth, excellency or goodness for the sake of Him and His righteousness? Surely we are under the conduct of heavenly wisdom in this, for in Him there is no curse nor condemnation; yea, and the great God of heaven and earth is well pleased with us for His righteousness' sake. Therefore well sings the poet, though in self altogether vile and unworthy, when speaking of approaching to God in His worship, depending on Jesus:

“Nor fear with Thy righteousness on,  
My person and offering to bring.”

Are they riches that we forsake for Immanuel? With Him are durable riches as well as righteousness. Indeed, the riches of divine love, grace, mercy, goodness, truth, wisdom and so on, which are enjoyed in and with Him exceed, we are informed by the sacred penman, the highest conceptions of mortal man. In complying with the precious invitation of the text, do we turn our backs upon the honours of this world? But O how far the honour of being called to be companions with the Lord of life and glory outstrips these transitory honours! In this privilege we are brought to know something of what is contained in that wonderful scripture: “I in them, and Thou in Me ... that they may be one in Us” (John 17. 23, 21). With Christ, then, we shall be in safeguard from every enemy and evil, and possess all good, perfection, purity and blessedness.

“Come with Me,” says Jesus, “with Me,” your heavenly Husband. Surely this is calculated to win upon and draw our poor hearts to His blessed majesty, for besides the great favour conferred upon us, in that we are raised to such an exalted alliance with the Lord Jesus, what of love, kindness, tenderness, compassion, gentleness, etc., can or will be withheld from us? Has He espoused us to Himself? and will He not perform the Husband's part? Yea, blessed be His holy name, He will indeed. He will surely far surpass all other husbands in this respect. Hear what is expressed: “He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love.” “His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me.” “The King hath brought me into His chambers,” into the closest embraces of His love, and therefore the church exclaims, “Thy love is better than wine” – better than the most excellent things of this world. And when she was in great troubles and distresses, He presents Himself for her support and to deliver her out of them; whence we read, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?” (Song 2. 4, 6; 1. 4, 2; 8. 5).

The Lord Jesus says, “Come with Me from Lebanon, My spouse.” The church and every believer is the Lord's. He from eternity loved them into union with Himself. He became their law-fulfilling Surety, and thence suffered for their sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring

them to God. He came forth by His Spirit and grace to rescue them out of the hands of sin and Satan, and thereby imparted to them His life, purity and blessedness, and brought them from that direful place where the curses of the fiery law alight eternally upon the wicked.

Has Jesus thus loved, taken, purchased and brought the church near unto Himself, besides having promised to bring every member of her to ultimate glory? And shall she be backward to yield up her heart and affections to Him? Shall she pursue, or at least cherish some hankerings after other lovers? Alas! we know she will, she does, when left to the baseness of her desperately wicked heart. Still, when the Lord shines into her heart, and effectually brings home these heavenly motives, she cannot but yield up her whole soul to Him. She must now actually and sensibly cleave to Him with purpose of heart.

From the *Gospel Standard* 1906.

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## THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

*From Bogatzky's "Golden Treasury"*

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“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12. 21).  
 “And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?”  
 (1 Pet. 3. 13)

The Christian life is a warfare, and the conflict between sin and holiness, and between sorrow and comfort, is often very violent. The child of God has many evils to encounter with. Sin, Satan, self and the world are daily enemies. He is also exposed often to poverty, affliction, reproaches and persecution. O my Saviour, help me to overcome every evil in the strength of Thy grace; give me a heart to do good, to all who may seek to hurt me.

“Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” Not the Father, for He loves you; not Jesus, for He died for you; not the Spirit, His work is to comfort you; not good men, they love those that follow that which is good; not wicked men nor devils for, though enemies, they are confined, and cannot stir one step beyond what thy God and Saviour permits them.

When you meet with a trial, look not to men, but to Jesus. Pray for patience to bear it, and look up for a blessing upon it. Then all things shall work together for good (Rom. 8. 28). Let every temptation make you more careful, and put you on a closer watching against the enemy. Cleave to Jesus by faith and prayer, like a child to its parent when it sees an enemy coming towards it. Behold Him, flee to Him, rest upon Him, and then you will rejoice in Him.

“How glorious, Lord, Thy wisdom shines,  
And baffles Satan’s deep designs!  
Thy power is sovereign to fulfil  
The noblest counsels of Thy will.”

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## **BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD**

*By Johannes Groenewegen (1709-1764),  
minister at Werkendam, The Netherlands*

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“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” (Rev. 14. 13).

This is one of the sweetest promises which can be found in the Book of God. ’Tis true, God makes great promises to His people in this life, but that does not wipe away all tears. If we were only hoping upon Christ in this life and did not expect anything hereafter, we would be of all men the most miserable – so speaks God’s oppressed and plagued people. Besides this, God’s people sometimes say, I prefer the service of the Lord Jesus even if it would not benefit me after death, and although I should be lost, I am worthy of it; nevertheless, my desire in this life is to be in the service of Christ and have communion with His people.

Yet the Lord comforts His people with the promise of an eternal rest and glory. For how then could they have gone to the stake and climbed the scaffold if the crown of glory had not glittered before their eyes? O happy people, who have ventured their life with Christ!

But why are they called dead? That happy people, those Lazaruses, are not dead; they just sleep here a short time until the heavens shall be changed as a vesture (Psa. 102. 26). But according to the outward appearance they also die, and sometimes they have a fearful death. A God-fearing person can also have a fearful battle with his last enemy, that king of terrors. The heirs of life must also die. It is wonderful to speak of death and blessedness at the same time and about the same person. Can then death and life be true at the same time? Can death, which is a punishment for sin, and eternal life take place at the same time? Yes, such a wonderful people and such a happy people are the children of God. Out of death that threatened evil upon sin, they get eternal life, and no wonder, for in the greatest need, and in death, the Son of God is their life.

We need not tell you what death is, nor closely scrutinise it, since there is so much experience of it in the world. We see it daily before our eyes in our good friends and relatives, that the soul is separated from the body, and the body returns to the earth from which it was taken. That we

all must die is without contradiction; even if death for us is swallowed up into victory through Christ, we still must die. It is set for man once to die according to God's eternal council. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?"

But I ask you how must we die in order to die happy? I answer, "In the Lord." The Lord here especially means the Son of God, the Mediator between God and man, who executes the work of salvation, with whom the people of God, by reason of His mediatorial work, have a special union through the Spirit and with the Father. As Mediator they go through Him to God, and since He is God, they may also end in Him.

All believers who go to the grave die in the Lord. "In the Lord" means to be united to Him by faith and have communion with Him, and to be reconciled to God by Christ. There is between Christ the Lord and the believers in life and death a new union through love and faith, from which flows a close relationship which is generally called a being in Christ. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15. 5).

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### TOMMY PEE'S CHAPEL

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*In the mid 1800s there was a little chapel in Dudley known as "Tommy Pee's Chapel." Apparently Tommy Pee and his wife were a most godly couple, and made a living by selling "bull's eyes." We ourselves remember people who either in childhood attended this little chapel, or else their parents did.*

*Eli Ashdown, the pastor at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, London, gives a most interesting account.*

On the Tuesday evening I was engaged to preach at Dudley, about six miles from Wolverhampton, and it being a good road I thought I would walk there. On my way I had a good view of the desolation of the country in the midst of iron furnaces. Many parts of the land had fallen through, where iron had been dug out from underneath, and many of the furnaces had been shut up, and were dilapidated and dropping down. What I beheld on the surface of the earth harmonised with my own feelings, for I felt a poor, broken-up man, and my soul could find no rest.

As I entered Dudley, men, women and children seemed all like sweeps, working in the iron and nail factories; women were sitting on the door-sills by the side of the road, smoking short pipes, and children were playing in the streets. I had not entered into the town far, before I saw a little short man making his way to me, and he addressed me: "Are you the minister that is come to preach here?" I said I was. He said, "Then



come along with me,” and after passing down the street a few hundred yards, he took me into a little humble cottage and introduced me to his wife, who was as small in stature as he was. This man was Tommy Pee, for so the friends called him, a most godly man, well instructed in the things of God.

Mrs. Pee had the tea spread on the table. They both entered into conversation on divine things, and I soon found myself at home with them. Though theirs was a humble dwelling, there was the air of cleanliness and seeming consistency with the truth and name of God in it. They manufactured “bull’s eyes,” and sold them from the window. I felt amused while at tea, for the woman could sit but a little while, when a child would come in for a farthing’s worth or halfpenny worth of “bull’s eyes,” and she seemed quite at home, and went on with the thread of her conversation with her husband undisturbed. Before the time for service, several friends came in from the furnaces and coal mines, and I found by their conversation they knew something of that path which is above to the wise.

When we came to the chapel I found it was a small place, made to hold perhaps one hundred people. Thomas Pee read the hymns, and that evening gave out this hymn of Hart’s:

“Lord, if with Thee part I bear,  
If I through Thy Word am clean,  
In Thy mercy if I share,  
If Thy blood has purged my sin;  
To my needy soul impart  
Thy good Spirit from above,  
To enrich my barren heart  
With humility and love.”

While they were singing, I looked round on the people, and truly I felt the Lord had chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, for both men and women looked as if they ate bread by the sweat of their brow. I read for my text Isaiah 51. 3: “For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.” I felt great freedom among this people. After the service, Thomas Pee took me warmly by the hand, and said, “Friend, we like it hot from the spit; we have had it warm from your heart this evening. Though you are a stranger to us, we know the things you have been speaking about.” Several friends went back to his house with us, so that his little room was full, and we had some comfortable conversation.

After the friends were gone, they took me to my bedroom. The bed furniture was exactly the pattern of my dear mother’s, and there was a

four-post bedstead, which led me back to my youthful days and the many admonitions my mother had given me when young; also to after-days, when it pleased the Lord to convince me of my sin. These things brought on my mind a comfortable meditation of the goodness and faithfulness of God to me an unworthy sinner from my youth up, and a sense of gratitude that my lot had been cast among His people from my birth. Notwithstanding the trying position I was then in, the Lord was near; light shone upon my path and past experience; and Satan hates the light and sweet influences of the Comforter; while these rest on the soul, he has but little power over us. I was very comfortable that night.

In the morning at breakfast we had more conversation on the best things, when my friends spoke of the way the Lord had brought them to the knowledge of Himself. How heart-strengthening and reviving is godly intercourse and fellowship with the saints amidst the trials and temptations of the way.

*From the Gospel Standard, 1885*

On December 13th, 1884, aged 68, Thomas Pee, for many years deacon of the church at Dudley.

He was born near Brierley Hill, Staffordshire, in the year 1816. His mother died when he was about seven years of age. After her death he lived with his grandmother, and when nine years old, he was put to work. After the space of six or seven years, his grandmother died, and he then went to live with an uncle and aunt who had a large family of their own, and lived at Gornal. When about fourteen he went to work in a coal pit, which was hard toil for so small a boy.

His aunt started an evening class, which Thomas joined, but owing to him being so short-sighted, he could never learn to read to any purpose. The Bible was the book used by the class, and Thomas would listen attentively while the others were reading it. His aunt attended the Congregational chapel at Gornal, attached to which was a good Sunday school. Here his education, if such it may be termed, was carried on. He quickly learned the hymns that were sung, and made himself so familiar with the tunes that in after days he was never at a loss to lead this part of public worship. He was a favourite with his companions and would often entice one aside to read to him, when his mind would receive and retain what he heard.

At the chapel he frequented, a Mr. Heathcote was the preacher. He was a faithful minister of Christ. What effect his preaching had upon the mind of Thomas does not appear, but the first evidence of some tenderness of conscience in him showed itself about the year of Mr. Heathcote's death, which, in the locality, is called the cholera year of 1832. It was on a Lord's day as he and a companion were indulging in profanity he was solemnly rebuked by a passer-by named Rogers. The

rebuke overwhelmed him, and for days he was cut to the heart by the reproof he received. How true is the Scripture, "A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool" (Prov. 17. 10)!

On another occasion, while he and some young men were joking and laughing as they walked down the street, they came up to a butcher who was driving a few sheep and lambs away to be killed. In an instant the words flashed into his mind: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. 53. 7). The words surprised and staggered him, and he hastened to a place of concealment that no-one should witness his tears.

His uncle now removed to Dudley, and Thomas came with him. About this time he joined a General Baptist church. The time, however, came when he began to scrutinise closely the doctrines of the church with which he stood connected, and ultimately was led to see the unscripturalness of free-will and creature-ability in divine matters. He frequently attended the chapel where Mr. Burns preached at Gornal, for the doctrines he was compelled to listen to at his own place were growing more and more distasteful to him.

At length he withdrew from the church to which he belonged, and was received as a member of the Strict Baptist church in Wolverhampton Street. Here he found his own religious views set forth, and friends with whom he could take sweet counsel. He had worked as a collier seventeen years, when he thought it advisable to give up an employment for which he never was very well adapted. He now took to making and selling sweets for a living, and in this humble business the blessing of the Lord attended him. When about thirty-one years of age he married, and he and his wife lived together in the same house for thirty-seven years. He had, like Mary, chosen "the one thing needful," and "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" stood first with him, and all earthly matters stood behind. In going his rounds to sell his sweets, he carried tracts with him, and would often engage in religious discourse with those he met with. His grand theme was the grace of God upon the heart.

The most useful part of Thomas Pee's life was yet to come. In the year 1854 a disorderly contention arose in the church to which he belonged. This was the greatest grief he had known up to this time. Some of the members left the chapel and opened a place in another part of the town. The few who were left were too poor to support the place, so Thomas proposed to open his cottage for public worship. This was gladly accepted. They had one fair-sized room, and the first service was held in it on January 13th, 1856. Ministers came to preach and the room was well filled. On December 7th of the same year, a church was formed and Thomas was chosen deacon, which office he held for twenty-eight years. He received the ministers, finding them board and lodging at his

own cost. His house was the resort of godly people. How he could do all this it would not be very easy to explain, but so it continued for upwards of twenty years.

The services being well attended, Thomas began to think that it would be wise to find some better accommodation than his little cottage afforded. Close to his house was a carpenter's shop. This he took at a rental of £9 a year. It was then fitted up with all necessary fittings and opened for worship in September 1861. Thomas named it Hope Chapel. His wife was chapel cleaner and pew opener, but would receive no remuneration. Thus they both worked together, and their reward was when the Lord in any way blessed the Word. In prayer he was very solemn. It was as if the Lord were present, and he would tell out the feelings of his own heart and those of others with much sincerity and earnestness.

In 1865 he was afflicted with shingles and bronchitis, from which he never after was free. These two diseases in the end brought him to his grave. He was naturally cheerful, but his afflictions at times brought him into a low state, both of body and mind. Once, when specially depressed, he feared that he had never been of any service to the church of God, and from day to day he mourned and grieved. A friend from Old Hill called to see him and told him how sweetly he had heard him in prayer a short time before. At hearing this his trouble fled, and gladness succeeded to his misery. The last year of his life he was never free from pain. A friend who called to see him when he was near his end said to him, "Thomas, you want to say, 'The Lord's will be done.'" He replied, "I want to say it out of a feeling heart," and then added, "Mine are such poor prayers. I love that hymn: 'A beggar poor, at mercy's door' (378). I shall have to be a beggar all the way."

Towards the last he was generally in a calm state, but the irritating character of the disease made him long to be gone. He felt very keenly the plague of his heart, and at times was sorely plagued with worldly thoughts, but the Lord, in answer to his prayer, took them away. When near his end, he told his medical attendant how great was the value of real religion, and said, "If you, Sir, should die without being born again, you must surely sink to hell." The last time he had his bed made, he said his time was up and he should not require it made any more. He fell asleep, and between one and two o'clock in the morning it was found that he had passed away. He was buried in the churchyard, Mr. Spencer having first conducted a service in the chapel.

W.K.T.

(We knew Thomas Pee for many years, and regarded him as a simple, good man, and much regret that no better materials can be obtained to give a more clear account of his religious experience) – the Editor, James Dennett.

*From the Gospel Standard, 1886*

On May 19th, 1886, aged 78, Mary Pee, for many years a member of the church at Dudley.

The following was written by her own hand:

"It is now above sixty years since I was first brought into trouble about my soul. I was then very ignorant, and knew nothing of the way of life, and was so blind that I think surely there never was one so blind as I. How true I have found the following words: 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.' (Isa. 42. 16).

"It is more than fifty years since I first made an open profession. I was then amongst the Wesleyans, but was nearly always in trouble of mind. I felt I had such a wicked heart, and was plagued with horrible temptations, so that I could not rest. I was not more than twenty-two years of age when I joined the Methodists, at which time I knew nothing about doctrine, only I was very unhappy, and there was not one in our family that knew anything about divine things. The trouble of soul that I was in affected my body, and they said I was going into a decline. I wished I had never been born, and feared I should go out of my mind. Nothing but almighty power could have kept me. Under the infirmities of nature we may seem to sustain ourselves, but a wounded spirit who can bear? My soul was indeed brought down with hard labour, and I do not think there was a more miserable person in existence than I was at this time. I could not work nor eat, but kept my distress from others as long as I could. I did not know what it all meant, but wished I had never been born. I now feel that nothing short of the power of God could have kept me from an asylum: 'My sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.'

"But one night as I lay in bed, these words came to me: 'Fear not; for I am with thee.' I felt so happy that I told my mother to call me in the morning, for I could get up and work now. My mother was left a widow with ten children, and we had a good deal of trouble, but I could now see that all had worked together for my good.

"I was first brought under the sound of the truth in the year 1847, and I and my late husband were brought together in the same year. I am a witness that the doctrines of the gospel are true, and I dearly love them, but I want to feel my interest in them. I am still very blind and ignorant, yet the Lord has borne with me all these years. I think I have been the greatest dunce in the school of Christ. When I had once heard the truth I could not go amongst the Wesleyans again, for I seemed dead to them. When the old room by the Bank in Wolverhampton Street was first

opened for the preaching of the gospel, I felt the Word so good that it was more to me than everything beside. I now feel I could die on the truth I have for so many years professed.

“I hope the Lord will keep me from falling. I firmly believe in the doctrines of grace, but want, after all these years, to know my interest in them. I feel I need God’s mercy as much as ever. I have taken in the *Gospel Standard* for the last thirty-nine years, and not missed one number. It is always a welcome messenger to me. We take between twenty and thirty every month at our little chapel. As it will be the Jubilee this year, and a meeting is to be held, I hope it may be a time never to be forgotten, and that there will be a special outpouring of the blessed Spirit, for without the Spirit’s work within, all profession is as unhallowed fire, and those who have it, have only a name to live while they are dead. I hope the Lord will honour his people at the Jubilee, and send a Pentecostal shower, and that all things will pass off in an orderly manner; for it is a great undertaking.”

In last November she wrote: “I have received the P.O. order from my friends at B., who show me such constant kindness. I feel it a mercy at my advanced age that I am not confined to my bed. If I live until the 6th of next January I shall be 78, but my days now are labour and sorrow. I miss my dear Thomas very much, for he used to pray for me, and he was so thankful and so solemn. He is very much missed at our little chapel by all who know anything of real religion. When I am in bed my mind is harassed with all manner of distracting thoughts so that I cannot rest. My faculties are giving way very fast. It is through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom. When I am awake my mind is exercised with all manner of things, and I have to groan and cry, ‘Lord, help me,’ and know not what to do at times.”

This is all we have from her own pen. The last few months of her life she gradually became more infirm, and was at last confined to her bed. The following, which was sent us by a friend, will show the state of her mind during the last few days of her life:

“On Saturday, May 15th, she was in a sweet frame of mind, and particularly so on the following day. It was good to be with her, for she was singing and repeating hymns most of the time, though she was very weak. She read the hymn containing the following lines:

“‘Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.’

“The enemy was not permitted to harass her in her affliction, for the Lord was with her and made her bed in her sickness. She exclaimed several times: ‘How beautiful! How beautiful! It is so perfect; all white. No one can describe it.’ She was evidently referring to something she

saw of the Lord's glory, and now she has gone to behold it in that place prepared for her, where she rests from her labours."

Mrs. Pee and her husband, considering their position, made great sacrifices to maintain the truth in Dudley. About thirty years ago they opened their house for preaching, and afterwards were instrumental in opening a chapel where many of the Lord's servants have spoken the gospel of His grace. Mrs. Pee, though in very humble circumstances, was a remarkably clean and industrious person, and did all in her power to make God's servants as comfortable as possible whilst staying under her roof. I had the pleasure of knowing them for many years, and frequently preached both in their cottage and at the chapel, and always found them simple, humble souls, and as far as they had discernment, they would hear nothing but what they believed to be the truth of God. I believe they are now in the presence of Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, enjoying to the full those things for which they often longed whilst here below.

J.D.

[This again would be Mr. Dennett.]

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Hymns on Various Passages of Scripture**, by Thomas Kelly; hardback; 319 pages; price £12 plus £2.84; published by Gospel Standard Trust publications, and obtainable from 12(b) Roundwood Lane, Harpenden, Herts., AL5 3BZ.

This is a most beautifully produced book, and contains *all* the hymns of Thomas Kelly, 765 altogether. Thomas Kelly (1769-1854) has always been counted one of the eminent hymnwriters; divine truths are expressed in excellent poetry.

In our Gadsby's Selection there are thirty-four of Kelly's hymns, thirty-three of them being chosen by J.C. Philpot in his selection. Interestingly Thomas Kelly was still alive when Philpot made his selection of hymns to be added to Gadsby's. Of course, there are some quite well-known hymns by Kelly which do not appear in Gadsby's – for instance, the beautiful "The head that once was crowned with thorns."

There is a short biography of Thomas Kelly at the beginning.

We believe this book will be well received, not only by lovers of hymnology but by lovers of the gospel.

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Love will stammer rather than be dumb.

*Robert Leighton*

## THE PLACE OF SAFETY

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How do Thy mercies close me round!  
 For ever be Thy name adored;  
 I blush in all things to abound;  
 The servant is above his Lord !

Inured to poverty and pain,  
 A suffering life my Master led;  
 The Son of God, the Son of Man,  
 He had not where to lay His head.

But lo! a place He hath prepared  
 For me, whom watchful angels keep;  
 Yea, He Himself becomes my Guard;  
 He smooths my bed and gives me sleep.

Jesus protects; my fears, be gone!  
 What can the Rock of Ages move?  
 Safe in Thy arms I lay me down,  
 Thy everlasting arms of love.

While Thou art intimately nigh,  
 Who, who shall violate my rest?  
 Sin, earth and hell I now defy;  
 I lean upon my Saviour's breast.

I rest beneath the Almighty's shade;  
 My griefs expire, my troubles cease;  
 Thou, Lord, on whom my soul is stayed  
 Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.

Me for Thine own Thou lovest to take,  
 In time and in eternity;  
 Thou never, never wilt forsake  
 A helpless worm that trusts in Thee.

Charles Wesley (1708-1788)

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If we are preferring any earthly object, of whatever kind, to Jesus Christ; if our affections are placed on any other being in opposition to Him; or if we are seeking our delight in any created thing as distinct from Him and independent of Him, we are neglecting His great salvation; yes, setting up idols in our hearts. We must love the adorable Saviour with a supreme affection; and we must love other objects only for His sake. Our temporal blessings must be enjoyed as flowing from Him; our friends and domestic comforts must be received as gifts coming to us through His redeeming grace. All we possess must be held at His disposal and with a view to that account which we must one day give. Thus Christ must be the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and ending, of all our desires and affections.

*Thomas Reade*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JUNE 2011

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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 WORD OF THANKS

It is my desire to return thanks for the loving way in which the denomination remembered the 40th anniversary of my Editorship of the *Gospel Standard*.

First, I would thank the Gospel Standard Committee for their thoughtfulness in arranging the collection at the Annual Meetings at Clifton in April to be given to me, and for the beautiful illuminated address, containing pictures of all the Editors, which was presented to me. But then – the wonderful generosity of the congregation in their kindness shown in the collection. Included was a special gift, with a very gracious letter, from the church at Bournemouth. We are grateful to the Lord and to you each for all these things.

It would be easy to reminisce about the forty years, but I do not think it would be profitable. Strangely, for a long time I had felt persuaded that one day I would be Editor, and was amazed when I heard that Mr. J.H. Gosden had said that one day I would be his successor.

In my early days, I was encouraged by the support of Mr. F.L. Gosden, Mr. Jesse Delves, Mr. J.S. Green and Mr. George Crowter – and also by a few godly women I scarcely knew. Names which come to mind are Miss Dorcas Baldwin, Miss Mary Wise (both of Biddenden), Miss Louie Lewis of Brighton and Miss Flora MacRae of Applecross in the Highlands of Scotland. In recent years Mrs. Jurina Wheeler has never failed to send a most encouraging letter each December.

Very special appreciation is owed to Mr. John Watts, Mrs. Alison Kingham and Mrs. Gill Parish for their continual voluntary help in proof reading over many years. This work has been carried on without fail, sometimes when it has been difficult to do so.

Without the sympathetic understanding of my dear wife, the Editorship would not have been possible. Especially in former days, with a few young children, she was left alone for many hours while I was in my study.

Being Editor has been a wonderful privilege, and I have always felt it as a calling from the Lord. As all the previous Editors have remarked, the work is arduous and relentless. J.C. Philpot in his inimitable way once remarked: "It is like the horseleach, insatiably crying, Give, give!"

One sadness during the past forty years has been that I have had to give up or decline so many preaching engagements as these have not been possible along with the work of the *Gospel Standard*.

Recently a minister in the Netherlands phoned concerning the forty years and asked why I had written so little personally, unlike J.C. Philpot, J.K. Popham and J.H. Gosden. I hardly knew how to answer. But pondering this, I have never thought of myself as a denominational leader, or anything like that – rather as just a working Editor trying to provide something Christ-exalting and profitable for the souls of the people month by month. I have felt like a man with the key to a treasure house, filled with precious jewels, who can take them, and show them, and even given them away.

There have been many failures and shortcomings. But I trust there has been no deviation from the truth, and a desire to follow in the spirit of the founder, William Gadsby.

Thinking of the past and the future, I close with what I wrote in my first issue in January 1971:

“Our Editorship begins in solemn times. We feel it must be as when we first began to preach: ‘Leaning on all-sufficient grace.’ It is now over 135 years since William Gadsby and his son John ‘ventured to launch their little vessel into so wide an ocean’ (to use their own words in the first *Gospel Standard*). Since then, the Lord has blessed us with a succession of godly, able Editors whose desire has been to exalt Christ, abase the sinner, set forth the precious doctrines of grace, insist on vital, gracious experience, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

“The substance of the first Editor’s favourite expressions has ever been found in its pages – speaking of Jesus: ‘Honours crown His head for ever’; and of the gospel: ‘O the riches of matchless grace!’ May this be the spirit still of the *Gospel Standard*.

“Thinking of the precious heritage of the past and ourselves, our thoughts have gone to the second chapter of Haggai: ‘Is it not in comparison of it as nothing?’ Yet that meaner building, the second temple, was to be honoured by the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus Himself and there in that much less glorious building, His own glory was to be displayed. May the Lord Jesus honour these pages and may they be perfumed with the sweet savour of His name. Our one desire is ‘that in all things He might have the preeminence.’ We long that the *Gospel Standard* may contain a sweet savour of Christ – His name as ointment poured forth; and may it be to many ‘the savour of life unto life.’ It is the Holy Spirit’s work to cause this: ‘Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.’”

With much thankfulness and deep appreciation to you all for all your kindness.

Yours to serve in the gospel of Jesus Christ,  
The Editor,  
B.A. Ramsbottom

## THE LITTLE FOXES

*Sermon preached at Clifton Chapel on Friday evening,  
April 15th, 2011, on the occasion of the Gospel Standard Society  
Annual Meetings.*

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**Text:** “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes” (Song 2. 15).

The Lord Jesus has lovingly compared His beloved church to a vineyard, and has He not declared, “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit”? When there is much fruit brought forth in the Lord’s vineyard, then His name is glorified, and then the Saviour sees of the travail of His soul and He is satisfied.

You might say then, What is the fruit of the vine? You may say, What are these grapes that appear? Let me remind you that in the prophecy of Ezekiel (chapter 15) there is a very short chapter and it makes one simple point: that a vine is the most useless of all trees – apart from fruit. You do not admire its beauty. You do not treasure it. You do not use the wood to make furniture; the wood of it is useless. But it just has one point: fruit. If it does not bring forth fruit, there is no use for it. But if it does bring forth fruit under the blessing of God, there is not a more fruitful tree to be found anywhere.

What are these fruits? What are these grapes that the Lord looks for? You can look at it in two ways. There are new converts in the church of God, the tender grapes appearing upon the boughs; and then there are the fruits of the Spirit, the precious graces of the Spirit – things like the love of Christ, godly repentance, true humility, living faith. So you might go on – a tender heart, walking in the fear of God, loving union and communion with the Saviour – these fruits of the Spirit.

In a chapter just after this we have this word: “Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear.” Well, beloved friends, sadly, solemnly today as we go round our churches and as we look into our own hearts, we are disappointed, and if we are disappointed, what of the Saviour? When we get up early and go to the vineyards, do we find the vine flourishing? Can that truly be said of our churches? Can it be said that the tender grapes appear? O but we look for these fresh converts coming and to find one here and one there coming into the sweet liberty of the gospel and to see them walking in obedience to the Lord’s commandment and to see older ones being blessed and flourishing in the faith, and then to see the tender walk of the godly. If we are honest, we are disappointed, and we are disappointed with ourselves. We do not see the vine flourishing. We do not see the tender grapes appearing just as we would desire. It is right for us to search our hearts: is there a cause? Not just to leave it to

complacency or just a phase in church history, or just something that will pass over and pass along, or things could be worse, and we have still got the truth. To search our hearts for a reason, and the best way to search our hearts is under the light of the Spirit and under the light of His Word.

Of course, there are various answers to this question, and I believe there are many here who are really concerned about it. Witness our prayer meeting this morning. Wasn't this a concern among the brethren? In the imagery here, do you know what they were all praying for? They were all different, but all praying that the vine might flourish and the tender grape appear. They were not using this imagery, this language, but that was their desire: that the vine might flourish and the tender grape appear.

The Lord here gives us the answer for this lack of fruit which we see on every hand and which we see in our hearts and lives. It is these foxes, these little foxes. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." When Solomon wrote this, Palestine abounded with these foxes. Perhaps they were more like what we would call jackals, and they used to get into the vineyard, especially if the hedge was broken down. That is the trouble today: the hedge of separation being broken down. They caused havoc in the vineyards, scraping away and destroying the bark and eating the grapes. It is a wonderful mercy that they could not touch the root; the root was still there. But when the farmer came into the vineyard, he was disappointed. The foxes had been there and it was not easy to keep them out. They were spoiling the vines.

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." We are plagued with these little foxes today. Strangely, even naturally in the papers during this last year or two you seem to read more about foxes than I have ever read in my lifetime: foxes getting into people's gardens and foxes going into people's dustbins and even foxes getting into people's bedrooms. That word has definitely come to pass in the church of God in our country, that the foxes walk on Mount Zion (Lam. 5. 18) – not they hide out of sight, not they slink along – the foxes walk on Mount Zion. And they "spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes."

Now what are these foxes and how are they to be dealt with, seeking the Lord's honour and glory? Of course, Satan is the great fox, deceitful, cunning, cruel, and his one aim: opposition to the honour and glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and so seeking to dishonour Him in the church, and seeking in any way to stop this fruitfulness, and seeking in any way possible to spoil these vines, these vines that have tender grapes. Now Satan is the great fox, and this is his great aim, but Satan can make himself appear as a little fox, and Satan has plenty of little

foxes. A little fox can get through the hedge or under the fence where a big fox cannot, but little foxes grow into big foxes, and big foxes have sharp teeth.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” What is a little fox? Do you know, really the answer to that is *anything*. Satan does not mind what he uses so long as it seeks to dishonour our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the churches and amongst the Lord’s people. Sometimes people are little foxes. Of course, there are these dreadful foxes when you think of people today with all their enmity and malice and opposition to the Word of God and the truth as in Jesus. These foxes. But Satan can use anything. “Little foxes.” I do not know if you have ever seen a little fox. It is one of the most beautiful creatures you can ever see. I remember being up in the Lancashire hills once and I saw a baby fox playing with a puppy. You have never seen such a beautiful creature as that baby fox. I have known people who have been so attracted by these baby foxes that they have tried to tame them, and they have been lovely pets until one day they caught the smell of blood, or the taste of blood, and O the viciousness and havoc they caused.

But Satan can use anything as a little fox. People can be little foxes, especially erroneous teachers; but even good people can. I remember once a godly woman saying to a godly deacon whom many of you knew, “Don’t be a little fox!” What was he doing? Well, it was the end of a service and she had been favoured in her soul, and this man started quibbling and talking and arguing about something which did not really matter. I remember well her turning to him and saying, “Please don’t be a little fox.” The prime example of this was dear Martha of Bethany. Wasn’t she a godly woman, but wasn’t she a little fox when Mary was sitting at the Master’s feet! Anything that spoils the union of the people of God with Him, anything that mars their close walk with Him is a little fox.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” Now there are many of these little foxes. Where can we begin? False teaching is a deceitful, dreadful little fox, especially when false teaching creeps into our churches and when it dishonours the Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is a sad thing that it comes in as a *little* fox. People say, Does it really matter? I don’t really understand it. There are other things which are more important – and there the little fox is spoiling the vines, “for our vines have tender grapes.” O how we need to be delivered from the spirit of Lot when he said even to God Himself, “Is it not a little one?”

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” Unbelief is a dreadful fox and it often creeps in as

just a little fox, as if warning people to beware of presumption. You know what Joseph Hart says of unbelief: it is “Of all offences worst,” because it fights against our God. O to recognise it as a little fox and to treat it as a little fox. “Blind unbelief is sure to err.”

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” Prayerlessness – O what a little fox that is when the Lord’s people begin to cease to pray! “Little foxes.” Fatalism, your own misunderstanding of the blessed truths of God’s providence and divine sovereignty and the truths revealed in the Word of God, and the little foxes cause havoc by this fatalistic spirit. “Little foxes.” A spirit of self-satisfaction, self-complacency. Didn’t J.H. Gosden say how much our churches have been weakened by a solemn perversion of the truth we read this evening: “Without Me ye can do nothing”? How often even the truth has been wrongly used as a little fox, to be the cause for complacency, self-satisfaction and unconcern.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” It is not just in the church of God; it is in our hearts also: the lack of repentance, self intruding. “Little foxes.” And those twin little foxes – not identical twins – they are like twins who are very different: prejudice on the one hand and personal liking on the other. What havoc these have caused in our churches over the years! Prejudice against a person. You know what Bunyan said. Mr. Prejudice went to listen, but he took with him ten men and all of them were stone deaf. Beware of prejudice, and on the other hand, partiality – a friend, a relative, and excuses are made. It is wrong; we know it is wrong, but it is passed over and excused. It was partiality that caused the first split in the church of God. There were those two godly men, Paul and Barnabas, and they had a dispute among themselves and it was all through this little fox of partiality. There was John Mark. Should they take him with them? And Paul said, No; he was not reliable. They had tried him once, and he had failed badly. But even Barnabas was partial: “Barnabas determined to take him.” (John Mark was Barnabus’ sister’s son.) And those two godly men were divided and the church was split for the first time.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” Perhaps more than anything else, worldliness, worldliness in all its different shapes and forms, but it comes as a little fox and it spoils the vines and there is a taking of affections away from Christ. Things which were once counted evil are now condoned and there is a living at a lower standard. O these little foxes! You older ones remember those godly souls that we knew. They lived for the honour and glory of God. They had only one concern: the things of God. I remember a minister saying that he remembered a godly old couple and

the way they spent their holidays. When the Bank Holiday came they got a tram in the city where they lived; they packed up sandwiches and a flask of tea. They went to the chapel and sat there alone and ate their sandwiches and read the Word of God and sang and prayed. There were the milling throngs, but those two felt they had had a good holiday, a blessed day. There was a lot of poverty, a lot of sorrow, a lot of affliction, but there was a closer walk with God. But the little foxes have got in.

We could go on all evening about this little fox and that little fox, but *you*, do not be a little fox yourself and I must not be a little fox. I am sure as I am preaching you can think of all kinds of other little foxes,\* but we do not want to spend all evening looking at the foxes walking on Mount Zion. There are a few better things to speak about.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” Now there are two different ways you can take this verse, and I find some of the godly divines have taken this verse one way, and some have taken it another way. One is as spoken by Christ and the other is as a prayer to Christ. I think it was Thomas Godwin of Godmanchester – on one occasion he preached from a text in the Song of Solomon, and one of his hearers went to him and said, “Mr. Godwin, I didn’t think that was Christ speaking to the church; I thought it was the church speaking to Christ.” The good man said, “I can see it both ways. I took it that way this morning and I am going to take it the other way this evening.”

But look at this as Christ speaking to His beloved people and especially to His ministers. “Take us the foxes.” It is part of the work of the gospel ministry. It is part of the work of grace and faith in a sinner’s heart, that work of self-mortification, the crucifying of the flesh. “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” One of the old divines said he felt John the Baptist was a prime man in taking the foxes. He said, Look how he started. Those soldiers came with all their fox-like ideas and fox-like beliefs and fox-like behaviour. How he took those little foxes! He said, “Do violence to no man... and be content with your wages.” And then he said some foxes came along themselves. They were hypocrites. He said, “Ye generation of vipers.” And last of all he met the old fox himself, Herod, whom the Lord Jesus called a fox. He reproved him to his face and said, It is not right for you to have her. But if some say the prime one in taking little foxes was John the Baptist, what about the Apostle Paul, and what about the first Epistle to the Corinthians, as he sees all these little foxes molesting the churches and how he seeks to take them one by one and how he seeks to slay them and how he seeks to drive them out?

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\* One of these is gossip. What harm it does in the church of God!

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines.” O but as an exhortation to every sinner saved by grace, to be able to recognise a little fox and to chase it away or destroy it. You even read today of people foolishly encouraging foxes in their gardens and feeding them. You think of the foolishness of it. But your carnal heart and mine, left to ourselves we do not drive the little foxes away. Some of them are quite attractive to us, attractive to our flesh, attractive to our carnal hearts, and we perhaps like to watch them and we are not really afraid of them. “Take us the foxes.” There is so much about subduing the flesh, so much about indwelling sin, because love to proud self, self-righteous self, lustful self, unbelieving self, is the greatest fox of all to a child of God personally. “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines.” O the havoc they cause in the church of God and the havoc they cause in our lives! “For our vines have tender grapes.”

But to look at it the other way, the second way, and this is the way I myself like to think about it and am inclined to speak about it: as a prayer, a prayer to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Take these foxes. Rid us of them. Drive them out of the church. Destroy them. Keep them from us personally. We cannot do it. We are not like Samson, who caught three hundred and tied them tail to tail. We cannot catch foxes like that. Lord, “take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” It is real prayer. It is a prayer of helplessness, confessing our own helplessness to do it. It is a prayer of desire, of reality, wanting it to take place. It is a prayer acknowledging the gracious ability and divine, almighty power of the Saviour, that He is able to do it. It is a prayer of sincerity. It is a prayer of reality. “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” You see the plea. Lord, it is for Thine own honour and glory. Lord, it is for our good. Do it in our churches. May our churches be more fruitful. O to see these fresh converts, sinners walking in obedience to Thy ways, the blessings of the sweet liberty of the gospel, our captivity turned as the streams of the south, love to Thee as the Saviour abounding. Lord, it is for Thy honour and glory. It is for our real good. But these foxes are too cunning. They are too crafty, too cruel, too strong for us. Do it for us.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” Now I want to come to the way the Lord does it, and I do not want to go outside this chapter. What happened in this chapter? Well, it is “the voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh.” And these little foxes are frightened when they hear that voice. It is “the voice of my Beloved.” O wasn’t Satan frightened when he heard that voice from Calvary: “It is finished”? It is “the voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.”



There are not any of these foxes walking on the mountains of Zion when the Lord comes leaping across those mountains. They scurry away as fast as they can to their dens. You see the point, the secret of it. You see what the answer to this prayer is, don't you? It is when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ comes, when He comes to His beloved church. "When wilt Thou come unto me?" When He returns to Jerusalem with mercies.

"Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." Where is He coming? He is coming right where His beloved people are, and He is going to do everything for them. "Behold, He cometh." "He standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, shewing Himself through the lattice" – as the old preachers used to say, the lattice of God's Word and ordinances. Now when the Lord Jesus comes and blesses His church, when there is that true reviving, when He Himself is graciously present, when He looks through the windows, when He shews Himself through the lattice, when He makes the place of His feet glorious, it is then this prayer is answered and it is then the foxes flee away. So, "Take us the foxes, Lord." We cannot do it, but we would love to see the church rid of the foxes; we would love to see ourselves rid of these foxes which torment us and try us and plague us and perplex us. May this be the answer: "Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains."

"He sees when we are sunk in grief,  
And quickly flies to our relief."

"Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." He is coming so easily over every difficulty, but He is coming right where His beloved people are. You can speak of all kinds of troubles they are in, each one plagued by these wretched foxes. "Behold, He cometh," and He stands behind the wall and He looks through the window and He shews Himself, and once He has shewn Himself, it is then that the foxes flee, and then there is an answer to this prayer: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

It is this: when the Lord Jesus speaks in love and mercy to His beloved people and He says, "Rise up, my love, My fair one, and come away," He reveals Himself to His beloved people in love. He, the risen Saviour, makes known the power of His resurrection. He bids them rise up and He sweetly claims them as His own: "My love, My fair one." Where are all these foxes now? They are all fleeing away. "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away." Come away from all these things, all this unbelief, all this self, all this worldliness, all this fatalism, all this unconcern, all these God-dishonouring things. Come away from them,

sweetly constrained by love – “The love of Christ constraineth us” – and that is how the foxes are taken, and that is how the foxes flee, and that is how the foxes are destroyed. “Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.” The foxes cannot live in the presence of the love of Christ, but especially His dying love. “Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away.”

“Come, poor sinner,” says the Saviour, “Come away;  
 In meditation sweet,  
 Let us go to Golgotha,  
 And kiss the Saviour’s feet.  
 Let us in His wounded side  
 Wash till we every whit are clean;  
 That’s the fountain opened wide  
 For filthiness and sin.”

There are no little foxes there, beloved friends.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.”

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### THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETY

*Report of the Annual Meetings of the Gospel Standard  
 Aid and Poor Relief Society held on Friday, April 15th, 2011,  
 at Clifton, Bedfordshire*

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#### PRAYER MEETING

Mr. R.D.G. Field (Pastor, The Dicker) read Psalm 137 and spoke as follows:

There was much to weep over in the heart of the dear Psalmist as he penned this Psalm and considered the solemn state of Zion, and truly really it is typical today. There is much to weep over. First, the great withholding of the Holy Spirit. The Lord is grieved. O how we need to weep over our sins personally, the sins of Zion! Secondly, there is much to weep over with the lack of discernment in these solemn days. Men seem satisfied with the letter of the truth when we should desire those things that are vital and real. Thirdly, the world is creeping in on one side and self-righteousness on the other. But to the real, exercised child of God there will be much weeping – weeping over the hidings of the Lord’s face; weeping over the bondage that they are in, and many feeling today a weeping over the low state of Zion, many empty seats. Dear old Mr. Kirby who was at Staplehurst used to say when one or two seats appeared empty, “Those seats make an impression on me, but I cannot make an impression on them.” What he would say today, with the many empty seats throughout our little denomination, I know not. But O may we be found among the real weepers.

This weeping is not just with the natural eye, but heart-weeping. I do not want to tarry this morning on just the weeping. These first two verses seem to have rested on me for the last week or so. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." The mercy is this: in spite of all the inward weeping and tears, the Lord still reigns, and He reigned over the dear people here in Babylon in all their bondage.

But there is one thing that seems to have rested upon me so much since this word came: "We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." The mercy is this: they did not destroy them. There was a sweet measure of faith, and may the Lord grant it to us, to believe that we shall yet take down the harps. They did not hide them; they hung them on the willows to be seen. The day was to come when they would begin to sing. We think of that beautiful word in the prophecy of Hosea. He says, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: *and she shall sing* there, as in the days of her youth." And there is no singing like that, beloved friends, and O may the Lord hasten the day when the weeping will be turned into joy. Those of you may have many things to weep over personally and when you think of Zion, but O may there be the faith given to believe that the harps will be taken down and we begin to sing.

We read in this sacred Book of the Psalms, "Weeping may endure for a night," but he did not leave it there. "Joy cometh in the morning." "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Now how many of us personally know both sides of this? Because if we have got a real religion, we shall know much weeping, much sorrow, but it will not always be sorrow; there will be the joy. "We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof," in sweet anticipation they would be able to sing again, and the day came when the Lord was pleased to liberate them, set them free, and all that liberty will flow from the dear Redeemer Himself, for He says, "If the Son ... shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Well, may the Lord grant to us that real heart-weeping and that faith to believe we shall yet sing, and crown Him Lord of all. Of course, the fulness of this singing will be known in heaven.

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing His power to save."

May our souls anticipate that blessed day and be ready when the hour of death comes.

Hymns 1055, 330 and 1144 were sung during the prayer meeting. The following prayed: Mr. H. Mercer (Blunsdon Hill), Dr. T.J. Ramsbottom (Luton, Bethel), Mr. M.P. Hydon (Attleborough), Mr. D. Hodson (Southery), Mr. R. Cottington (Blackboys), Mr. J.W. Stevens (Luton, Bethel), Mr. T. Barker (Southill), Mr. D.W. Kerley (Swavesey), Mr. E.A. Palmer (Fenstanton) and Mr. D.J. Lawson (Clifton). Mr. Field closed with prayer and the benediction.

#### AFTERNOON MEETING

After the singing of hymn 517, the Chairman of the Society, Mr. G.D. Buss, called on Mr. G.W. Hyde (Pastor, Tenterden) to seek the Lord's blessing on the meeting.

The Chairman then read Psalm 68. 7-13.

CHAIRMAN: In those few verses I have read before you, we read of the power of our God in reviving His church. In verse 9 we read of a weary inheritance. God not weary of His inheritance – He will never be that; He has loved her with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness He has drawn her. He loves her in her weary times as well as in her times of apparent strength. But often His inheritance is weary rather like the drought when the flowers begin to droop through the lack of moisture and the lack of rain. So only one thing in a natural sense could cause the plants to flourish again and be strong again and that is moisture, water.

So what God did send?: "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm" – that means strengthen – "Thine inheritance, when it was weary." What is this plentiful rain so needful in the church of Christ for her to revive? You may look at it in many ways, but just in one way this afternoon I will just briefly mention it is surely *the Word of God* as taken by the Spirit of God and applied to the hearts of the children of God. It is what we have spoken of in John chapter 6 where the dear Saviour said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." I would venture to suggest this afternoon that nothing less than this will do, the application of the Holy Ghost to take His Word, the spiritual rain, and pour it out upon His weary inheritance.

And it is spoken of as a plentiful rain. Dear friends, there is no deficiency in the gospel. The blood of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, why, there is no deficiency there. O but it is in our poor hearts there is the deficiency when the Spirit is withholden. So what we want is that plentiful rain dispensed from above by the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, we have it as *a prepared Word*, because it says, “Thou ... hast prepared of Thy goodness for the poor.” I would just say this year when we remember four hundred years of the Bible we love so much, the Authorised Version which was faithfully translated by our godly forebears and has been such a blessing in the churches – how thankful we should be for this prepared Word. There can be no doubt that the Holy Ghost secretly moved in that generation to give to us this rich treasure so that we may hold in our hands the Word of God which we may trust as God’s Word, infallible and inerrant. Bless God for it. While we have the freedom to use it unhindered, may we use it well. But it is not just the written Word, is it? No; it is *the incarnate Word*. It is as the little hymn says,

“Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,  
Be Thou for ever near;  
Teach me to love Thy sacred Word,  
And find *my* Saviour there.”

How many of us this afternoon have found *our* Saviour there by divine revelation? It points to just one sentence perhaps in holy Writ and that was used by the blessed Spirit to open our eyes and from that day onwards we saw hope in Christ. A prepared Word.

And then we have it in verse 11, *a published gospel*. “The Lord gave the Word: great was the company of those that published it.” Here we have the ministry of the Word and in these days of great change when there are so many itching ears and so many *lo heres* and *lo theres*, and so many clamours in certain quarters for differences in worship to try and fill empty pews, we have no warrant from the Word of God for any other than this: “Preach the Word,” and every true reviving the church has ever known has come on that ground and that alone. “Preach the Word,” the written Word, the incarnate Word and contend for the applied Word. That is where reviving comes from; that is the gospel ministry. “How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” Who by? You say, Well, by the churches. I hope the churches are exercised in this matter, but the Holy Ghost who prepares the Word prepares the minister and the Holy Ghost sends Him if he is to be of any profit to the living church of God.

And the fourth thing we have here is *a prosperous harvest*. See the effect of the Word: “Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.” Those who have lien among the pots, that low, miserable place, yet they rose as the wings of the dove. How was this? The power of the Word, that Word being fulfilled by the dear Saviour in prophecy: “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” “My Word ... shall not return unto Me void, but it shall

accomplish that which I please.” What did we sing in our closing hymn this morning?

“Saviour, visit Thy plantation,  
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain!”

This is the rain we need, that rain to come down from heaven, God’s Word sent, God’s Word applied, God’s Word like Lydia, received in the heart where He opens it and makes it a blessing. May God grant us such reviving in these difficult days.

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society.

It is my privilege and pleasure to ask our Secretary, Mr. David Christian, to introduce the Report and the Accounts that you have with you.

MR. CHRISTIAN: Mr. Chairman, subscribers and friends: It is always nice to see so many gather together on these annual occasions and we do hope that they may be spiritually profitable to each of us, but they are a reminder that another year of our lives has passed away. Some who met with us in former years are no longer well enough to be here and some have passed into eternity, perhaps the most well-known of those being the much-loved servant of God, Mr. C.A. Wood who fell asleep in December last year; but there have been others also. At a funeral last year Mr. Ramsbottom said we had come to bury a King’s daughter, and we would pray that each of us might be found as sons and daughters of our glorious King, or as the apostle puts it, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus.

The Committee is very conscious that many of our churches are reduced in numbers and it is their earnest prayer that the Lord would grant a gracious increase. There does seem to be a withholding of the Holy Spirit and we would seek to examine ourselves to see if we have grieved the Spirit of God. May we be granted that true repentance and may the Lord return in His power to the churches.

We live in very solemn days and see many of those signs the Lord spoke of when here on earth – wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. In many lands we hear of the persecution of those who seek to worship the true God and in our own land there is increasing pressure to try to make Christians conform to the demands of a secular society. May we be among those of whom the Lord Jesus said, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” As we think on these things, may we not forget that our God is in the heavens and that He still reigns.

In November 2010 the ministers on the Gospel Standard list were invited to a meeting at Clifton for prayer for our churches, and it is hoped to hold another meeting for prayer at Clifton on Friday, November 11th, 2011, to which all ministers who are members of Gospel Standard churches will be very welcome.

Many of our ministers are now advanced in years and we seek that they might be spared to us and that more labourers may be sent into the harvest. We welcome applications from churches to have ministers, whose ministry has been with power and unction, added to the list of Gospel Standard ministers. The necessary details are printed in the January issue of the *Gospel Standard* or can be obtained from the Secretary.

Turning now to financial matters, you will see on page 13 of the Report that the funds in the Society increased during 2010 by £35,083. This was due to the receipt of £54,726 which was half of the funds from the sale of Petworth chapel. We are grateful for the money, but it is always sad when it comes in this way.

The financial state of the country has meant that interest rates have remained very low. The Committee has sought to obtain better rates without taking undue risks, and during the year has withdrawn funds from the COIF Charities Fund and now have deposits with NatWest, Santander and Scottish Widows Bank. We are very grateful for all the donations, subscriptions and collections that we receive and especially for the substantial anonymous donations received for the Magazine Fund since the end of 2010. Grants paid in 2010 were slightly lower than the previous year, but this was mainly due to some previous recipients entering Bethesda or passing away. The Committee will be pleased to hear from subscribers about those who attend our chapels and may be in financial need so that the necessary enquiries can be made.

The bulk of the surplus, £31,359 came in the Aid and Poor Relief Fund, but in the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund expenditure exceeded the income by £2,730. The Magazine Fund showed a surplus of £6,454 which was largely thanks to our printers entering into a different arrangement with Royal Mail which resulted in a considerable saving. We do express our thanks to Mr. Chapman for all his help and this has enabled us to keep the prices of the magazines the same for 2011. We did introduce a chapel parcel rate for *Perception* magazine but this has caused some confusion. The magazine is quarterly and so it is not practicable to send this with the monthly magazines. The reduction was to reflect the saving on postage if magazines were sent to one address, but unless the parcel contains at least three magazines there is no benefit. We would ask friends to inform us when they change from having individual copies of the magazines to having them in chapel parcels as this will avoid duplication.

We are very thankful that our Editors have been helped through another year and we seek that they may be helped to continue and that the Lord's blessing may rest upon their labours. We also thank those who assist our Editors in the preparation of the magazines.

2010 marked the 175th anniversary of the first *Gospel Standard* and a facsimile copy of the August 1835 issue was produced and sent with the August magazine. The start of 2011 marked the fortieth year since the appointment of our present Editor of the *Gospel Standard*, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom. He has been the longest-serving Editor by several years, and we give thanks for all he has been enabled to do. In recognition of all his work, the Committee decided to hold the collection this evening for his benefit.

The number of subscribers has not altered very much during the year and we would warmly encourage those who attend our chapels regularly and who agree with our Articles of Faith to consider becoming subscribers. Forms are available in the porch or from the Secretary and the minimum subscription is £5.

We are very grateful to the friends here at Clifton for the use of the chapel and especially thank Mr. Lawson for all his work in arrangements for today. The chapel here does seem to be the most suitable location, and as we hope to hold our Annual Meetings here regularly, the Committee made a grant to provide new cushions to the lower part of the chapel.

The next Annual Meeting, if the Lord will, is arranged for Friday, April 13th, 2012.

In conclusion, the Committee seeks an interest in your prayers as the members deal with the matters which come before them. Some of these are very difficult and they seek that grace and wisdom may be granted to them.

“Brethren, pray for us.”

The Chairman thanked Mr. Christian for his report, and asked if there were any subscribers who had any questions relating to the Annual Report and Accounts. There were none, and the proposal to approve and adopt the Annual Report and Accounts was put to the meeting. It was proposed by Mr. P. Barnard (Bodle Street) and seconded by Mr. M.P. Hydon (Attleborough) and carried *nem con*. The Chairman asked Mr. Christian to convey good wishes to his wife in her deep affliction.

The Secretary announced the result of the election of the three members who were put up for re-election. 254 ballot papers were sent out, of which 191 were returned. One arrived after the closing date and two were spoilt, leaving 188 valid papers. Each of the three members of the Committee who offered themselves for re-election received over 95% of the votes cast, and therefore Messrs. J.F. Ashby, J.R. Broome and G.D. Buss are re-elected to serve for a further three years. Mr. Christian emphasised that no record is kept of which ballot paper is sent to which member and they are all allocated at random.

Mr. J.F. Ashby then expressed thanks on behalf of the re-elected members of the Committee.

MR. ASHBY: Dear subscribers and friends, it is not until we come into these positions that we realise the solemn responsibility of them and our need of much grace and the direction of the Lord, for in and of ourselves we are not sufficient for these things. May the Lord give the spirit of prayer that the Committee may be upheld and make those decisions which are right in the sight of God, for His honour and glory and for the good of the denomination. I would repeat the final statement of our Secretary: “Brethren, pray for us,” for we need it much. We thank you for your support.

The Chairman said that we have to elect a new Funding Trustee and that the Committee two meetings ago proposed Mr. J.H. Cottington, who is the Vice-Chairman of the Committee. He put the resolution that Mr. J.H. Cottington be elected as a Funding Trustee. This was proposed by Mr. J.L. Rosier (Pastor, Blackboys), seconded by Dr. M.J. Hyde (Tenterden) and carried *nem con*.

The Chairman spoke of the loss of Mr. Clement Wood, who had been an able and useful member of the Gospel Standard Committee and the Bethesda Committee. He referred to his gracious counsel and consistency and his loving concern for the churches. He is remembered with great affection.

The Chairman endorsed what had been said: our wish that our loyal supporters might all be subscribers, and the need for our churches to recommend the names of profitable ministers to appear on our list of ministers.

He spoke of the letters which are sent from time to time concerning the current affairs of our nation. Sadly, the response is usually negative or non-



committal. A leather-bound 400th anniversary commemorative Bible is being sent to Prince William and Catherine on the occasion of their marriage.

A brief report of the Gospel Standard Library was then read by the Chairman.

### GOSPEL STANDARD LIBRARY

The Trustees of the Gospel Standard Library would like to encourage a greater interest and use of the Library which has an extensive collection of books. Being at Hove the Library is not central, but the Librarians are always pleased to assist and the catalogue is available in print or on the website, and books can be borrowed by post for three months. There are facilities, including a number of indices, to study various topics or for family history research. The Library is open most mornings from 9.30 to 12.30, but appointments can be made for other times or a key obtained from the Hove Bethesda Home.

This year the *Friendly Companion* magazine has been scanned from its inception to the present year and is being arranged with a comprehensive index which has been compiled. This has not been easy by the very nature of the magazine. It is not easy to put various items into certain categories. It has been done by our friends Miss Marion Hyde and Miss Muriel Stonelake, for which we are very thankful.

Last year mention was made about church records and a leaflet was prepared to provide useful and helpful advice and was circulated to all chapel correspondents. The records held at the Library have been, or will be, deposited at the relevant record office. To facilitate access, a list of the reference numbers allocated to them will be at the Library, and in due course available on the Gospel Standard website. Copies of some church minute books will be obtained and these will be kept securely at the Library and be available for inspection there. If anyone knows of the whereabouts of any records of chapels already closed, the Librarian would be very pleased to assist and give advice.

The Library now has a lovely picture including the first fourteen Editors of the *Gospel Standard* which is temporarily on show on the bookstall, prepared by Miss Marion Hyde with the help of Matthew Hyde.

The date and subject for the Annual Meeting of the Trust at Fenstanton were announced, and greetings received from our three ministers in the U.S.A. and Mr. Seymour in Australia were given by the Chairman. The church at Chilliwack in Canada had now been added to the List of Gospel Standard churches.

Hymn 607 was then sung.

*The 4th Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda then followed (see later).*

The Chairman on behalf of the Gospel Standard Committee specially thanked the Bethesda Secretary, Mr. Scott, for his work over the past twenty-one years.

The Chairman then presented the Editor of the *Gospel Standard*, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, with a beautiful illuminated address, containing pictures of all past Editors, in appreciation of his forty years' service as Editor. He expressed thanks

to the Lord for His goodness and mercy shown. The collection in the evening was to be for the Editor.

Mr. Ramsbottom was completely taken by surprise. In expressing appreciation of the kindness shown, he promised, if the Lord will, to try to give a suitable written response (see page 161).

The Chairman said: "We owe a debt of gratitude to the beloved wife of our Editor as well for the many lonely hours she has spent while he has been in his study, producing the magazines for forty years, and we thank her for that unseen sacrifice on our behalf."

After hymn 667 was sung, Mr. T.J. Rosier (Pastor, Maidstone) addressed the Meeting on Hebrews chapter 9, verses 27 and 28. If the Lord will, this address will appear next month.

In thanking Mr. Rosier for his address, the Chairman quoted the verse:

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

Hymn 500 was sung, and the Meeting closed with prayer by the Chairman.

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### GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND 4th ANNUAL MEETING

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MR. H. MERCER (Chairman, Bethesda Fund): We now come to the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund and welcome our subscribers and supporters and friends. It is my privilege to welcome you to this 4th Annual General Meeting. Although the past year has been difficult in many ways, we are truly thankful to the Lord for His help and for going before us. The regulation of care homes is constantly more intense and we have to comply with the requirements of the Care Quality Commission. This has placed a heavy burden upon our senior management and we are very grateful to them for all the work they continue to do. In addition there are financial constraints in the public sector which restrict the amounts of support given to residents who are not self-funding. Bethesda has to supplement from reserves the resulting shortfall in fees. Our operating costs continue to rise. It is the Committee's objective to maximise income and to reduce operating costs wherever this is possible.

You will observe from the Financial Statements that there is an excess of expenditure over income in 2010 of over £226,000 compared with £87,000 in 2009. This is largely the result of legacies received being £1,700 compared with almost £150,000 in the previous year. We are thankful that there are reserves available to cover the recurring deficiency of income compared with resources

expended. The Annual Report and Financial Statements give detailed information on the financial position of Bethesda which continues to be strong.

The Bethesda Secretary, Mr. T.H.W. Scott, spoke as follows:

MR. SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, subscribers and dear friends: It is my privilege once more to present to you the Annual Report and the Financial Statements for the year 2010. I would like to draw your attention to just a few matters of particular significance. The first one has been mentioned already by our Chairman. If you look at the Statement of Financial Activities found on page 32 of the Report, you will notice that the legacies received, the second item, amounted to just £1,700. Legacy income is always unpredictable, but I believe this was the lowest amount received for many years, possibly the lowest amount ever. The amount of legacy income received does have a major effect on the overall results for the year. Investment income has risen a little, increasing from £33,000 last year to just over £42,000. We have re-arranged some of our investments during the year in an effort to secure more attractive rates of interest, consistent always with security. A summary of the financial results of each of the Homes is given on page 14 and of the Flatlets on page 15. Each of the Homes has operated at a substantial deficit, which of course is a major cause of concern and weighs heavily on us all, but costs continue to rise, many of them beyond our control. The overall loss in running the Homes last year was £244,000.

Quite rightly, people are asking how long can this continue? There is no easy answer to this. Although we firmly believe that if it is the Lord's will that the work is to continue, He will provide the means, but as stewards we do have a responsibility to do all we can to contain the deficits. However, what can actually be done in practice is very limited. The basic Bethesda fee has been increased this year by just under 5%. This is at a time when income received by residents who depend on investment income has fallen rapidly. It also has to be said that however much the Bethesda fees increase, much of it will not be recovered because the amounts paid by Social Services are already inadequate to meet the fees and this year in many cases have been frozen completely.

We are thankful that the Harpenden Home is currently 100% full, as this does help the overall income of the Fund. Our General Manager, Mr. Topping, is investigating many areas of expenditure to see whether improvements can be made, but the deficits are so great that small savings here and there do not really contribute much towards the overall problem. In saying this, we in no way wish to be unthankful for the wonderful provision of the Lord over the years for the work in which we are engaged and also for the generous support received from subscribers and donors and from chapel collections.

Just one more comment on the Accounts, and that is concerning the amount shown in the Balance Sheet of £450,000 described as restricted funds. These funds arise mainly from legacies which have been left for the benefit of a particular Home and they are not therefore available for general purposes. The Committee prefers to spend these often large bequests on some major improvement to the Homes, and that is the reason that sometimes there appears to be no activity on the account. It may be some years before a suitable project materialises and the restricted funds can be used to meet the cost of the project. Further details of the restricted funds can be found in note 20 to the Accounts.

The number of Committee members at present is seven. Our friend Mr. Robert Field retired from the Committee at the end of 2010, having first joined the Committee in 1997. Mr. Field served on the Committee for two periods, first from 1997 to 2002 and again from 2005 to 2010, and for five years he was the Chairman of the Harpenden Home. We do thank him for all he has done for Bethesda and the help given in many practical ways too.

The new regulations introduced by our regulatory body, the Care Quality Commission, or the CQC as it is generally known, came fully into force on October 1st, 2010. Sadly the Commission has had a troublesome start with poor communication and sometimes misleading information. In July it was announced that the star rating system of Homes was to be abolished. A new scheme is being developed to recognise excellence in adult social care. The scheme is set to be launched in April 2012. It will be owned by the CQC but will be delivered by other organisations under licence. The CQC has developed a new tool known as the quality risk profile where all the information gathered about the Home is fed into their data analysis and this will hopefully enable inspectors to assess the risk presented by a particular Home. The number of inspectors has been drastically reduced and the current method of working is sometimes described as desktop inspections, with fewer and fewer inspections actually taking place. So far only one of our Homes has been inspected by the CQC, when the Studley Home was visited in February. We are pleased to say the inspector found the Home was meeting all the essential standards of quality and safety and many favourable comments from the residents found their way into the report.

In many ways the year has been a relatively quiet one for Bethesda, with no major building projects or alterations taking place and no particular anniversaries or open days. That does not mean nothing has happened, because the routine work of the Homes has carried on and thanks to our wonderful staff, I believe it has been carried on efficiently, compassionately and lovingly, and I believe professionally too. That of course includes everyone, whatever capacity they fill. From time to time we have young girls on work experience and one recently said she had enjoyed it so much, she felt it was the first step in her future career.

At both Brighton and Harpenden we have recently had very severe bouts of sickness which rapidly spread through the Homes and I have to say the staff were wonderful in dealing with this really critical situation and did everything possible to alleviate the distress of the residents. One of the residents said recently, "It is the little things which make all the difference, the extras which are so appreciated."

We are truly sorry that two of our Home Managers will be retiring later this year, Mrs. Jean Feaver at Brighton and Mrs. Susan Verweij at Harpenden. Both have worked for Bethesda for a long time, starting as care assistants, Jean for nearly fourteen years and Susan for sixteen years. We are pleased to report that Miss Sarah Parish has been appointed Manager of the Harpenden Home from June 1st, and will be working alongside Susan until the end of November. Sarah has worked for Bethesda for several years, so it is a real pleasure to be able to promote from within. To be a Home Manager is a responsible position, not only with the care of the residents, but overseeing the hundreds of rules and regulations that are inevitable in our time. We pray that someone might be constrained to apply for the position of Manager at the Brighton Home. However, we can report that Miss Sarah Williamson has been appointed Deputy

Home Manager at Brighton. Sarah has long experience of working in the Home. She first started back in 1993, so that is eighteen years. We wish all these members of staff the Lord's blessing in the future, both those laying down their responsibilities and those taking them up, and say to them, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

I would like to mention that if the Lord will we are hoping to hold an Open Day at the Brighton Home to mark the 50th anniversary of the opening of the original Home at Preston Road, Brighton. The date is Saturday, July 2nd, and details will be advertised in the *Gospel Standard* in May and June. If you can possibly come, we shall be most pleased to see you, so please do mark the date in your diary. There will be a service of thanksgiving held in the Home during the afternoon which Mr. Gilbert Hyde has kindly agreed to take, and after that there will be an opportunity to look round the Home and speak to the residents, following which tea will be served.

Several of you have enquired about my predecessor, Mr. John Watts. After a period in hospital, he remains very weak, but remarkably only last week he moved permanently into the Harpenden Home as a resident, and it is pleasing to think that after the many years devoted to Bethesda, he is now being cared for himself.

It has been my privilege to serve Bethesda as General Secretary for over twenty-one years. During those twenty-one years we have seen many changes, but this needful work goes on. I am pleased now to be handing over many responsibilities to our General Manager, Mr. Adrian Topping, whom I know will value your support and above all your prayers. In many ways working for a denominational charity is not easy, but we can say that, "There our best friends, our kindred dwell." I believe that amongst the denomination there is a very real love and a genuine concern for Bethesda and all that it has meant to many hundreds of our elderly friends over the past sixty-six years. We look to the Lord to continue His favours to us. Without the Lord's blessing we all of us must labour in vain.

On a personal note, I am hoping to continue as Bethesda's Financial Accountant with responsibility for the audited end-of-year accounts, so although remaining in this lesser role, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support, help and encouragement over the years. I would especially like to thank my two secretaries, first Mrs. Rosemary Mercer and then Mrs. Linda Wigley, for their very hard work, and also my wife who has helped me in so many ways. May the Lord Himself be with you all.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Scott for his Report and asked if there were any questions, but there were none and it was proposed by Mr. J.F. Ashby (Pastor, East Peckham) and seconded by Mr. D.J. Lawson (Clifton) that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund for 2010 be approved and adopted. This was carried *nem con*.

The Chairman then stated that the retiring members of Committee, Messrs. A. Rayner, M.D. Ridout and R.G. Wells had offered themselves for re-election. The Secretary announced that a total of 235 ballot papers were distributed to subscribers, of which 170 were returned. There were no spoilt papers, so the number of valid papers was 170. As a result of the voting, all members had been

re-elected by a substantial majority, each having received in excess of 90% of the votes cast. All three members had therefore been appointed to serve for a further period of three years.

MR. MERCER: This brings us almost to the close of the business of the Annual General Meeting. I would like just to mention what Mr. Scott has said in his report, that he is stepping down as General Secretary after over twenty-one years in that position. We pay tribute to his work for Bethesda during this time, and are thankful that Mr. Topping has been appointed General Manager to assume most of the responsibilities previously held by Mr. Scott. Mr. Scott has indicated his willingness to continue to be responsible for Bethesda's financial records and preparation of the accounts at the end of the year on a part-time basis for the immediate future. We wish him the Lord's rich blessing as he lays down the heavy burden and pray that Mr. Topping will be given all needed strength and wisdom as he takes it up. May the Lord also be pleased to give much-needed wisdom and grace to the Committee in the unknown way.

That brings to a close the Annual General Meeting of the Bethesda Fund.

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## CHRIST SMITTEN BY THE SWORD OF DIVINE JUSTICE

*From a discourse by Ralph Erskine (1685-1752)*

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1. Now the supreme Rector comes with the sword of justice to rectify these disorders by drenching His sword in the blood of His eternal Son. Was the covenant of works broken? Behold, here is the condition of it fulfilled by His active and passive obedience; yea, both the two covenants, of works and grace, were at once fulfilled in His obedience to death; this is the proper condition of each of these covenants.

Was the devil reigning and raging on the earth? Behold, by this blow of justice's sword given to Christ, the devil and all our spiritual enemies are destroyed! "For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." By the bruise of His heel, His human nature, He broke the serpent's head and his power.

Again, was the honour and beauty of God's workmanship like to be lost? Behold the Man that is God's Fellow, sustaining the stroke of Jehovah's sword, restores all: "Then I restored that which I took not away" (Psa. 69. 4). What was taken away? Why, the devil, Adam and Eve took away the glory due to God, the obedience due to the law, and the happiness which belonged to man in his first creation. Well, says Christ, it is much to bring them back again; but I will do it, though I took them not away. I will restore to man his happiness; he has lost the favour of God, I will restore it in justification; he has lost the image of God, I will restore it in regeneration; he has lost the fellowship of God, I will restore it, I will bring them to fellowship with God by sustaining the stroke of the sword of justice, which they should have sustained for ever.

I will restore to the law its due obedience; yea, I will magnify the law and make it honourable by My obedience to it, insomuch that the Lord of Hosts shall be well pleased for My righteousness' sake; and so I will restore to God the honour and glory that He lost by the sin of men.

2. The Lord of Hosts caused the sword of justice to awake against Christ, that in this way all the divine attributes might be glorified in the highest. "Glory to God in the highest" was the song of angels when the Son of God appeared in our nature to receive the stroke. God's honour was not more impaired by the sin of man, than it was restored and repaired by the death of Christ. If all mankind, and all the angels with them, had fallen a sacrifice to the sword of divine justice, it could not have repaired the honour of God for one sin. Though they had all been offered up in one whole burnt-offering, it could not have satisfied infinite justice. Yea, though they had all been damned in hell to all eternity, justice could never have got full satisfaction.

But here is justice glorified in the highest. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified": and at the same time vindicated the spotless holiness and righteousness of God, that it might be known that God is holy and just, who must needs avenge sin in His own Son, the holy and innocent Cautioner [Surety], when He interposes in the sinner's room. This is the declared design of God's awakening the sword of justice against Christ: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, that He might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3. 25, 26). If God had exacted the satisfaction of the sinners themselves by sending them to hell, it might have declared His justice and righteousness much; but here it is more gloriously declared, and glorified to the highest.

Here is mercy and free grace also glorified to the highest, while the sinner is freed from paying the debt in his own person. Here is divine power glorified to the highest in the crucifying of Christ, whom the power of God supported under that load of wrath which would have crushed ten thousand worlds. Here is wisdom glorified to the highest, the manifold wisdom of God, that there should be two natures yet but one Person; that mercy should be fully magnified, and yet justice fully satisfied; that sin should be punished, and yet the sinner unpunished; that the sinner should escape, and yet God should take vengeance upon sin. O the wisdom of God in a mystery!

3. Another reason why the Lord of Hosts caused the sword of justice to awake against Christ, the Man that is His Fellow, was that Christ Himself might have great honour and glory. God designed that for His suffering of death, He should be crowned with glory and honour; that for His humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, He should be highly exalted above all, and have a

name above every name; that for drinking of the brook of divine wrath in our room, He should lift up His head above all principalities and powers, have all power in heaven and earth given to Him, and the whole elect souls to praise Him for ever.

O it is a wonderful thing to think what He gave, and what He got! What gave He? His body, His soul, His blood, His life. What got He? Even some of the black, ugly race of Adam to embrace Him. He makes His soul an offering for sin, and then He sees His seed, He sees the travail of His soul and is satisfied. He thinks all His pains well bestowed when He gets His bride in His arms. O here is love! Behold incarnate love! bleeding love! dying love! Shall not this glorious Lover be exalted of God for ever, and exalted by all the redeemed with the highest praises, for opening His breast to receive the wound of the awakened sword of justice? Yea more, the song will be: "Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb that was slain. Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

4. The sword of justice was awakened against the Man that is God's Fellow that a fountain of blood might be opened for the benefit of sinners. The Shepherd was smitten that a fountain might be opened for the watering of His sheep. "There shall be a fountain opened ... for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13. 1); a fountain for watering and washing the sheep. And how is it opened? With the sword of justice: "Awake, O sword, against the Man that is My Fellow." And the Shepherd's blood is for the sheep in many ways. Particularly, it is peace-speaking blood; it is heart-cleansing blood; it is healing blood; it is bliss-purchasing blood. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

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O my soul, examine well into your real state and condition before God! Do not be satisfied with how much you know, but see what effect the knowledge which you have attained has upon the heart and life! Are you acquainted with your fallen state by nature, and your added wretchedness through actual transgression? If this awful truth has been admitted into your understanding, so far it is well. But rest not here. This is merely intellectual light, if its rays extend no further. Search and see whether its piercing beams have reached your conscience, and, like forked lightning in the midst of Sinai's thunder, struck you with conviction and dismay. Like Saul of Tarsus, has it struck you to the ground, and laid you low in the dust of deep humiliation?

Without this self-abasing experience of the total corruption of your nature, and this heart-humbling sense of your own extreme depravity, all your knowledge is merely human, "taught by the precept of men," and leaves you in a state of spiritual insensibility; the more dangerous, because the more liable to make you contented with the barren knowledge of your condition, and to substitute the shadow for the substance.

*Thomas Reade*



## WARNINGS AGAINST SINS OF THE FLESH

*By J.C. Philpot*

Now look at the way in which the Holy Ghost warns us against *sensual* sins. The very nature of the subject compels us to treat it very cautiously. But, "Unto the pure all things are pure" (Tit. 1. 15); and if we have brought the subject forward, it is with the sole object of throwing a fuller and clearer light upon our present point. Read then carefully 1 Corinthians 6. 13-20. We say this as expecting you to have your Bible in your hand when you peruse our Meditations, and to compare with it all that we advance. For if we speak not according to the Word and the testimony, there is no light in us (Isa. 8. 20). Now just observe that there are three most blessed gospel truths here brought forward by the Holy Ghost as reasons against all unchastity.

1. That "*he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*" (1 Cor. 6. 17). What an unsearchable depth of truth is lodged in that one verse – union with Christ so close, so intimate, so near, so real as to be one spirit with Him. To unfold this would be to open up the inmost heart, the deepest and warmest secrets of a living soul in its best and most favoured moments. But as an illustration of this oneness of spirit with Christ, take what you have doubtless in greater or less measure felt, oneness of spirit with some dear child of God. There are those amongst the living family with whom we see eye to eye and feel heart to heart in the precious things of God. What a oneness of spirit is there between us when we see alike, think alike, feel alike in what is all our salvation and all our desire, and when our very souls flow into each other like two drops of oil, or as those of David and Jonathan. Now he that is joined to the Lord is in a similar, but in a much higher degree one spirit with Him; therefore sees with Him, thinks with Him, feels with Him. But see the conclusion drawn from this precious gospel doctrine of oneness of spirit with Christ, and how peculiar it is – one we should never have thought of. This is the argument: Shall those who in *soul* are one spirit with Christ, be in *body* one flesh with the vilest of the vile? (1 Cor. 6. 16). What high, holy and heavenly ground is this!

2. But now view another gospel doctrine in connection with the warning against uncleanness. It is this: *The body of the saint is the temple of the Holy Ghost* (1 Cor. 6. 19). Shall we, then, pollute that temple in which dwells so sacred and holy a Visitant by allowing in it any filthiness of walk and conduct? Would not this be like offering swine's blood upon God's altar (Isa. 66. 3), or committing the sin of Zimri (Num. 25. 6-15) in the very presence of the Holy Ghost? Do you not think that if you carried about with you a deep and daily sense that the Holy Ghost dwelt in your body as His living temple, it would make

you very careful how you spoke and acted, lest you should by polluting His temple grieve that holy and divine Inhabitant?

3. And now observe the third gospel doctrine with which the precept is connected. "*Ye are bought with a price*" (1 Cor. 6. 20), a price no less than the blood of the Son of God. What then follows? That "ye are not your own," in either body or soul, for Jesus has bought both for His own possession and His own glory. What, then, is the consequence? That you are neither your own property or at your own disposal. And if so, what follows as the practical result? That you should glorify God in your body; therefore that it should be possessed in sanctification and honour (1 Thess. 4. 4), and in your spirit, which are both His.

Is not this high and holy ground, so high and holy that we seem scarcely able to look at it, much less to reach it? But does it not amply prove our point – the connection of gospel precepts with gospel doctrines, and that whether the Holy Ghost would warn us or exhort us, He always does so on the purest, clearest gospel ground, avoiding on the one hand, with the most holy and heavenly wisdom, the least tinge of what is legal, and yet on the other setting before us such a path of practical godliness, spiritual obedience and Christian devotedness as to make our very hearts sink within us at the sight and sense of our inconsistencies and backslidings?

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### TRUSTING IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST

*From a direction to ministers about visits to the sick, written by  
Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1093*

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Dost thou believe that thou canst not be saved but by the death of Christ? The sick man answereth, Yes. Then let it be said unto him, Go to then, and whilst thy soul abideth in thee, put all thy confidence in this death alone. Place thy trust in no other thing. Commit thyself wholly to this death. Cover thyself wholly with this alone. Cast thyself wholly on this death. Wrap thyself wholly in this death. And if God would judge thee, say, "Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Thy judgment; and otherwise I will not contend with Thee." And if He shall say unto thee that thou art a sinner, say, "I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my sins." If He shall say unto thee that thou hast deserved damnation, say, "Lord, I put the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between Thee and all my sins, and I offer His merits for my own, which I should have, and have not." If He say that He is angry with thee, say, "Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Thy anger."

## BEHOLD HE COMETH

*By George Burrowes, 1853*

“Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” (Song 2. 8).

Christ comes over all difficulties to visit and revive us; on or over the mountains or hills, He comes leaping, surmounting all obstacles with ease. “Here, near the sea of Galilee, we saw the gazelle bounding on before us, over shrubs and rocks and every obstacle, and felt the exquisite fulness of meaning in the church’s exclamation, ‘Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart.’ It is the very nature of this lively animal to bound over the roughest heights with the greatest ease, it seems even to delight in doing so” (Scottish Mission of Enquiry into the state of religion in Palestine). And it is the very nature of the Lord Jesus to come to the souls of His people, over all difficulties with perfect ease. Nothing, whether the inward sense of unworthiness and guilt, aggravated by numerous backslidings, or outward sorrows rising around us, dark and towering as the crags of the valley of the shadow of death, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

He comes to us speedily, unexpectedly. The roe was an emblem of swiftness: Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe (2 Sam. 2. 18); and certain of David’s men were as swift as the roes upon the mountains (1 Chron. 12. 8). The heart is surprised in an unexpected moment, by the appearance of the Beloved. Though keeping afar off for a time, He comes speedily; His heart was turned; His repentings were kindled; and ere we were aware, His soul made Him like the chariots Amminadib. He came as speedily as the angel came to Peter in prison asleep; as when He came to bless the Psalmist, and He rode on a cherub and did fly, yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind; as speedily as on the first visit to the disciples after His ascension, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

When churches long thirsting for the revival of His work have well nigh fainted under the thought that their sins and unworthiness were so great as to exclude them, perhaps for ever, from the blessing, He has been found among them as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men (Mic. 5. 7).

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The Spirit of God rides most triumphantly in His own chariot.

*Thomas Manton*

## TEMPTATION TO INFIDELITY

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Dear Miss L—,

I was glad to find your note awaiting me on my arrival today. I can fully enter into your exercises. I believe all the Lord's people are tempted more or less as you, but perhaps very few so deeply. Personally, I know the path only too well. Hence my remarks Tuesday night. To be candid, Mr. B. had said (I think Monday evening) you were troubled with infidel thoughts. That was all he said and it had quite passed out of my mind till I was speaking on my own experience and felt such a drawing out that the thought struck me whether I may be expressing the feelings of another and momentarily my mind went to you. As I said, the text came to me just before the service and I had no thought of speaking about temptations; rather my mind was to encourage seekers to pursue the narrow way till Him they viewed, even till Christ was glorified in their hearts. This I believe to be the essence of all gospel experience. I dare not tell out all my experience from the pulpit in detail. I can only hint at some of the temptations, relative to the truth of God. For it is there Satan aims his fiery darts. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

“Our Captain stood the fiery test  
And we shall stand through Him.”

Carnal reason is no help; no man by searching can find out God. No, never; therefore do not expect to find out the incomprehensible. Rather wait upon God that His Spirit might reveal Christ in your heart the hope of glory. I think these gusts of infidelity have done more to strip me of a natural religion than any one thing. It has made me feel the absolute need of the Holy Ghost to lead me into all truth, and I may say it has been the means of making the gospel exceedingly precious in the divine need of a hiding place and the blood of Christ the only refuge.

Sometimes in the pulpit I feel an arch-hypocrite, as though I do not believe a word I am saying. But O the determination to speak the truth as far as I know it in my judgment, whether I am saved or lost, and this I find in the end defeats Satan and often I begin to suck sweetness and strength out of the truths I am speaking.

Then again I am brought to this conclusion. If the way to heaven is not through Christ, I am absolutely undone, for there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. Here I have to stand. Then Satan says, But what do you know of that name? O so little, but I cry out, “Lord, do reveal this Christ to me; O make Him known; let me know the virtue and efficacy of His wondrous redemption.” I get just a glimpse occasionally, and only a passing glimpse, and my hope is confirmed. And so will yours. It is the only remedy; wait on Him; be

constant, though weak. The Psalmist cried out for the living God, yea his soul thirsted for Him. Do not you thirst for the living God only to be revealed in Christ? Some are content with a God of imagination, but let you and I seek that great God to be revealed in His dear Son and by the Holy Spirit.

“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee.” O to come to some measure of that experience!

Then again many in the professing church and out of it prove stumblingblocks – some with too much experience, or rather, glibly talk of rich experience, and others who go carelessly on contented with just a name and a place amongst the people of God. These will fan the smouldering flame of infidelity so much so you will wonder if there is such a thing as a God-given, grace-taught experience. How many times I have been tripped up here! A distinct call, a distinct revelation and yet no unction or savour and no godly fear apparent, and on the other hand some who seem well-meaning people, comfortably settled down upon their religious duties and meagre experience.

But we have to leave all these and come back to the old question: “How stands the case, my soul, with thee?” as though there was no one in the world but ourselves. Well, dear friend, you are travelling the old beaten road and I firmly believe you will get such a dead lift by and by when Jesus stands confessed in your heart that neither devils or men will be able to overthrow. “It fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”

C. Sawyer.

Chapel House, Mayfield, September 16th, 1922

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### JOHN WARBURTON'S DELIVERANCE

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In the morning I went to Mosley Street Chapel, and soon after I was seated a solemn old man ascended the pulpit, and O how my soul trembled for fear lest he should bear a message from God to me of wrath and condemnation. What distress and horror I felt when, in reading the chapter, he came to these words, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them”! I can never express the thousandth part of all the misery and sense of guilt that I endured. I saw that my soul was doomed to certain destruction for ever and ever. What the old man preached about I could not tell; but this I knew, that damned I was, and sometimes thought that I should have dropped into hell whilst in the chapel.

The service being concluded, I wandered up and down from street to street, until I verily believed that my senses were entirely gone. I

looked behind me and saw two men following me, who, I was afraid, were coming to take me to the mad-house. The first place where I could sit down and vent my grief was St. George's Church; and seeing no person near, I sat down on the steps and wept until I had no more power to weep. After some time I got up, and thought I would go home and put an end to my miserable life. "Yes," said I, "I will come to an end and know the worst at once."

On my way home, as I thought, I got into Cannon Street, and observing a chapel there into which people were crowding, I remembered that it was the chapel of Mr. Roby,\* to which I had once or twice been in company with my mother. I stopped and said, "Shall I go in?" "No," thought I, "I will not. The minister will take that text, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.'" I proceeded a short distance down the street and stopped again. "Who can tell?" came once more into my mind. "Well," said I, "I can but be damned"; and so I came to the resolution of going into the chapel, and "if I perish," said I, "I perish." If ever I entered a place of worship with the feeling cry that God would, if it were possible, show mercy to one in so desperate a case, I believe I did then.

When seated in the chapel all the horrors of hell seemed to come upon me. I trembled from head to foot, and wished that I had never come in. At the conclusion of the first hymn, Mr. Roby went to prayer, and towards the end of it he dropped a few words which I believed were for nobody but me. He begged God that if there was anyone present who had come to make a last trial of His mercy, He would show Himself to such a one as his God. It was with hard work that I could keep from calling out, "Yes, here is poor, lost John Warburton. Here I am, come to make the last trial." O how my soul went out to God in prayer that He would appear for me! The prayer being finished, another hymn was sung previous to the sermon. All my little hope seemed dashed to pieces when I saw the minister take his Bible from the cushion to find his text. "O," thought I, "he is certainly seeking for that awful text which has so torn my heart asunder all these months. What shall I do if he takes that text, 'Cursed is every one,' etc? O what will become of me? I must drop into hell if he take that." O the feelings I experienced!

I could not imagine why he delayed so long to put the Bible upon the cushion. At last he did so, and I saw that it was opened about the middle. Blessed be God, my soul whispered, the text is not, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." O the expectation that sprang up within me! "Do, Lord, pardon my sins; do, Lord, have mercy upon my poor, lost soul," burst

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\* William Roby (1766-1830). He was one of the best-known Independent ministers in the North.

from my heart; and when Mr. Roby read his text, O the wonder and the glory that shone into my soul! The precious text was, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Psa. 68. 18). O the love, peace and joy that broke into my heart as the words came out of his mouth! They were truly sweeter to my soul than ten thousands of gold and silver. I wondered again with astonishment, and said in my soul, "What can this mean? Where are my sins? What can be the meaning of all this? Where is my burden and the wrath and terror I have had so many months?" And again the text flowed into my soul, "Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

O I knew not where to hide my poor face! My soul kept whispering, "Surely it cannot mean me. Is it a dream? is it a dream?" I looked for my sins, for my burden, for the wrath and misery I had so long carried in my poor, distracted soul, and could find neither guilt nor sins, wrath nor bondage, for the Saviour of my soul had taken them all away. Such a sight of His sufferings and death shined into my soul as broke my heart to pieces. O how I looked on Him and mourned! "What have I done?" cried I. "I have crucified the Lord. O my cursed sins, that drove the nails into His hands and feet and thrust the spear into His heart. O wretch, wretch that I am! And canst Thou, wilt Thou save and pardon me, notwithstanding all my cursed sins?"

How wonderfully was my soul led to see that the dear Saviour had fulfilled and obeyed that holy law which I had broken in ten thousand instances, that all my cursed sins had been laid upon Him, and that He had suffered in my room and stead. I had so blessed a sight by faith of His feet and hands nailed to the cross, of the crown of thorns upon His head, and of the spear entering His heart; and His redeeming blood flowed with such peace, and love, and joy, and liberty into my soul, that I hardly knew what or where I was. The poor things who sat in the same seat kept jogging me with their elbows to sit still; but it was impossible for me to sit still or to lie still. O the love I felt to my dear Saviour for such unmerited kindness to one so vile, to the vilest wretch that ever was on the earth! I can never express a thousandth part of the hatred I felt against my cursed sins, which pierced the Lord of life and glory.

When the service was over, I went down the street blessing, thanking, wondering, praising and adoring the God of my salvation; for text upon text flowed in upon my soul, one after another, with so much power that sometimes I was obliged to hold my hand upon my mouth to prevent myself from shouting aloud in the street. On my way home I got into the fields as soon as I could, and when out of the sight and hearing

of every human being, I shouted, I leaped, I danced, I thanked and praised my dear Jesus with all my might, until my bodily strength was so gone that I fell upon the ground, and there lay, firmly believing that I was upon the point of going to heaven to be with my dear Lord and Saviour.

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### SPEAKING OF CHRIST

*“Then they that feared the Lord spake often  
one to another” (Mal. 3. 16).*

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Why should believers, when they meet,  
Not speak of Christ, the King they own,  
Who gives them hope that they shall sit  
With Him for ever on His throne?

Is any other name so great  
As His who bore the sinner’s load?  
Is any subject half so sweet,  
So cheering as the love of God?

’Tis this that charms reluctant man,  
That makes his opposition cease;  
Beholding love’s amazing plan,  
He drops his arms, and sues for peace.

’Twas so with us; we once were foes –  
Were foes to Him who gave us breath;  
But He, whose mercy overflows,  
Has saved us from eternal death.

We look with hope to that great day,  
When Jesus will with clouds appear;  
A sight of Him will well repay  
Our labours and our sorrows here.

Of Him then let us speak and sing,  
Whose glory we expect to share;  
In heaven we hope to see our King,  
And yield a nobler tribute there.

Thomas Kelly (1769-1854)  
From the newly-published volume of Kelly’s hymns

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One Son God hath without sin, but none without sorrow.

*John Trapp*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JULY 2011

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

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*“My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12. 9)*

The Apostle Paul had a deep sorrow – and he knew the reason why. He tells us, twice in one verse: lest he be exalted above measure. Often God’s people do not know the reason for their afflictions; it is wisely hidden from them. But Paul did.

Paul describes it as “a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan.” No trial can come without divine permission, yet still it was a messenger of Satan to buffet him. If you literally have a thorn in your flesh, and cannot get it out, it is with you all the time, distressing you. Usually such a thorn is not seen by other people – a thorn in the hand or foot – so people often do not know or really care.

Paul prayed that it might be removed. He continued in prayer. We are not forbidden to pray for deliverance from our troubles! Was Paul’s prayer answered, or not? It *was* answered, but in a different way from what Paul wanted. The thorn remained, but sanctifying grace was given.

That is a beautiful word: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” But do not forget what comes first: “*And He said unto me.*” This is the divine authority for this word of loving assurance.

“His every word of grace is strong  
As that which made the skies;  
The voice that rolls the stars along  
Speaks all the promises.”

Very lovingly the Lord Jesus says, “*My grace.*” It flows from His loving, tender heart. And He says: “for thee.” Like the good Samaritan, this word comes just where the sinner is in all his weakness and distress.

There is something very attractive in the expression: “The all-sufficiency of grace.” We read of reigning grace: “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” We read of abounding grace (in a few places): “The grace of our Lord Jesus was exceeding abundant.” “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” But this is *sufficient* grace. We have tried to think why the Lord should use this expression, attributing a *sufficiency* to His grace.

1. It is all the sinner needs. If in his sorrow he has the grace of God, he needs no more.

2. It will never fail him. He can rest on it, rely on it, and it will not let him down.

3. It is inexhaustible. If we prove His grace today, it is not exhausted; His grace is the same tomorrow. The old hymn says: "Have I of His grace received? Still there's more to follow."

So it is all-sufficient grace in pardon and forgiveness.

"Grace reigns to pardon crimson sins,  
And melt the hardest hearts;  
And from the work it once begins,  
It never once departs."

It is all-sufficient grace giving submission to the trial. Our carnal hearts will never submit, but grace can sweetly enable us.

All-sufficient grace is "grace to help in time of need." And all this is bound up with the throne of grace, the mercy seat sprinkled with blood. This is where the sinner obtains grace (it is completely free and undeserved). As we daily, hourly, need help, all-sufficient grace is promised and provided. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

In a word, all-sufficient grace upholds us in all our weakness. All-sufficient grace supplies all our needs. All-sufficient grace gives strength equal to the day. All-sufficient grace is suitable for our present trials and sorrows, and all-sufficient grace will be there in every step of the unknown way.

But there is the *special* trial – whether providential or spiritual, whether plagued by unbelief and temptation, or in the furnace with personal things, church things, family things, ill-health or trouble, this word is a *special* word: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

What a blessing hymn 329 ("How firm a foundation"), written by the unknown author "K," has been to the people of God! May we still prove it:

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My *grace all-sufficient* shall be thy supply."



"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils" (Mark 16. 9). Jansenius says, "It is very observable that our Saviour, after the resurrection, first appeared to Mary Magdalene and Peter, who had been grievous sinners, in order that even the worst of sinners may be comforted and encouraged to come to Christ, to believe in Christ, to rest and stay their souls upon Christ, for mercy here and glory hereafter."

*Thomas Brooks*

## A WONDERFUL PROMISE

*Sermon preached by David Dickson (1583-1662), one of the leading Scottish Covenanter preachers. A number of old Scottish words are used; some are explained, but others seem self-evident.*

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**Text:** “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” (Isa. 41. 14, 15).

God has threatened the overthrow of idolaters in the former part of the chapter. Now, in this part of the chapter, He promises to do for His true worshippers: that He shall uphold them, deliver them, comfort them, and make them victorious over all their enemies, whom here He comprises under the name of adversaries great and small.

The encouragement given to them in the former verses, is repeated and insisted on by a promise of help (verse 14), and of strength and victory over their enemies (verses 15, 16); and if need be, a drink of comfort is promised in their conflict, or time of sore trouble (verse 17). It is very fit ye should hear this, because ye are called to war; ye must fight before ye can win to heaven. There is more ado than to say your prayers, come to the kirk, and haunt communions; for ye must run, strike, fight and endure sore bickerings before the crown be gotten. There is no coming to heaven with ease; but as Christ came to heaven, so must all His, through many tribulations and conflicts. But this generation has neither will to work nor fight. Their hearts faint, their feeble knees bow, and their hands refuse to work. Men sleep over in security and dream of the fool’s paradise. They come to the communion to be cleansed, and fall over again, as swine in the mire, as if the coming to the communion were like the confessions made to the Papist priests, and their absolutions. But the truth must be told. Now ye have a fight, a task-work, ere ye get the treasure; a hell to go past ere ye win to heaven. As ye have reconciliation to seek with God, so ye have the devil and the world to encounter with; therefore ye have need to guard yourselves upon all hands.

After that here a Redeemer is promised to Jacob, he is encouraged to go in the battle: “Fear not, thou worm Jacob.” As if He said, I know thee; thou hast a great turn to do, and thou art but a feckless and feeble thing in the sense of thy own weakness. Yet fear not, for I will help thee; I thy Redeemer have said it. O but what shall I do with my strong and mighty adversaries, that are like mountains and hills, says Jacob? The Lord answers, Thou shalt thresh them like a sheaf of corn, and winnow them like chaff. I shall make thee like a new-shod flail with iron, or like

a cast wheel shod with iron nails, that takes the corn off the straw; so that albeit thy great enemies be as mountains, and thy smaller enemies as hills, yet I shall cause thee beat them as a sheaf of corn that lies still before thee and stirs not, till thou be tired of threshing, and then casts it by thee, and when it is threshen, is letten through the wind; and thy enemies shall be carried away as chaff that is carried out of the gate with the wind.

Now, because Jacob might think this an easy victory over his enemies, therefore he tells them in the words, that for all this, he will be put to a sore pinch before this victory be gotten in his sense, for it is a victory that is given to faith, and faith will count no more of all enemies, the devil, the world and the man's own corruptions, than a thresher will count of a corn-sheaf, when it looks to the Lord's strength. But before sense get the victory, there will be a strange warsling [wrestling], sweating and breathing, and such a weariness in the conflict that there must needs be a drink of consolation. Therefore the Lord says, "When the poor and needy want water, and their tongue fails them for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, and will not forsake them." I know that for all the notable victory I have promised, Jacob will faint, but when Jacob is so forfoughton [over-fought, exhausted with fighting] that he cannot cry to Me for a drink, yet I will hear him when his tongue cannot speak, when he cannot pray for swooning. I will hear him and not forsake him. This for the meaning of the words; let us now make our use of them.

1. "Fear not." When God is speaking to Jacob and all His redeemed people, He says, "Fear not," which lets us see that God knows that His people are very feeble and weak in the time of trouble, trial and temptation, and how much we are taken up with the sight of impediments when we meet them in a strait. We are all stout enough till we be assayed, but when we have adversaries to meet with, and see their strength, then our hearts fall into the dust. We are like Peter, who minted to his Master on the water, but when the wind blows, and he is like to sink, he cries, "Help, Master, I perish!" I grant, it is no wonder the godly be feeble, they carry about with them so great misbelief and manifold corruptions; yet let them know, that know their fears:

2. "Fear not, saith the Lord." We see there is no remedy for this fear but the voice and word of the Lord: only His encouragement can hold us up in the conflict, and no created power will bear us up in the strait; His voice and Word give boldness and courage. Thou who art afraid to win through thy sins, and get impediments overcome, take the Lord's Word, the staff of His promise, to strengthen. Let this Word dwell plentifully in thee. Take the sword of the Spirit, the leg-harness of resolution, the helmet of hope, spoken of in Ephesians 6, and guard thyself with the Word on all quarters.

3. In the tenth verse He forbids Jacob to fear, and here He repeats it. It lets us see that as nothing is more comfortable to a feeble or fleyed [frightened] soul than the Word, so the Lord is not sparing of it, but large in His promises; He repeats, inculcates and strengthens in the battle. So that look how feared we are, and what need we have of encouragements, as ready is the Lord to lay them to our hand, both to rebuke our fear, and strengthen our doubtings. The same He does to Joshua, to Jeremiah, and here to Jacob.

4. "Thou worm Jacob." Jacob a worm,

i. For weakness; for what is all flesh but grass when it is to stand out against the fight of sin, the devil and the wrath of God?

ii. A worm, for unworthiness; for of all the unworthy things that can be, a piece of sinful flesh is the unworthiest, for sin disgraces the substance wherein it is.

iii. A worm, for afflictions and dejection in the mire of trouble; therefore in the twenty-second Psalm, "I am a worm, and no man"; for it is a worm's place to be trodden in the dirt; so was Jacob, an offcast for reproach and affliction.

iv. A worm, because of the sense of his own naughtiness; a worm in his own estimation, because of his present estate. He was so cast down and discouraged in himself that he cannot lift up himself: as Asaph, "I was as a beast before Thee" (Psa. 73. 22); I have not the understanding of a man. Here then God, by calling Jacob a worm, recounts all his objections which might mar his faith; as if He said, Jacob, I know well enough that thy weakness, unworthiness, thy afflictions and estimation thou hast of thyself make thee fear; yet fear not for all that. It lets us see that the consciousness of these, which is in man, makes him to fear and breaks his courage. Try what makes thee fear that thou shalt not win to heaven. I speak to thee who art yoked in the battle, and not to lazy sluggards that love to loiter and sleep, and will not wrestle against sin, Satan and their own corruptions; but to the striver I speak. What makes thee afraid? I am weak, sayest thou? and I have many strong enemies and adversaries, sins, and God's hand is upon me day and night, both upon body and soul; I am unworthy to stand upon God's earth; I am sensible of my own naughtiness, and see reasons anew within me. I answer, All is true that thou sayest; but God who knows all this, saith, "Fear not, thou worm." Therefore seeing God knows thy weakness, unworthiness and every evil that troubles thee, and meets them with, "Fear not," take heart – strive on!

5. "Fear not, thou worm." Jacob, I know thou art a worm, and what are the causes of thy fear; and yet that hinders Me not to make unto thee a promise of help against all thy enemies. It lets us see, seeing our weakness, unworthiness, troubles and sense of want hinder not God to

make a promise, neither should they hinder us to embrace the promise. If we find ourselves unworthy worms, and God saying, Fear not, then we should answer God and say, Albeit, Lord, I be a weak, unworthy worm, and my foes many and strong, yet seeing Thou forbiddest me to fear, I will not look to my own dead body; but having Thy promises, as Abraham did, I will give glory to Thee in believing, whatever unlikelihood be in the performance of the promise. I will not look to these, but to Thee who promisest.

Seeing God knows the fears, and passes them by, let us pass them by also, for He makes not a promise for anything in us, but for His own love and grace's sake. Therefore let us not, because of our unworthiness, refuse the promise. If it were for our deservings, it were not grace. Labour indeed to be sensible of thy weakness and unworthiness, that thou may the better take the promise. But, alas! the most part are not sensible of their weakness and unworthiness, but bolster up themselves with some one conceit or other, as those who say to Christ, Hast Thou not taught in our streets? Have we not eaten and drunken at Thy table? Have we not preached in Thy name? And yet never have their hearts been brought low in the sense of their own vileness and unworthiness; never have they searched the reason of their fears or doubts. To whom, I say, it is very needful that they should search the causes of fear and doubting to work humiliation, for fault of this, sin is not repented, God's anger not laid to heart. Hell is not seen gaping for them, but rather a covenant is made with hell and an agreement with death. I grant, we should not doubt nor fear, yet we should dispute about the causes of fear and doubting; and if any dispute not, let them beware lest they presume.

Therefore hear the reasons of the doubts of thy conscience, and if thy conscience say thou hast reason to fear and doubt because thou art a rotten hypocrite; thou hast never pannelled thyself before God's tribunal for sin; thou hast never taken pains to know if thou art reconciled to God; thou hast never been loathsome in thine own eyes; and for thy prayers, hearing, reading, communicating, they have been but counterfeit. When the conscience thus accuses, thou hast reason to dispute the matter; thou must either grant or deny, when thou art challenged on true grounds; and if after dispute and trial, all be found true that is said, hast thou not reason to be humbled, and to fall down, and mourn in the sense of thy own vileness?

And yet I would not that in this estate thou should quit the promise, but keep the promise fast in thy hand, and mournfully cry to God with thy mouth for pardon. Jacob, thou seest he is a worm, weak and unworthy in his own sense, and therefore if thou be unhumbled, proud and beastly, thou hast cause to fear and doubt. If thou hast never doubted, beware lest thou never believed. Yet I condemn not doubting,

but I speir [ask], How came thou to that strength of faith, that never staggered, or felt thy own weakness? Beware thou be not circumvented by the devil's delusions!

Therefore rest not without impregnable grounds. Labour first for a sense of unworthiness and wretchedness, and grip the promise of not fearing.

Here I have digressed a little, but men's sluggishness and customary slighting of God's service makes me fear that many a one is not prepared for the consolation that here is given to such as are become worms, as Jacob, in their own estimation. However, the point I had in hand is this, that unworthiness should not hinder to take the promise, seeing it hinders not God to make it.

6. "Worm Jacob, I will help thee." Wherefore will God help Jacob? Because Jacob is a worm and cannot help himself. It lets us see that our weakness and unworthiness are so far from hindering God to make the promise, that it is the very fit disposition in us to stir Him up to make a promise to help us. And therefore the feeling of our weakness and unworthiness should be so far from hindering us to believe the promise, as it should further us to it, for now we are in the disposition fittest to receive God's help; our sense of the need of help should make us take it; the sense of our weakness and wants should make us apply the comforts. This is a notable mean to overcome Satan and all our doubts. When Satan says, Thou art vile, weak and unworthy, therefore thou cannot lay hold on God's promise, retort his argument and say that by the contrair, because thou art so, thou shouldst lay hold. If he say, Will such a feckless, weak wretch as thou stand out against principalities and powers, or will such a worm as thou bear out the godliness thou aimest at? thou mayest answer, Because God has letten me see my weakness, worthlessness and sinfulness, and in sense of it has laid me low, flat along upon the earth as a worm, therefore I know He will help and regard me in this low estate.

7. We see, albeit Jacob be a worm, he must neither misken [misunderstand] himself, nor refuse God's promise of help; but his disposition must be such, as he must both be abased in himself and confident in God; for these two stand well together. Take it for a proof of faith when thou findest both, and of presumption when these two are parted. If thou believe in God, and see not thyself a worm, thou but presumest; but if the sense of thy vileness make thee tremble to draw near to God, and yet thou comest, then art thou confident. Let this then be the trial of thy faith: art thou vile, wretched and unworthy in thyself, and at the same time believest in God? Thou hast found faith, for the composition of the sanctuary is in the ointment. Now, to deny thyself is to be a worm, and to lean on Christ is to believe in Him. That this may

be done, hold the glass of the law still before thine eyes, to show thy vileness, and so be humble; and Christ shining in the mirror of the gospel, His goodness and pity to make thee believe. Look on both, and thou shalt be borne through.

8. "I will help thee." The reason why Jacob should not fear: it lets us see that having God on our side, we should not fear. If God be with us, who can be against us? Follow God at the back, and in His name pray, work. Then fear not, for He will be with thee in all thy ways, to guide thee, and has given His angels charge over thee, that thou should not dash thy foot against a stone. Hold thyself in God's ways, and at His back [help?], and fear nothing.

9. While God says He will help Jacob, it imports that He will join Himself with Jacob in the turn, for He sayeth not simply, I will do the turn, but, I will help thee to it. It is true, God doeth the turn, but He doeth it by Jacob. It lets us see that God so works His work in all His own as that they are not idle, but are employed in the work. This reproves those who will lay over the matter upon God, and go idle themselves. It is true, all we can do is nought; yet by us as instruments, God will work. It reproves those who say, It is bootless [useless] for me to mint [try] for repentance till God please to give me it; and so they will follow the devil's service merrily, and if God will fetch them from the devil's back, it is well; if He will not, they cannot help it. But I tell these men, they tempt God never to give them repentance. If they will have mastery of their sinful corruptions, they must put to their own hand to the fight, and they must bear some bulk with God. Albeit they can neither fight nor work, when God bids them put out their hand to do anything, they must assay to put it, albeit it be lame and sick, and so God shall furnish strength to do the work; for God, and anything with Him, are strong enough against all our foes, spiritual and bodily.

10. "Saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer." He puts three styles to the promise, or shows His great name in three titles, that Jacob may know who is the Promise-maker, for it is a matter of singular worth to know what He is who makes a promise, and the promise takes worth from Him who makes it; and so we see the Lord sets to His name to the promise and subscribes it. See here God's willingness to make His kirk believe His promises. He not only makes promises, but subscribes, and would have us to read His written subscription at the end of the promise. He is not like the false flatterers in the world, that will make many fair promises, and when it comes to the subscribing or sealing, will draw back. But God both promises, and subscribes it in all His three styles: the LORD, thy REDEEMER, the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL. In all God's promises, read God's stamp and subscription, and when thou perceivest the promise to be His, distrust not; say not it will never be, call not His



obligation in question, controul not his truth; for that would crab [offend] an honest man, far more the God of truth.

11. These three styles are God's name in three titles, which lets us see the distinct Persons of the Trinity; for here both the works of creation, redemption and sanctification are clearly shown, whereby He lets us see there is a consent given to this promise by all the three Persons of the Trinity, and God is content that His great styles lie in pawn till He perform the promise He has made, that as He would give honour in these three styles, so shall He get it in performing of this promise. Therefore when God lays His crown royal in pawn, His name Jehovah, having being of Himself, and giving being unto all, His name in redeeming us His people, His name of sanctifying them, He intimates that as He loves to be honoured in one and all of these styles, so shall He surely perform His promise, and He will no more quit His being of Himself, redeeming and sanctifying of His people, than He will quit the performance of His promise. Neither yet think that there is a division among the Persons of the Godhead when a promise is made, for when the Lord says it, it is the Redeemer says it, and the Holy One says it, for He promises not that the Son knows not of, for both Their promises are one, Their word and works are one to us.

*Verse 15.* "Behold, I will make thee a new threshing instrument." Here the Lord's promise to make them strong against their adversaries. As a sheaf of corn is unable to resist the threshing instrument, so shall their adversaries spiritual and temporal, compared to mountains and hills, be unable to resist them.

1. It lets us see that the victory of God's people over their enemies, looking to God their Helper, is as easy as the threshing of a sheaf of corn. I say, it is easy to faith, albeit not to the flesh, for the Apostle Paul, when he looks to his flesh in his conflict, he says, "O miserable man that I am! who shall deliver me?" But when it comes to faith, he says, "I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There he threshes all his enemies, sin, Satan, the world and all that can be against him. And in the 118th Psalm, "They ran about me like bees, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them all." For temptations come about him like bees swarming upon all hands, and no place to fly to, but in the name of the Lord, that is, his faith looking to God, He will destroy them all. He only stands, and sees the salvation of the Lord, holds on the whole armour of God, resists the devil, and he flies from him; yea, no enemy, great or small, but faith in God makes them all fly.

2. "Thou shalt fan them." We see Jacob's adversaries who were great like mountains being threshed and put to the wind. They seem

strong and terrible, and he like a weak worm, but from once they be holden to the wind of God's promise, they are blown away as chaff. It lets us see that the godly seem weak and their adversaries strong before God put to His hand, but then the godly seem strong and their adversaries weak; for when the devil's strength is compared to God's, it is but like chaff to the wind, or the forces of kings and potentates. Therefore the prophet says, "What art thou, who art afraid of man whose breath is in his nostrils, and forgettest the Lord his Maker?" And David says, "I will not fear what flesh can do to me." This is after fainting. Therefore winnow all the doubts which arise from the strength of thy adversaries and thine own weakness, but see that thou winnow them at God's barn-door, in the sanctuary, as David [Asaph] in the seventy-third Psalm. When he had almost fallen at the sight of the prosperity of the wicked, he went to the sanctuary, and there he saw they were set on slippery places, and horribly consumed in a moment.

3. "Thou shalt beat small," and, "the wind shall carry them." They are something before God put to His hand – mountains and hills – and Jacob nothing. But from once God put to His hand, Jacob is strong and they are weak. So it is at this day with the kirk and her adversaries: that which was something is nothing, and nothing is by God's hand become something. For who would have said that the King of Sweden [Gustavus Adolphus] when he came from home with six thousand men, when his enemies were six hundred thousand, should have done that which is done,\* but through God's putting to of His hand. He has done great things.

4. We see in God's promises it matters not what strength they have or want, to whom the promise is made, for the whole strength stands in the promise. And when God threatens, it matters not what strength be in the party threatened; for albeit they were as mountains, yet He who threatens can make a worm thresh them. God's flail can ding them all in dust. Look never how weak or how strong those are to whom God speaks, for the weak shall be strong and the strong shall become weak.

"And thou shalt rejoice in the Lord." Jacob's part of the battle is won, and now God must have His victory. We see it is a part of the Lord's honour, and our thankfulness, to rejoice in the Lord when we have gotten victory. Has God promised that He will be our God, and renewed covenant with us, and communicated Himself in the sacrament, and has done it? It is our part to rejoice in testimony of our thankfulness.

2. He says that worm Jacob shall rejoice, which lets us see that we may be a worm in our own sense, and yet rejoice in the Lord, and in Him

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\* Referring to some recent, well-known event. Gustavus Adolphus was a champion of the Protestant cause.

triumph over all His enemies. These two stand well together, for we are bidden rejoice in trembling.

3. Rejoice, is for the time bygone and present, and glory is for the time to come, which lets us see that the fruit or right use-making of our delivery past is to make us rejoice for the present, and glory for the time to come. And indeed the godly, if they will not look to themselves but to God, may rejoice for time bygone, and glory for time to come. They may boast themselves in God all the day long; they may not glory in their own strength or wisdom, but let him that glories, glory in the Lord; through Him they do valiantly. Albeit they have many strong foes and great adversaries, yet God shall tramp them under foot, and rule over them with a rod of iron.

*Verse 17.* “When the poor and needy seek water.” This victory formerly promised is yet not very easy to sense; for albeit faith may lay hold on this victory, yet flesh and sense will flag and fail, and be more worm-like and naughty before the battle be ended. Therefore a promise is here subjoined to such as in their own sense are weak in the conflict, that they shall get a drink of consolation. We see whatever promise be made to God’s children of victory over their foes, yet they may not think but to find great pain to the flesh, and sore and uncouth skirmishes, albeit faith get the victory easily, yet it is hard victory to the flesh. Wonder not to find it so that ye be like Elisha at Jordan, crying, Where is now the God of Elijah? I am like to be overcome. In such straits as these, think not that God will fail in His promise.

*Question:* But how far may victory of faith be kept under in the flesh?

*Answer:* Till one become poor and needy, fainting, forfoughten [over-fought, exhausted with conflict], and fallen by, and their tongue so failing that they cannot seek a drink, yea, no water or drink of consolation at all, but debarred the sight of all comfort in the conflict, so deprived of all comfort that their tongue is so far sealed, that they dare not say, God help me! or pant unto God. Think it no wonder when thou art thus borne down, and thy face thus rolled in the dust. Know it is but thy flesh and thy pride that God is abasing; He is but making thee nought to thy own sense. It is true, all will grant in their words that they are nought, but it is mickle to get acknowledgment of our own naughtiness from experience; therefore that we may win to this, God yokes us with a hard party, and so empties us in ourselves, that being closely contemned of ourselves, we may seek help in Him. Therefore, at the hardest pinch, look up to God, for there is adversity betwixt faith’s estate and flesh’s estate. Think not that faith is failed when flesh fails, for David says, “My heart and flesh fail, but God fails me never.” God and His Word cannot fail, whatever we feel or fear.

*Question:* What will God do when we are brought thus low?

*Answer:* I the Lord will hear and help. This is a strange kind of hearing, to hear one whose tongue is sealed so as he cannot speak.

1. We see that the consolation of the godly may be so long delayed till their strength be found to be spent, and they neither able to help themselves nor seek help, their tongues sealed with thirst.

2. It lets us see that their impotency and weakness in the trial shall do them no prejudice, for the dumb silence of their pressed soul is a loud speech, and an earnest prayer in the ears of God which He will both hear and answer. When their tongues are tacked, and speak nothing – so straitly frozen, that they cannot stir, no more than a frozen worm in the clay – even then they have a loud cry to God. Know then that when thou art forfoughten, like one gasping in the water ready to give up the ghost and cannot cry, “Help me!” this gasping dumbness speaks to the onlookers, to haste to help, so thy estate hastes the Lord to help thee.

“I the God of Israel will not forsake them.”

1. Jacob, who before was called a worm, is now called Israel. It lets us see, albeit God call His children worms, yet He keeps His estimation of them as Israelites. Whatever styles of baseness He gives for our humiliation, yet He has the same estimation of us as when He gives us highest styles. Learn we then so to be base in our own eyes, that we quit not our prerogatives; for God counts of us at the worst, as He doth when we are at the best – as the woman of Canaan was called a dog at the one word, but a woman of great faith at the other word. God counts nothing less of a humble soul than at another time. Therefore humble thyself under the mighty hand of God, and know that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Yet quit not thy privileges in thy low estate.

2. This name of Israel is a glorious style, a word of estimation, and imports a duty [something to be done]. He was called Jacob, a supplanter, because of a trick which he played to his brother in stealing his birthright; but he is called Israel because he wrestled and prevailed with God. And his glorious style puts him and all Israelites in mind of a duty. Every worm Jacob must be an Israel; every true Israelite must be a wrestler with God in the time of his deepest dejections. Wilt thou then, a pressed worm with sore troubles, make thee for wrestling, as a worm that is trampled in the clay? At the one end it will sprawl, and stir at the other end. So must thou: whatever part is loose or free of thee, stir that. If thou cannot pray, meditate, hear, or confer, yet sigh, bow thy knees, lift up thy eyes, and stir whatever is loose.

3. “I the God of Israel will not forsake thee.” That is, because I am become your God in covenant with you, I will not forsake you. It lets us see that those whom God has tane by the hand to be of Israel, whatever

be their straits, for His covenant's sake He will not forsake them. Our heart, flesh and courage may fail, but God neither fails nor forsakes. Forsake not Him, but fight out the spiritual combat as good soldiers. So shall your glorious God be with you. To that God be all praise for now and ever. Amen.

When David Dickson was dying, he was asked how things were with him. He replied, "I have taken all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds, and have cast them together in a heap before the Lord, and have fled from both to Jesus Christ, and in Him I have sweet peace."

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### ONLY ONE WAY OF SALVATION

*By Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843) on Hebrews 4. 1, 2*

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When a faithful minister comes into a town bringing the glad tidings of the gospel, when he preaches freely of ruin by the Fall and righteousness by Christ and regeneration by the Spirit, the world cry out, "What new doctrine is this? This is some new light! What will this babbler say?" Thus does Satan strive to bring men to despise the glorious gospel of the blessed God. But this passage shows that there never was but one way of salvation from the beginning of the world. The gospel is the good old way. "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them."

In Revelation 13. 8, Jesus is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." No sooner had man fallen than God pointed him to Jesus. Even before He pronounced the curse on man, He preached the gospel to man. The woman's seed "shall bruise thy [the serpent's] head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3. 15). How simply did God teach them the way of pardon by putting on Christ when, "The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them"! As if He had said, "Take away the filthy garments from him ... and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech. 3. 4).

And was it not the same gospel that gentle Abel believed when he brought his snow white lamb and slew it and God testified that he was righteous, and by it he being dead yet speaketh?

And did not Noah believe the same gospel when he was moved with fear and fled into the ark which God had provided, and God shut him in and made him ride in safety on the raging deluge?

And there is venerable Noah, arrived at the haven at last; and Job went this way; and Aaron; and Jacob too, halting on his thigh. This way went Isaiah, hymning Immanuel's praise; and Jeremiah too, weeping along this narrow path. This way went Matthew the publican, and Zacchaeus the hoary-headed swindler; and the thief that died believing.

“Apostles, prophets, martyrs there  
Around my Saviour stand;  
And soon my friends in Christ below  
Shall join the happy band.”

Dear friends, you are not alone. This is the good old way, wherein you may find rest for your souls.

O my friends, how many of you are not entering in by this Door? How many of you are setting at nought this only Foundation Stone, although you hear it is the only way by which a sinner can come to God? “Neither is there salvation in any other.”

If you would go to Abel’s heaven you must go the way Abel went. Everyone that stands before the throne has a robe washed white in the blood of the Lamb. No prophet, apostle, martyr, can stand there without that blood-washed robe. Wherein will you appear, O gospel-despising generation? You that have no imputed righteousness, you that have never felt the sweet peace which the blood of Jesus gives, where will you appear?

How many of you are utter strangers to conversion and the Lamb of God, and yet think to sail easily into eternal glory? Ah brethren, be not proud, but think when ye are turning away from Christ Jesus – I am despising the only way to the Father. Let this word sink into your heart: “No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” “Neither is there salvation in any other.”

It was the same blessed gospel that cheered the heart of Abraham when he left his country and kindred and father’s house. “Your father Abraham saw My day and was glad.”

It was the same gospel that made Moses refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, for it is said he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

It was the same gospel that was preached to the many thousands of Israel in that awful night when God commanded them to kill the Passover and strike the lintel and the two sideposts with the blood and, “when I see the blood, I will pass over you.” They did all eat the same spiritual meat and they drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

The manna, the rock, the water, the pillar and cloud, the tabernacle, all preached the gospel unto them. And the rest of Canaan, into which God promised to bring them, told them of the rest of the believing soul, the pardon, peace and holy serving of God into which believers enter. Ah brethren, the gospel I have always brought to you is an old gospel, provided before the world was, and made manifest from the days of Abel.

Here is a sweet comfort to believers. You sometimes feel as if you were alone. Most despise this strait gate and narrow way. A reproach

falls on all who walk in it. The world rejoice in other things. Often you stop and say, "Am I right after all? Is the whole multitude around me going to perdition, and am I alone in the right?" Take comfort. You are not alone. See what a blessed company have had that narrow way before you.

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### LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR

*Address given by Mr. T.J. Rosier at Clifton Chapel on April 15th, 2011,  
on the occasion of the Gospel Standard Society Annual Meetings*

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Mr. Chairman and beloved friends, we are all fellow-travellers to a never-ending eternity; and as we consider the present state of the earth, the world in which God has placed us, we can truly say we can see the Word of God being fulfilled on every side. We live in a day of a great falling away, the love of many waxing cold, the vilest immorality and covetousness that abound on every side as men are casting off God. But as we have been reminded, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth," and though we may be very tried, and indeed, have to hang our harps on the willows, and are cast down at the developments, yet may we each be helped to remember this: that Immanuel will bring His beloved bride home safely to be with Him for ever; and not an hoof will be left behind. We need the grace of God to endure unto the end. Notice how in the two verses by Joseph Irons written on the illustrated picture given to our esteemed friend [the presentation to the Editor], the poet anticipated that day when he would sing that triumphant song of the riches of the grace of the Lord Jesus. The church will sing of gospel grace. [See the end of this address for the two verses.]

Well, in pondering this afternoon's meeting last evening, after returning home from Canterbury, these two verses in Hebrews 9, verses 27 and 28 seemed to come with some dew and unction. May the Holy Ghost help me to make a few suitable remarks. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

These verses show plainly that the seeking soul, the confessing sinner, the pilgrim seeking that better country, who is looking for the blessings to flow to him through the Lord Jesus, these verses assure us that indeed he will go home to glory. For the Lord will appear in His covenant faithfulness. These two verses apply to every one of us. Verse 27 which refers to the second coming of Immanuel, in particular, I would emphasise not only applies to every one of us here, whatever our spiritual state, but it applies to everyone in the whole world. But may it be our blessed lot and portion to have an exercise in the second verse, that we

may be found among those looking for Him. For it is definitely certain according to Scripture, He will appear; and that will be to the joy of the church, “without sin unto salvation.”

The time is very limited so I must hasten on. There are four things I would bring before you from these two verses. Firstly, the divine appointment for us all. Secondly, the one great offering of Immanuel, God’s own well-beloved, eternal Son, His own Lamb whom He gave, who is raised up to His right hand, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. Thirdly, the exercises of those here below who will be safely gathered above. They will be found looking for Him. And then lastly, the Lord helping us, we will consider the sacred promise, something that is definitely certain in spite of our sin, weakness, fears and tremblings. In spite of the roaring of the enemy and the wickedness of mortal man, the church will be gathered safely at last and not a hoof will be left behind.

1. Well firstly, then, the divine appointment. It is a most certain thing, my dear friends, that we must pass away, and surely with us all “the sands of time are sinking.” Not one of us knows how much sand we have in our top glass, but it is fast running out. When we consider those of us who are now senior in life, how quickly our days have passed away. But my dear friends, what a mercy if we are exercised to be right. Is not the cry with the godly, “Prepare me, gracious God”? There are many distractions, many worries, many heavy responsibilities. Satan is keeping everybody busy in this modern, complicated world where there are so many standards, and so many regulations, and rules and laws to keep. Certainly Satan is indeed working so wondrously in his lying deceit to provide plenty of entertainment and toys for men to play with and enjoy, so that they should not think about their approaching end. But the Holy Ghost will bring the whole body of Christ rightly to consider their latter end.

When one of the old pastors at Rotherfield, Mr. Percy Laver, was a lad, the word: “Consider your latter end,” followed him. The Lord is a sovereign in His working; but I believe that describes the exercise when the Holy Ghost blows upon a man’s soul. He is brought into deep concern about this approaching time. It is appointed that we shall die and pass away, and we have no power against that date, fixed in the eternal thought of Almighty God. As the Lord sees His troubled, anxious people journeying along, He looks upon them with deep, everlasting affection. He Himself anticipates the day when each one of the dear members of His own mystical Body will be ushered into His presence through the portal of death, which He has appointed for them. We have no power. We are completely dependent in that day upon the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.

But I must come to what is after death, so plainly set forth here by the apostle: “the judgment.” Every secret thing will be revealed.



Nothing is hidden from that divine scrutiny of the omniscient eye of Jehovah. He has appointed His own well-beloved Son to judge the world in righteousness, as the Apostle Paul so set forth as he preached on Mars Hill. For God “will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained.” Jesus is ordained by God to hear the account of ourselves. What a wonderful thing, my friends, if through God’s tender mercies, and through those fresh supplies of grace that you need, and I need, we are well prepared in that day to rejoice in Him and indeed to declare, “O Thou blessed Lord, we bless Thee for Thy first coming and now we bless Thee for this appointment indeed, for Thou hast washed us, loved us and redeemed us out of all evil.”

Think of that tremendous day when the ungodly shall ask for the mountains to hide them from the wrath of Him that sits upon the throne. Think of the blessedness of those who sought Him, begged for His help, confessed their sins and trusted wholly to Him. O the joy as their redeemed spirit and blood-washed soul is ushered away from the body to appear in the presence of God! But this speaks of the grand assize. I realise at death the ransomed spirit returns to the Lord Jesus following the great Shepherd, our glorious Forerunner. As He Himself committed His Spirit into the hands of His Father as He died for our sins, therefore those who commit their way to the Lord and trust also in Him, and those who seek His blessed face, in like manner so their spirit also returns to their Shepherd and their great and glorious Redeemer.

2. But I must now venture on quickly to consider that blessed truth the apostle so sets forth in the closing verses of this chapter 9. “As it is appointed.” This relates to our passing away, so he says, “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” I will try and briefly consider this tremendous truth, this one great offering. When you consider the enormity of our sinfulness, the thoughts that run through our mind hour by hour, my friends, the sins of unregeneracy and the backslidings of heart and the backslidings maybe in other ways, and how we suffer from indwelling sin, yet what a tremendous truth, that Christ died *once*. What a sacrifice that must have been! Our most holy, heavenly Father laid the iniquity of us all upon Him. The margin says, “made the iniquity of us all to meet on Him.” And how His soul was poured out unto death. “He was numbered with the transgressors.” He knew in that great and tremendous suffering the hidings of His Father’s face. I do not believe there was any break in the communion of the Godhead – that cannot be – but the holy Saviour bore our sins.

That was His first coming. He came to be made sin for us, not a sinner, but to be a sacrifice for sin, to bear our iniquities. We read, “For He shall bear their iniquities.” You see it in the type and shadow of the scapegoat. Once every year in olden times the high priest confessed the sins of Israel as he laid his hands upon the scapegoat and a fit man led

the scapegoat away into the wilderness, the land of forgetfulness, never to be seen again. And what a tremendous truth beyond our comprehension that God puts behind His back for ever, and remembers not the transgressions of His dear people, for He is pleased with the offering of His beloved Son. He died once, an all-sufficient offering for poor and needy sinners to plead, and to plead as they journey on. For, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." God is satisfied with the offering, and with the life and the death of His Son. Therefore He is exceeding pleased with all those who look to Him.

We must hasten on because of time. There is such a vast matter here, but I dare not linger. Ponder the words of the poet in one of the hymns on backsliding:

"The blood of Christ, a precious blood!  
Cleanses from all sin, doubt it not,  
And reconciles the soul to God,  
From every folly, every fault."

This covenant truth stands: "If we confess our sins," and we will have to be confessing our sins with a tender conscience while we suffer from our sinnership which we all do hour by hour, day by day. But, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He is true to His Word; He cannot lie; He is just. An honourable settlement has been made between God and His church. He being made a Surety has paid their deep debts. Therefore He is just. It is a holy, a beautiful, a lovely, a most honourable and just thing for Almighty God to put away the sins of His people and account them righteous and receive them into glory, for their worthiness to go to glory is bound up in the Lamb once slain.

3. Now thirdly, this blessed declaration, for the promise is here made: "And unto them that look for Him." My dear friends, in our innermost conscience may the Holy Ghost be a Witness with us here today. Are we looking for salvation in Him in spite of known and felt poverty, weakness, so often afraid to die, and often afraid to continue? We are so easily distracted, so easily like Gad. He was overcome. "A troop shall overcome him." We find many troops overcoming us again and again. "But he shall overcome at the last," by faith.

There is another sense here of looking for His second coming, and Jesus taught that "when ye see these things," the signs of the second coming so clearly set forth in the Scriptures, which we see abounding on every side, He says, "Look up ... for your redemption draweth nigh." The poor pilgrims, following in the way of this cloud of witnesses set forth in chapter 11, are counselled by the Apostle Paul at the opening of chapter 12: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us" – pilgrims in these modern days – "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." That is the work of God, and if He is the Author, He will finish it, and we will need Him to finish salvation by bringing us safely through, and the real consolation will be when the Holy Ghost applies to us that sweet truth, when feeling so needy and ruined: "Her warfare is accomplished"; for Zion's salvation is finished. Therefore we plead the Lord will finish in His sweet grace His dealings with us to bring us through every distress, every sorrow, the losses we are bound to come into, and the distresses that must come into our pathways and our declining years, if spared to old age, and especially when we come to our dying pillow.

Is there not that looking to the Lord, looking to Him for daily help, daily strength and daily supplies of grace? He is upon His throne now. There is the promise of His second coming. Therefore we look unto the Captain of our salvation, that great Shepherd of Israel. The dear brethren on the Committee, O may you be much helped to continue looking unto the Lord Jesus for that wisdom. I know you do. You need Him to be with you. Dear, godly brethren, in the churches and fellow-ministers, what daily help we need, and especially in the gospel ministry. We need the Holy Ghost to be with us.

Well, you dear pilgrims that look for Him as you travel along seeking "a better country, that is, an heavenly," have you not proved what the psalmist says in the song of degrees: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth"? He is faithful! You know that help, my friends. Yea, He will not withdraw that help from His people, for He has covenanted: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The Lord has never failed yet, my friends. We have often failed Him in our serving and in the profession we have made. We feel and know we have failed. But He changes not. He delights in mercy.

Well, He makes this promise: "Unto them that look for Him." This is all faith can do really. In this looking there is a holding fast and a clinging to what has been made real to your soul. There is a pleading of it before God and a venturing on day by day through many dangers, leaning hard upon Him, your Beloved, One who has kindled a love in your soul, a beginning and only a beginning of love in your soul to this blessed Person. The promise is to those who look for Him.

I must come now to the faithfulness of God. "Shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." These exceeding great and precious promises have been sealed by the blood of the Lamb of God whom God has raised to His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for poor sinners, and to give what they so much feel their need of: "repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," and there He sits triumphant. He sits upon that throne of grace where poor sinners look

for help, and can flee to Him. The apostle in chapter 4 concludes, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We need that wisdom from above. James instructed, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." So the pilgrim looks for help with some blessed hope in his soul.

There is yet to be a more glorious day and what grace we need to be prepared for that dying day. I feel it myself. Time is so short and as we see the day approaching we, like the apostle, have to lay up many prayers against that day. The Apostle Paul was not so confident as to say, "I am a Christian. I do not need to worry about these things." He was a most favoured man. He had been caught up to the third heaven. He had that sight into the blessed glory. What was his exercise as he laboured on? He laid up prayers against that day. He had to commit his soul and his circumstances to the blessed One in whom he believed and in whom he trusted. This is that exercise of looking unto Jesus.

4. Then lastly to consider this blessed truth: "Shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." His first appearing was, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," that is, to be made a sin-bearing Victim. But His second coming, O the triumphant coming, bringing His thousands upon thousands of angels with Him in the clouds of heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect, who were those believers and pilgrims through the centuries. They are mostly unknown in the earth. They sought that city built by eternal hands. Their precious faith believed, when they were living and came to die, with the apostle that the Lord had built the city for them; and they believed it because of the faithfulness of their heavenly Friend who would appear the second time to bring them in.

We do not know here below what it is – and I borrow from M'Cheyne – to "love God with an unsinning heart." You may know the kindlings of longing and praise in your soul, but we do not know what it is to be without sin. We have this treasure in an earthen vessel. The vessel is corrupt and rotten to the core. Think of that blessed day, to quote again from M'Cheyne, to "love Him with an unsinning heart." What must it be to enter into that rest where nothing will molest! Where there is no devil, no unbelief, no wanderings of heart, no fears, no frights, no temptations – where Christ is All in all. And with your blood-washed soul, you, the same person now changed will truly worship Him and crown Him Lord of all. My dear friends, what a mercy to know just the first few notes of that triumphant song here below, the song of the redeemed; or as again we read, "the song of the Lamb." I believe if the Lord has ever touched your heart in any way, you have struck up the first few notes of that song. It is true that it is so often with a lisping,

stammering tongue because of our infirmities. The enemy will often say, "It is all very well, but I will get you at last; you wait." No, the dear pilgrim has to press on and keep pleading Christ.

I must just mention before I close, God has sworn these things, and that in spite of the case of the dying thief, or Mary Magdalene, or you and me, with our failings and weaknesses. He has sworn them, and He can swear by no greater, and therefore we are travellers looking for Him. "We have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge." Are you fleeing for refuge? I know we all come short, but are you fleeing for refuge? So this strong consolation is for them "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them." And faith as it brings us to see Christ in the Word, brings us to lay hold on the incarnate Word. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Think of His infinite merit as that blessed High Priest. Yea, the merit of His precious blood speaks for every comer. There is a secret in all real religion. Your heavenly Father has drawn you, for none can come to Jesus except the Father who hath sent Him draw them. Blessed truth! And they are needy, they are poor, they are troubled, but the truth of it becomes their meat and drink. It is a blessed truth. We have a divine appointment. The Lord hear our bleatings.

"Then O my Lord, prepare  
My soul for that great day;  
O wash me in Thy precious blood,  
And take my sins away."

"He is faithful that promised."

Now my friends, may His name be to us from time to time as ointment poured forth, that the virgins here might love Him on account of the savour that He is to them. May we look to Him that He may appear to us personally "without sin (for us and to us) unto salvation" which will be with everlasting joy on our heads.

*The two verses referred to on page 207:*

"No news can suit a ruined race  
But sovereign, free, eternal grace;  
No other gospel can impart  
Joy, peace and comfort to the heart.

"Lord, write this gospel in my heart,  
And in its blessings give me part;  
Until I see my Saviour's face,  
And say, 'I'm saved by gospel grace.'"

## SPIRITUAL RECOVERY

*By Richard Sibbes (1577-1635). See Review, page 221*

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The question may be asked, How shall men recover themselves, when they are subject to this hardness, deadness and insensibleness? If after examination a man find himself to be thus, how shall he recover himself out of this estate? I answer,

1. First, as when things are cold we bring them to the fire to heat and melt, so bring we our cold hearts to the fire of the love of Christ; consider we of our sins against Christ, and of Christ's love towards us; dwell upon this meditation. Think what great love Christ hath showed unto us, and how little we have deserved, and this will make our hearts to melt and be as pliable as wax before the sun.

2. Secondly, if thou wilt have this tender and melting heart, then use the means; be always under the sunshine of the gospel. Be under God's sunshine, that He may melt thy heart; be constant in good means; and help one another. "We must provoke one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3. 13). Physicians love not to give physic [medicine] to themselves. So a man is not always fit to help himself when he is not right; but good company is fit to do it. "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us?" said the two disciples, holding communion each with other at Emmaus (Luke 24. 32). For then Christ comes and makes a third, joins with them, and so makes their hearts burn within them. So Christ saith, "Where two or three are met together in His name, He is in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). Now they were under the promise, therefore He affords His presence. Where two hold communion together, there Christ will make a third. Therefore let us use the help of others, seeing David could not recover himself, being a prophet, but he must have a Nathan to help him (2 Sam. 12. 7). Therefore if we would recover ourselves from hard and insensible hearts, let us use the help one of another.

3. Thirdly, we must with boldness and reverence challenge the covenant of grace; for this is the covenant that God hath made with us, to give us tender hearts, hearts of flesh (as Ezek. 11. 19, "I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within their bowels; I will take away the stony hearts out of their bodies, and I will give them a heart of flesh"). Now seeing this is a covenant God hath made, to give us fleshy hearts and to take away our stony, let us challenge Him with His promise, and go to Him by prayer. Entreat Him to give thee a fleshy heart; go to Him, wait His time, for that is the best time. Therefore wait though He do not hear at first.

These are the means to bring tenderness of heart.

## A WISE AND LOVING PASTOR

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John Kershaw is still much loved and esteemed, both for his published sermons and also his autobiography. What is not so well known is what a wise and loving pastor he was. In this he is a most gracious example.

We give three instances.

### I

Sarah Haworth was a young farmer's wife, living on the edge of a wild moor between Edenfield and Rochdale. Kay Barn was the name of their farm, seven miles away from Rochdale, where she attended Hope Chapel.

One day, as she was lighting the fire, the Lord powerfully spoke to her: "Thou art a sinner." She trembled from head to foot, and was so troubled she could hardly speak or sleep. She feared hell would be her deserved portion.

Some time later she heard that Dr. Hewlett of Astley\* was going to preach at Haslingden parish church, and resolved to go. (This may seem strange, but Haslingden was just over half the distance to Rochdale. We understand that whenever Dr. Hewlett preached at the parish church in Hindley, the Strict Baptist chapel was closed for the day.)

In the morning she received nothing, but in the evening she was abundantly blessed. The text was: "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." She said, "I know not how I got home, but I blessed and praised the Lord, and wanted everything around me to do the same.... I could do nothing but sing praises unto the Lord for having set His love upon such a poor, sinful wretch."

After this she was sorely tried and buffeted by Satan, till Mr. Kershaw preached in the room at Limey Leach (about a quarter of a mile from Kay Barn) from: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." "O *that* was a sermon to me!" she said. "Tears of joy ran down my face as I was listening to him, and I felt as happy as one could feel out of heaven.... After the meeting Mr. K. came and spoke to me, and I could not help telling him how the Lord had blessed the Word from his lips to my soul, and we rejoiced together."

Soon after Mr. Kershaw preached in the room at Cheesden Pasture mill (just over a mile from Kay Barn). The subject was baptism, and Sarah felt she must go and show that she was not ashamed of Jesus.

But when the time came, she felt so dark and full of fear that she told her pastor she could not go. She felt she would just be unable to

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\* Alfred Hewlett, D.D. (1804-1885), for the greater part of his life Vicar of Astley, near Manchester.

speak. It was here that John Kershaw showed his wisdom as a pastor. He knew what her experience was, so found a hymn which contained it, and said, "Sarah, if you cannot say anything, read this hymn, and tell them that it contains your religion." He would vouch for her. This broke the snare.

When the church meeting came, she did not need any hymnbook! The Hope Chapel church minute book tells us there were *five* people spoke at the meeting, and beautifully records:

"The account they gave of the dealings of God with their souls was exceedingly pleasing to the church for it was done in great meekness and fear and a sweet savour and power attended it to the hearts of the people which caused many tears to flow from the eyes of the friends."

This was in 1850.

Sarah said, "I had a sweet time when Mr. Kershaw spoke to me in receiving me into the church, and while they were singing the hymn, 'How sweet and awful is the place!' especially the last verse:

'Why was I made to hear Thy voice,  
And enter while there's room?'"

Sarah Haworth died on March 6th, 1889. "Sarah o' Kay Barn," as she was known, was highly esteemed as a godly woman and a mother in Israel.

*(From G.S. 1890, pages 136-139, and Hope Chapel, Rochdale, Church Book.)*

## II

"Old George" was a wealthy man. Along with his brothers he owned a prosperous cotton mill at Cheesden Pasture, up on the moors five or six miles from Rochdale. This must have been one of the earliest mills; they were built close to streams from the hills.

But George was more noted for his godliness and grace – not only his experience of the truth but his Christian character and witness and abundant generosity.

As a young man he had attended Park Independent Chapel but nothing seemed to meet his case. He felt he was a sin-sick soul and his language was, "O Lord, I am vile, and I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Unclean! Unclean!"

He was about 21 at the time and out of curiosity went to Hope Chapel to hear John Kershaw preach. The text was: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." For the first time he found his case described. He felt: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"; and, "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sins."



Afterwards the blessed Spirit sealed home in his conscience the great Physician and His precious blood, and he told his friends that if the whole of Rochdale had been given him, the joy of his heart would not have been so great.

For nearly thirty years after this he walked in love and union with the Lord's people, honoured and esteemed among them. It was said that his attendance at chapel was more regular than that of the pastor! In addition, he was a man of some accomplishment, and with much ability wrote on divine things. *But, remarkably, he had never made an open profession of the Lord's name.* He felt timid, and had such low views of himself.

We can imagine what a concern this was to his pastor, but again we see the grace and wisdom bestowed on John Kershaw.

Mr. Kershaw, realising what an accomplished writer George was, said he would esteem it a great favour if he would write an essay for him on a portion of God's Word. He said before he left George's house, he would mark it in his Bible. And would he please have the essay ready when he called again in a month's time?

As soon as his pastor was gone, George opened the Bible and found the text marked: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized." As he thought of what he could write, the only scripture that came across his spirit was: "Physician, heal thyself!"

Long before the month was up, he was at his pastor's house, having felt the powerful effect of the Word. He said that *he* must "arise, and be baptized," as he could no longer rest in neglect of the ordinances of God's house.

At the next church meeting he appeared and "gave a blessed account of the gracious dealings of the Lord with his soul. He was received by the brethren with great joy, and the following Lord's day was baptized and added to the church. On this occasion his cup of joy ran over. Before he left ... he told the minister and deacons that he had never left that place before with so much joy and solemn satisfaction in his soul as he did that night, having the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Christ from the dead."

This was in 1848. He did not live too long, dying on November 21st, 1853. He was only 55, so it is strange that he was always known as "old George." It was recorded after his death: "His whole heart and soul were in the peace and prosperity of Zion."

*(An account appeared soon afterwards on the wrapper of the Gospel Standard, reprinted in A Cloud of Witnesses. On visiting the little shop in Cheesden Terrace some years ago, the shopkeeper kindly gave us a small pamphlet on "old George" (George Ramsbottom) containing the same account. It seems it had been circulated in the district in which he was so well known and esteemed.)*

## III

On one occasion an old, godly man wished to be baptized and join the church at Hope Chapel, Rochdale. But when the time came for him to give his testimony before the church members, he was not able to speak a single word.

The church was very sad, and so was the old man. In the end John Kershaw had to say, "Friend, if you cannot tell us *anything*, then we cannot receive you."

The old man was walking sadly out, when Mr. Kershaw called after him something like this: "Do you *not* love the Lord Jesus?" Almost indignantly the old man turned round and cried, "I do that, and aboon [above] a bit!"

That broke the snare. That was what they were all waiting to hear. We rather gather the old man told them quite a bit about his love for the Saviour.

*(Related by the Editor's grandfather who, when young, used to hear John Kershaw.)*

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### **"LOVE ALL DEFECTS SUPPLIES"**

*By J.C. Philpot*

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Without a loving, affectionate spirit, it is impossible to perform those precepts which inculcate mutual forgiveness and forbearance, kindness, tenderness of heart, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering (Eph. 4. 2, 32; Col. 3. 12, 13). To do all this from the heart, and not merely in lip, we must "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us." Without this love we may have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; we may bestow all our goods to feed the poor and give our body to be burned, and yet be nothing and have nothing (1 Cor. 13. 2, 3). But if blessed and favoured with this love, we shall obey those precepts which direct our walk with our brethren unto God and from the heart.

Who that has seen much of Christian churches does not know the difference between the hard, cold, contentious, unforgiving spirit of some, and the tender, loving, affectionate spirit of others? Who that has a feeling heart has not been cut, wounded, and grieved by the pride, obstinacy, selfishness, hardness and unkindness of the one, and been softened, melted and blessed by the tenderness, meekness, humility, loving and affectionate spirit of the other?

Love is so the spirit of the gospel, and therefore of the precept as a part of the gospel, that we may unhesitatingly say that few more break the precept than some of the very persons who most contend for what is called practice. Practice is excellent, admirable, indispensable, and the want of it grievous, lamentable, disgraceful. But let us be clear in our views as to what practice is and what it means. If it be the mere doing of what are called good works, as alms-giving, visiting the sick, strictness of life, dress, deportment, accompanied with unblemished conduct, a sister of mercy will outshine us all, and father Ignatius be a pattern of holiness.

It is plain, therefore, that something more is needful for acceptable obedience than external practice, and that this something is love – love to the Lord and to His people. Nor is it less evident that this love must be made manifest by our general spirit as well as our conduct; for love is not a mere occasional spurt, a now and then warming up, like a hot fit of the ague, or the slow, relenting gripe of a miser over a charity plate, but a living principle, ever discovering itself in words and acts of kindness, forbearance, self-denial, self-restraint, consideration of the feelings of others, meekness, gentleness and a humble, affectionate, conciliating manner and bearing.

You may be outwardly very consistent, but if you are harsh, censorious, self-willed, obstinate, unforgiving, if you would sooner see the church torn to pieces with strife than give way on some point which involves neither truth nor conscience, but merely some concession of opinion, you are breaking the precept as much by your disobedience to its spirit as others by their disobedience to its letter. God, who searcheth the heart and reads our inmost thoughts, feelings and motives, descries with unerring eye our spirit as well as our conduct; and if, indeed, we see light in His light, we shall read our own heart too, and distinguish between the proud, obstinate, self-willed, contentious spirit of the old man and the humble, forgiving, affectionate spirit of the new.

O that this kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, and forgiveness more animated our spirits and guided our words and actions. There would then be no stormy church meetings, no broken friendships, no shy looks, no harsh words, no resentful memories, no magnifying and dwelling on infirmities and defects, no raking up of buried injuries, no malicious insinuations, or slanderous reportings. Having had so much forgiven us, we should freely forgive our offending brethren; and, feeling ourselves to be the chief of sinners and less than the least of all saints, we should rather wonder at their forbearance of us, and admire their kindness to us, than cherish a resentful, unforgiving spirit, even against those at whose hands we may have suffered real or imaginary wrong.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Watkin Maddy – Separated by Sovereign Grace**, by Henry Sant; paperback; 56 pages; price £3.90; published by Huntingtonian Press and obtainable from 72A Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hants., SO30 4EB.

Readers of *More than Notion* will remember Watkin Maddy as a friend of James Bourne; a fellow of St. John's College Cambridge, writer of a standard astronomy textbook and a Church of England Clergyman, who was made to forsake all worldly preferment and cast in his lot with a few who esteemed the reproach of Christ. A memoir of him is found in *Witnesses of the Truth* and the author has here added other material, some previously unpublished, in writing this biography.

Mr. Maddy was sensitive, often cast down, tempted and subject to depression, one who deeply felt the deceitfulness of sin, and with but little comfort in his religion. Yet, as Bernard Gilpin said of him, though he very quickly lost his spiritual joy and liberty, he retained his humility, love and simplicity which endeared him to those around.

Perhaps due to the limited and disparate material available, the book is somewhat disjointed in style; it is not a book that will appeal by its eloquence, but those who look for "the little that a righteous man hath" we trust will not be disappointed.

John A. Kingham, Luton

**Contemplations on the God of Israel**, by William Huntington; paperback; 183 pages; £8.50/\$8.44 plus postage; published by Gospel Mission, Choteau, Montana, and obtainable from Ossett Christian Bookshop (tel: 01924 260502).

We have been asked to review this well-known book once again (please see G.S. 2010, page 191).

This is Huntington at his best, dealing with the best of subjects – contemplations on each Person in the glorious Trinity. Nicely produced, with clear print, again we can recommend Huntington's *Contemplations*.

**The Agency that Transformed a Nation**, by J.C. Ryle; small booklet; 16 pages; price £1; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This excellent little booklet was originally a chapter in J.C. Ryle's well-known book *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century*. It answers the question: what was it that transformed the people of England during the latter half of the eighteenth century? The answer is nothing but the preaching of the gospel under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit.

Ryle lists seven vital things which were preached:

1. The sufficiency and supremacy of Scripture.
2. The total corruption of human nature.
3. Christ's death upon the cross as the only satisfaction for sin.
4. The great doctrine of justification by faith.
5. The universal necessity of heart conversion and a new creation by the Holy Spirit.
6. The inseparable connection between faith and personal holiness.
7. God's eternal hatred of sin and God's love towards sinners.

“These were the doctrines by which they turned England upside down.” Only the same doctrines, applied by the Holy Spirit, can perform such things today. As the foreword states: things previously in England were even worse than they are now.

The only slight flaw, as hinted in the introduction, is J.C. Ryle’s bias as a Bishop toward the Church of England. It is really through his writings that people have come to believe that the old Particular Baptists were in a very bad way spiritually before the Evangelical Revival – which we do not believe can be proved.

**Josiah’s Reformation**, by Richard Sibbes; paperback; 176 pages; price £5; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

J.K. Popham believed there were no writers like the godly spiritual Puritan divines. Highly honoured among them is the name of Richard Sibbes (1577-1635). One of the earlier Puritan preachers, his preaching and lecturing in Cambridge was much used by the Holy Spirit, and among well-known ministers who in their early years were influenced by him might be mentioned Thomas Goodwin, John Cotton, Jeremiah Burroughs, John Preston and Philip Nye. Sibbes was known as “the heavenly Doctor,” and Izaak Walton (of *The Compleat Angler* fame) wrote of him:

“Of this blest man, let this just praise be given,  
Heaven was in him, before he was in heaven.”

Sibbes is usually regarded as the easiest of the Puritans to read, his style being so direct and simple, and because of this he is recommended as the best introduction to the Puritan writers (rather than, say, Dr. Owen who is much more complex.) It is only fair to say, though, that he does not use the lively illustrations or anecdotes as some of the Puritans do.

To read Sibbes is a profitable exercise. Many reading the Puritans for the first time are very surprised how different they are from modern Strict Baptist or evangelical preachers. There is a directness. (Someone said, “They seem to be *at* you all the time!” Well, they are – probing the conscience, exhorting, reproving.)

*Josiah’s Reformation* was first published in 1629. It consists of four long sermons on 2 Chronicles 34. 26-28: “And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard; Because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest His words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humblest thyself before Me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before Me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.”

The four sermons are entitled: “The Tender Heart; The Art of Self-Humbling; The Art of Mourning; The Saint’s Refreshing. There is a helpful foreword by Michael Reeves explaining the life and witness of Sibbes.

We give a short extract from *Josiah’s Reformation* here, as a recommendatory example, and include a short article on page 214.

“Tenderness of heart is wrought by an apprehension of tenderness and love in Christ. A soft heart is made soft by the blood of Christ. Many say that an adamant cannot be melted with fire, but by blood. I cannot tell whether this be true or no; but I am sure nothing will melt the hard heart of man but the blood of Christ, the passion of our blessed Saviour. When a man considers of the love that God hath showed him in sending of His Son, and doing such great things as He hath done in giving of Christ to satisfy His justice, in setting us free from hell, Satan and death: the consideration of this, with the persuasion that we have interest in the same, melts the heart, and makes it become tender.”

*Josiah's Reformation* appears exactly as it was first published – that is, without any editing, amending or modernising. We most strongly believe this is the right way! Banner of Truth's best work has been in rescuing these ancient treasures and presenting them to the public as they were written. If the sermons are nearly 400 years old, the production of the book is exceedingly attractive, well set out, with good, clear print. (Sibbes does not always quote from the Authorised Version, but uses either the Geneva or his own translation.)

We are very pleased to recommend all these old treasures as they appear from time to time.

**The Tender Heart**, by Richard Sibbes; small paperback in the Pocket Puritan Series; 70 pages; price £3.25; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This little book contains the foreword and the first sermon of *Josiah's Reformation* (see previous review). The text is almost identical with the original, with what is described as “light editing.” This does not affect the text at all, though the scriptures are quoted in slightly unusual fashion.

Obviously the aim of the “Pocket Puritans” is to give a taste of the full, original work to those unfamiliar with the Puritans with the hope that they will be attracted and become regular readers.

**Smooth Stones taken from Ancient Brooks**; a selection from Thomas Brooks; paperback; 204 pages; price £5.75; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680) has always been accounted one of the foremost Puritan divines. Among his well-known works are *Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*, *The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod*, *The Golden Key to Open Treasures and Heaven on Earth*. The six-volume set of his complete works has been published by The Banner of Truth. When the Nichol series of Puritan divines was published in the 1860s, Brooks proved the most popular. He writes in a simple, interesting, gracious way.

*Smooth Stones* consists of hundreds of short quotations taken from Brooks's complete works. This is a delightful selection. We give a few examples.

“Of all graces, faith takes the crown off a man's own head, and puts it upon the head of Christ.”

“No man begins to be good till he sees himself to be bad. The ready way to be found is to see ourselves lost. The first step to mercy is to see our own misery; the first step toward heaven is to see ourselves near hell.”

“Three things are called precious in the Scriptures: ‘precious faith’ (2 Pet. 1. 1); ‘precious promises’ (verse 4); ‘precious blood’ (1 Pet. 1. 19). All our precious mercies twine to us in precious blood, as may be seen by comparing these Scriptures together: Romans 5. 9; Ephesians 1. 7; Colossians 1. 20;

Hebrews 9. 7, 14; 10. 19; 1 John 1. 7; Revelation 1. 5. It was an excellent saying of Luther, 'One little drop of this blood is more worth than heaven and earth.' Christ's blood is heaven's key."

"Weak saints are as much united to Christ, as much justified by Christ, as much reconciled by Christ, and as much pardoned by Christ, as the strongest saints. He that looked upon the brazen serpent, though with weak sight, was healed as thoroughly as he that looked upon it with a stronger sight."

"Thrice happy are those souls that are brought to Christ, whether it be in a winter's night, or on a summer's day."

"A good conscience will look through the blackest clouds and see a smiling God."

How does one read a book like this? Obviously it cannot be read through like a treatise. The preface suggests taking one a day for meditation. (This would take a long time!) One suggestion is to read a page morning and evening. Another is just to dabble.

Really the title could read, "*Precious Stones taken from Ancient Brooks.*"

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### TILL THE DAY BREAK

*"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense" (Song 4. 6).*

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Dark the night and stormy, no shelter here I find.  
 Troubles oft surround me, and fears distress my mind.  
 Fears lest in Thy favour, O Lord, I should not share,  
 Lest among Thy children, no portion I should bear.  
 Yet to Thee for mercy my prayer shall still arise,  
 Towards Thy holy mountain I would lift up mine eyes.  
 Saviour, do Thou lead me, nor suffer me to stray,  
 Till the morning breaketh, till the shadows flee away.

Till the Day Star riseth, O grant some heavenly light,  
 Shining on my pathway, may guide my steps aright.  
 E'en as through the blackness of midnight storms are seen,  
 Transient rays of moonlight the rifted clouds between.  
 Saviour, at Thy footstool, help me to pour my prayer;  
 With fresh favour bless me, and keep me suppliant there.  
 Quickened by Thy Spirit, renew my strength each day,  
 Till the morning breaketh and the shadows flee away.

Long the night of weeping in sorrow may endure,  
 But the morning cometh, the promised joy is sure.  
 Long the tearful sowing may fruitless seem to be,  
 Yet the plenteous harvest the reapers eyes shall see.  
 Faint my heart with longing has grown through hope deferred,  
 But Thy faithful promise my waiting soul hath heard.  
 Help me still to seek Thee, nor let my hope decay,  
 Till the morning breaketh, till the shadows flee away.

Thou, O Lord, hast promised, within Thy house of prayer,  
 Thou wilt meet Thy people, and make them joyful there;

There with heavenly manna their hungering souls are fed,  
 There with rich provision Thy table still is spread.  
 Oft the gospel trumpets proclaim a rich repast,  
 Often towards the banquet a longing look I cast.  
 But too oft in sadness I empty turn away,  
 Till the morning breaketh and the shadows flee away.

Jesus, with Thy people, I love oft-times to meet,  
 When they spread their sorrows before Thy mercy seat.  
 Perfumed with Thy merits, their prayers shall doubtless rise,  
 As with grateful odours before Thee in the skies.  
 I in supplication, my voice with theirs would blend,  
 O that my petitions like incense might ascend;  
 Then a glad thank-offering of grateful praise I'll pay,  
 When the morning breaketh and the shadows flee away.

Hasten, O Beloved, though mountains rise between,  
 Though thick clouds and darkness too often intervene.  
 Thy blest voice can reach me o'er every towering hill,  
 And though much discouraged, I listen for it still.  
 Give me soon to welcome its tones of heavenly peace,  
 Come with full salvation, my captive soul release.  
 Till all darkness vanish, and passed the wintry day,  
 Haste the glorious dawning, chase the shades of night away.

Ruth Hammond

Mr. J.H. Gosden wrote: "A friend of my mother's; she died young."

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## OBITUARY

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**John Albert Watts**, member and deacon of the church at Bethel, Luton, died on June 13th, 2011, aged 91. For many years he was General Secretary of the Bethesda Fund. "Asleep in Jesus."

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## 2012 MINISTERS' ENGAGEMENTS

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We have been asked to draw chapel correspondents' attention to the fact that next year there are **53** Lord's days. Thus we assume there is *no* corresponding date for *the last Lord's day* in the year, December 30th. We have thought it wise to draw attention to this without trying to give any direction.

Often over the years, there has been some confusion, but this has been overruled to the glory of God. The way we were first able to visit Luton was through a moveable fifth Lord's day.

Whilst the Word of God gives many instructions concerning a pastorate, there is nothing about our "supply system," which has become very rigid. We need to watch we do not grieve the Spirit by ignoring His leadings.

We would take this opportunity lovingly to urge ministers not to delay unnecessarily in answering invitations. This can cause distress and difficulty to our correspondents, some of whom are aged. We realise that sometimes a minister has good reasons for his delay.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
AUGUST 2011

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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 SHORT BUT AN EFFECTUAL PRAYER”**

*“O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness”  
(2 Samuel. 15. 31).*

Only a short prayer – but what an answer! It turned the whole course of Absalom’s rebellion, the whole course of the battle, victory instead of defeat. Because the Lord immediately answered the prayer.

This was one of the saddest days in King David’s life. His son Absalom, whom he dearly loved, had rebelled against him. Not only so, but he was seeking to take his life. It seemed that his sorrows could not go any deeper. But he had a beloved friend Ahithophel, an eminent man. It was said that his counsel, his advice in Israel, was counted as the counsel of God Himself. And David loved him. He said, We took sweet counsel as we went up to the house of God together. Now this seemed to be the crushing blow, the final blow: “And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.”

Immediately David prayed. That is a mark of grace. With everyone at times some terrible shock comes. But what is our reaction? With the world it is often an oath or a curse or some complaint. But David said, “Lord.” He took the sinners’ safe and sure retreat. He turned away from everyone and everything in his sorrows, and he turned to the Lord alone. “O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.”

But it was not only the bitter grief and disappointment in finding that Ahithophel was a fickle, unfaithful friend, but also Ahithophel was his chief adviser. It was almost like losing his prime minister or his minister of war. It was a wonderful acquisition for Absalom. Surely this was now the end.

“And David said, O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” It was a very short prayer, but it altered everything. It received an immediate answer. Ahithophel came with wonderful counsel, wonderful advice to Absalom, but Absalom rejected it! And Ahithophel went away, set his house in order and then took his own life.

If this means anything at all, it teaches us the value of prayer and the power of prayer. It was a short, simple prayer, a very direct prayer, and it was wonderfully answered.

“And David said, O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” And the Lord did. But this was a different prayer from most. Shall we call it a negative prayer? It was a prayer *against* someone. It was a prayer that God would overturn someone. This teaches us that such prayers are not wrong; often they are very much right. In this evil day it is right that we should pray *against* so many of the evils in the land – the God dishonouring laws, the wrong decisions, the persecution of Christians, etc. O Lord, overturn them; O Lord, destroy them – for the glory of Thy name, for Thy people’s good. The Lord was not offended with a prayer like this. He answered it. Perhaps Satan will tempt you and tell you there is not much love in such prayers. Well, we cannot say there was much love in this prayer. But there is such a thing when the hosts of hell turn against the people of God, against the Lord Jesus and His purposes, when it is right for God’s people to pray against these things, that the Lord will overturn them.

“O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” This is what the apostle meant when he said, “Pray without ceasing.” We cannot always be at home, on our knees, pouring out our hearts to God. But “pray without ceasing” throughout the day when things come. Much of the prayer-life of God’s people is in these sudden short prayers, and they are real prayers. Something comes suddenly. You say, “Lord, help me,” and your prayer is heard in heaven. Or someone asks you an important question. You pray, “Lord, guide me.” Or you feel your weakness before Satan’s temptations, and you cry, “Lord, give me strength.” Ralph Erskine spoke of these fleeting glimpses toward heaven throughout the day, and their value. They keep your soul in health. They keep your soul prosperous. And in them is much real prayer, prayer that honours the Lord, prayer that depends on Him, prayer that the Lord answers.

“And David said, O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” There is encouragement here for those who feel they have not much ability in prayer. They have the desire, the thoughts, the burden, but they have not got the words. Well, David did not bother so much about the words here. He just threw them out, but they entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth and brought answers of peace.

“Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak;  
But pray with faith in Jesus’ name.”

Various ones cross our minds – one of the children, a person in trouble, a young one seeking the Saviour, another in darkness and bondage. May we be helped to look up and say, “Lord, bless him.” “Lord, do be with him.” And prayer indited by the Lord, the Lord will surely hear.

These things are recorded in Scripture for our teaching, help and encouragement, and not least as we journey on in the pathway of prayer.

## ADVICE TO A MINISTER

*Sermon preached by John Hill of Hitchin (and later London) at Cambridge on September 27th, 1739, at the ordination of John Conder. This sermon gives much to be considered by both preachers and hearers.*

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**Text:** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2. 15).

This and the foregoing epistle were written by the apostle to Timothy to instruct him "how he ought to behave himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

There was something in his education and temper, as well as the circumstances of his conversion, which made him dear to the apostle above many others, and he being called to office young, the apostle was particularly concerned that he might be thoroughly furnished for it and approved unto God in it.

Many are the temptations, many the disadvantages, to which youth is exposed, especially in a work which is of so large a compass in itself, so weighty and important, and of so great consequence to others, as the work of the ministry. Unacquaintedness with mankind in general, their different tempers and constitutions, designs and ends, want of experience and observation in the many branches of our office, and at some times of that gravity and suitable behaviour in conversation which is becoming our characters are things which render us liable to be despised. I might add, too, our own fears, lest we should stretch beyond the bounds of our office in reproof, exhorting and rebuking, though it be with all longsuffering and doctrine, which are often turned against us for our reproach. Alas! our youth itself, where particular errors are struck at, and particular darling sins are reproved, puts an emptiness into our words in the esteem of some, and makes our best endeavours in respect to them fruitless. This seems to be the great occasion of the advice I have now read to myself and you. The apostle having given his son Timothy many things in charge which would, in their season, be very disrelishing, lays a special injunction on him in the verse before the text to command and teach them to do it with that *authority* which the duty itself requires, and in so doing, to *magnify his office*, as the phrase is explained (Tit. 2. 15).

It is not my design in the following discourse to take in all the observations which arise from this text, but only to give some general directions which, if duly attended to, you and I may know how to behave in that great office wherewith we are entrusted, so as to approve ourselves unto God, while we study to show ourselves workmen that need not be ashamed before men.

The first thing I would recommend to myself and to you is a diligent study of our own hearts. Hold the torch there first, and everyone in the assembly will be the better for our light. "Take heed unto thyself," says the apostle (1 Tim. 4. 16), that is, not only to our outward conduct, but also to our inward frame, and the life and power of religion in our own hearts. Consider, you and I live by the same food we prepare for others, and how shall we know it is good for them if we do not first relish and digest it ourselves? The word will never come with power *from* us if it does not dwell with power *in* us. Alas, what are fine words, and exact periods, a well-composed and a well-delivered discourse? What are these to a wounded conscience, an afflicted spirit, or an overwhelmed soul?

Our own heart is one of the best and hardest texts we can preach from. Here we see the nature and cursed effects of sin; the use of the law to convince of sin; the beauties and glories of Christ as bringing in an everlasting righteousness. We see here why a soul is so often left of God, and the means whereby he is brought back to Him again; what are the causes of spiritual darkness, and what the soul's behaviour under it; how sweet are gospel promises; how precious is new covenant grace and the blood of sprinkling; how needful are the supplies of the Spirit and the quickening power of the Word in the Spirit's hands. These things we see, we feel, and are persuaded of by a careful scrutiny into our own hearts, and a frequent review of our past solemn transactions between God and our own souls.

I own that a natural, unrenewed man may have a notional knowledge of experimental truths; but he cannot say, as the spies did, "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us unto this land, and give it us" (Num. 14. 7, 8). Experienced truths warm and affect the heart, and give such zeal and fervour to the preacher in his delivery, as all the act in rhetoric, all the studied eloquence in the world, can never come up to.

My dear brother, every sermon you preach to others, preach first to yourself. When you have *proved* your armour, you may venture to *recommend* it. It is the trial of faith which is precious. And the improvement of gospel doctrines in our Christian life makes them always savoury and satisfying to the heart. Gospel doctrines lie as the foundation of the spiritual building; gospel grace, derived from Christ Jesus, in whom all centres, carries up the superstructure. Labour, then, after a thorough acquaintance with your own heart. He that is a stranger here errs at his first setting out.

Secondly, having got acquainted with your own heart, study to divide the Word aright for your own and others' profit. This is a special part of Timothy's charge in my text, and a great branch of the work of the ministry. To do this, several things deserve our particular regard.

1. We are to see that every text we preach upon has its *true meaning*. Not only that it be itself the truth, in opposition to error, according to the judgment of Scripture and the analogy of faith, but that it be *the truth of that place* which we are endeavouring to explain. It is not the sound of words, but the drift and design of the Holy Spirit we are to regard herein. And the best way to know the mind of the Spirit is to call in the help and assistance of the Spirit; to make Scripture the interpreter of itself, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual. All the articles of our faith are to be taken from the Word, and Scripture is not to be wrested, and so fitted to them. "We are not as many," says our apostle, "which corrupt the Word of God: but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (2 Cor. 2. 17). This is a metaphor taken from vintners who, for the sake of their own gain, mix the wine with baser liquors. Let God's truth be dearer to you than any private opinion of your own. Behave as in God's sight, when engaging in His work, and you dare not, you cannot trifle with His Word, much less corrupt it.

2. As every text is to have its *true meaning*, so every truth is to have its *due weight*. We are to keep back nothing that may be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The law is of use to show us our wounds; the gospel to direct us to the only means of healing. Doctrinal truths serve to inform the judgment; practical inquiries to settle the conscience and influence the conversation. We are not to be always laying the foundation, nor always to wave a disquisition into fundamental truths. Christians are commanded to grow in knowledge as well as grace, and to be able to render "a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear." Gospel doctrines have a special tendency to gospel holiness. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Tit. 3. 8).

Never strive to please itching ears. Some love your new, fine-spun notions, which buzz indeed in the head, but never reach or warm the heart. Nothing is gospel, but what comes up to their Shibboleth; and more time is spent in promoting the cause of a darling notion than can ever be spared from the good old savoury truths of the gospel, whereby the soul is drawn nearer to God and transformed into His image. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things." Judge of the importance of a truth by the power and fruits of it, in changing the heart, quickening the frame, curbing the passions and savouring the conversation. When once men begin to give a loose to their thoughts and temper, they often become vain in their imaginations and useless in their preaching.

We can never look back too often to the things we at first received. If ever we are edified, if ever sinners are converted by our ministry, it is

by the testimony which the Spirit gives in our hearts to those fundamental truths of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, and the way of a sinner's justification and salvation by Him. To many these are common things; they are even cloyed with hearing them; but when God brings our souls, or theirs, under the power of them, then how full are they of matter! How full are they of sweetness! How full are they of wonder!

A believer's soul cannot flourish a day without fresh actings of faith upon Christ and His righteousness. Not a step we take heavenward, but it is by the strength and Spirit of Jesus. So that we must be always *looking* to our foundation, though not always *laying* it. These are duties to be performed *by us*, as well as privileges which are purchased for and given *to us*. The end of principle is practice. Christians need to be told more of the duties of their callings, as well as the duties of their family and closet. Too much stress, in our day, is laid by the friends of the Bridegroom themselves upon our knowing well; but this is the easiest part of our religion by far; there must be *doing* also. The duties which a man owes to himself, to his fellow-creatures, to his fellow-saints, to the Lord Jesus, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, to the eternal Father and the eternal Spirit, are all to be particularised by us with all plainness and frequency.

General truths are too generally taken for granted by us all. Unless there be a special and particular application, a man may preach the law evangelically, and the gospel in a legal strain. It is a great thing to divide the Word aright; to cut it up with due consideration, as the metaphor signifies, in allusion to the Levitical sacrifices, so that God may have what He claims for His own, and man his proper portion. He that distinguishes well teaches well. A man may be young in years, and yet no novice in the faith: if he distinguishes well between law and gospel, duty and privilege, what God requires of us, and what He has promised to do for us; if he gives to man the things that are his, and to God the glory which belongs to Him.

3. To divide the Word aright, is to give every one their *proper portion*. This is the only justifiable sense in which we are to become all things to all men, that by all means we may gain some. We are to endeavour not so much to know the people's taste of preaching as their profit by it; and to commend ourselves to their esteem, no otherwise than by the manifestation of the truth to their consciences. It is required of stewards to hold fast the form of sound words. Uncertain sounds are empty sounds, which were never yet appointed of God, or owned by Him. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"

Everyone that attends our ministry is committed to us as our special care and charge, and we are to "watch for their souls, as they that must

give account.” Christ’s sheep are to be fed and nourished; those that are not of His fold are to be brought in. Secure sinners are to be roused by the terrors of the law; the weary and heavy laden encouraged by the promises of the gospel and the grace of the covenant; backsliders are to be reclaimed; and such as labour under decays of grace to be quickened, and put in mind of the love of their espousals. Some are to be “saved with fear, pulling them out of the fire”; “and of some have compassion, making a difference.” Zion’s mourners are to be comforted. And particularly have regard to tempted souls. The tongue of the learned is given for this very purpose, that “we may speak a word in season to him that is weary.” It is a sad thing to be left in Satan’s snare, or under the power of prevailing fears and despondencies of our own hearts. Heman’s complaint is an evidence of this, and perhaps your own experience may bring these things better to your remembrance.

A workman that understands his business can easily turn his hand to any branch of it without hesitation or loss: he has the plan of his whole work before him; and I have often thought, nothing shows more a man’s judgment, experience and spiritual skill in dividing the Word than a pertinent and close application of every gospel truth to the vast variety of our hearers. That which is a means of comfort to some may be improved to the reproof of others; and what is spoken to some by way of warning and rebuke may be applied to others for their direction and establishment.

Let no doctrinal point be handled without showing its use and tendency to promote the glory of God and the spiritual welfare and everlasting happiness of souls. Let no practical truth be considered, no case of conscience be unsolved, without leaving something behind you for the confirmation of gospel doctrines, which are the general foundation of all practice. Endeavour so to divide the Word that none may sit under your preaching in vain. Show every man his own face as in a glass, and be very frequent in laying open heart sins. He that has a talent to ransack men’s consciences, and set their secret sins before their eyes, never need be afraid of fighting uncertainly, or missing the great mark of his ministry.

4. To divide the Word aright requires that every truth should be delivered in its *proper season*. “Wherefore,” says the Apostle Peter, “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth” (2 Pet. 1. 12). The *present* truth is to be guarded carefully by us in perilous times. We have no need to raise ghosts or fight with shadows by reviving or opposing obsolete errors. Errors that are out of date have no concern in the controversy of these days, when so many are invented that cast the highest reflection on God’s sovereignty, wisdom and grace, and

lead the way to downright atheism and infidelity. It is no hard matter to tell what is the course of this world, the fashion of our polite age, when corrupt nature is made the guide in all matters of religion. Christ has long since been kept out of men's hearts through the binding power of sin and Satan, and now He is shut out of many pulpits; the doctrine of His Person and Godhead is derided and that of His righteousness and Spirit belied. A man is not counted to have any sense or ingenuity if he has not some objections against the covenant of grace, that glorious and wonderful method which God has found out for the salvation of sinners. These things, therefore, do you teach and exhort. Whenever Christ's righteousness and grace are neglected in your preaching, you may bid farewell to your usefulness and the power of vital godliness in your own and others' souls.

Guard against lukewarmness, that bane of true godliness; and never aim to be caressed for "moderate principles": if God be God, serve Him; if Baal, serve him; but never halt between two opinions. You may show the good temper of a Christian while you fight the good fight of faith, and keep the good profession which you have made this day before many witnesses. And give me leave here, for once, to use the power Christ has given me: I am but showing my heart's zeal for His Person and cause: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus ... that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." You are self-condemned if you leave these great truths, which you have summed up so well together, and professed with such plainness and holy boldness before us all. I must be a witness against you another day, and so must this great congregation.

I might add here, there are some sins to be reproved, and some duties to be particularly insisted on, according to the circumstances of the place where you are called to reside, and the particular temper and behaviour of your several hearers. But these things I must leave to your own prudence, putting you in mind only that you act the Christian and the man, without fearing servilely the face, or being awed by the humours of any.

5. To divide the Word aright is to do it in a *suitable, intelligible* way. Beware how you shoot over people's heads; aim rather to come close to their hearts. Study plainness of language, and follow, but do not mimic nature. Every man has his particular gift of God in speaking as well as thinking, and this is always most serviceable to the use of edifying. I have observed at some times an itch after the sublime in a plain and ordinary genius, and have heard my superiors in age, judgment and experience, condemned as trifling and pedantic, a sure sign of an haughty spirit and a frothy mind. The plainest language is most powerful



and affecting, and the words which the Spirit Himself teaches I have ever found most owned by Him. It is a good observation of one of the writers of the Church of England, in a visitation sermon: "God's Word, when it is most naked in itself, is then most mighty in its operations, most keen and cutting; our art does but take away its edge: and it is said of Christ that He preached not as Himself was able to speak, but as the people were able to hear."

Use Scripture not only to confirm what you assert, but fetch the heart of all your discourses from Scripture. Take heed of the fashionable phrases of the day; they are generally a cover to some latent error. Avoid too many logical distinctions and metaphysical quibbles in contending for or explaining the faith. It is in God's light that we see light. Our own reasonings and closest arguments will not confirm the weak or establish the wavering, without the plain, positive declarations of the Spirit. Do not look upon your hearers as if all of them were sceptics. Many things in the Christian faith are beyond dispute, and to dispute everything is the ready way (at last) to believe nothing. It is not nice reasoning that relieves a soul under bondage and darkness, but downright faith, and the doubting Christian knows more of its nature and use by *one* act, than by all the hearing and reading he has attained to.

I must here remind you of that zeal you are to show for Christ when you stand in His name to publish His gospel. Dull and lifeless preaching makes drowsy hearers. Show you have a concern for the cause of Christ, not by words only, but by the fervour and earnestness of your spirit.

If you are addressing rebel sinners or drooping saints, labour to make them not only hear but feel what you preach. If your heart be warmed, it cannot be hid from the observation of others; and even here, there may be danger of excess, lest we should take a great flow of natural affections for the spiritual work of the Holy Ghost. When you defend the truth, do it with clearness, consistency, zeal and love. Avoid all personal reflections while you show faithfully the consequences that attend erroneous principles; but yet do not charge these consequences upon the person that maintains the principle, if he himself disallows them. Take heed of too great a loose to your own spirit in vindicating the truth of God. The wrath of man will never work the righteousness of God. We may lawfully exercise charity to erring persons while we show a just resentment against the errors they maintain. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. 2. 24, 25).

In order to know the wants of your flock, acquaint yourself with the general state of it. The work of the pulpit is the least branch of the

pastor's office. It is a great account that is given of a Welsh minister by one that knew his life and manner of conversation: "Because of the number of his hearers, he was often necessitated to preach in the churchyard; and yet there was not one person in that great congregation whose spiritual state he did not fully know,\* neither was there any sermon he preached wherein he taught them not one lesson more than they knew before."

He that would convert sinners, or edify saints, must study souls, as well as books. If you would see the fruit of your preaching, always propose some end in your preaching. "Without this," says an ancient author, "we are like a smith that makes a curious key, but never consults the wards of the lock; whereas a rude and ill-shaped key that is fitted to the lock is of much use, the other of none at all." Study the circumstances and capacities of your hearers. Labour to know their doubts and fears, temptations and complaints, how far religion thrives in the family, and how far they keep themselves unspotted from the world. It is from hence that ministers have the title of shepherds, watchmen, bishops or overseers.

Many cases and particulars occur in the course of our visits which are not fit for public notice. These may better be considered and spoken to in private, and what is delivered in the pulpit may be enforced by such private and free conversation. The tenderest consciences, and those that stand in need of consolation the most, have a sinful shyness of their minister; but by being often in their company, you will slide into their hearts, and draw forth their doubts, before they are aware of it. One that has been in the valley himself can tell the meaning of abrupt expressions and inexpressible sighs, which are too much the ridicule of our present refiners in religion. Herein follow the example of the chief Shepherd, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

A compassionate, sympathising spirit in a gospel minister is very becoming and very endearing. "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" (2 Cor. 11. 29). This will conciliate a lasting esteem of your person and give a special weight to your exhortations and advice as a minister. It is a special gift to be made useful to the comforting of afflicted consciences, and the best way to attain it (as a great writer observes) is not by reading many books for that purpose and determining the case as you find it there resolved, but rather by a thorough understanding of the whole work of the Spirit upon your own heart; by an intimate acquaintance with Satan's wiles; the general deceitfulness of the heart; the conflict between flesh and spirit; the fickleness of frames; and the quiet assurance which a direct act of faith gives to dark and distressed

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\* We cannot understand this. Some people are exceedingly reticent, and most pastors have surprises, both joyful and sad.

souls. O these direct acts of faith, there is no living well a day without them! Naked faith upon Christ and His righteousness is of more use to stay the soul under spiritual conflicts than looking back to ten thousand former evidences without them. When I can go to Christ as a sinner, I find all the relief I need, though I cannot apply as a saint. Here I see righteousness, wisdom, strength and salvation, inexhaustible grace and mercy; “a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.” Remember this, for your own and your people’s sakes. The greater stress you lay upon Christ, the greater strength will you always find from Him.

Be willing to attend to the particular cases that are brought to you, and never think them any diversion from more necessary work. You may find yourself comforted by the experience of weaker Christians. Some of the sweetest turns I have been helped to give to Scripture, I have learnt from conversation.

I cannot help advising you here to dwell much upon the writers of the last age [the Puritans]. They dwelt much with God, and there is a savour in their writings which is like ointment poured forth. Their words were plain, but their thoughts were great, their matter solid and substantial and their self-knowledge uncommon. What a zeal do they show for Christ! What an affection for the souls of men! His sacred name shines in every page, and next to their own, the salvation of others lay nearest their hearts. To them it is chiefly owing that the spirit of true godliness is still kept up in the hearts of the common people. Their names are precious, and the ransomed of the Lord will ever esteem their works so.

But let not those keep you from serious converse with your people. Bear with the weakness of those that come to you for instruction. To show moroseness or unconcern towards them is to “turn that which is lame out of the way”; to forget the command, the character, the example of your great Lord. When our hearts are warm with a sense of God’s love to us, we shall endeavour to pluck others out of the burnings, and show a zeal for Christ, worthy of them who feel the influences of His power and grace within them.

Show a readiness to visit the sick, and give them a portion at home who are disabled from coming to the house of God. Sick chambers and deathbeds have been a great means of enlarging my experience and of quickening my frames. Never make these visits chargeable, as if you expected anything by way of return. It is a thing so mean in a gospel minister that it falls even below contempt itself. To sell prayers is one great means to quench the Spirit.

Never contradict in your life what you hold forth in your doctrine, whether public or private. We may soon pull down in our lives what we labour to build up with our mouths. The sins of the priest cause the

offering of the Lord to be abhorred by the people. Would you give no man occasion to despise your youth, then “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” Be humble and serious, not puffed up with your gifts, proficiency or success. Spiritual pride is the surest bar and hindrance to all spiritual supplies. Cheerful you may be, but not frothy; this will eat up your spirit, and in time take away the relish of divine things.

Set a watch before your mouth. Remember, all eyes are upon you, and oftentimes mouths are against you. Be prudent and faithful. Betray no trust committed to your keeping, and keep yourself clear of personal piques and family broils. Heal if you can, but never widen breaches. Be very cautious in your choice of friends, and never be desirous of hearing secrets. Study men, as well as things, that you may know how to meet them in a public discourse, who will give you no liberty to do it in a private way. Only remember, that personal reflections always spoil even necessary reproofs. Despise the practice of those who defame their brethren to exalt themselves. Honour follows them only who flee from it. He that brings you a little story against the rest of your brethren, will be first in raising one against yourself. They that stand highest are usually first lashed by the scourge of tongues. Leave your character where you have trusted your soul; your great Master will take care of both.

Be diligent and industrious in your studies. It was admirable advice which was given by Mr. Nesbitt (in a funeral sermon preached for Mrs. Gouge): “He that does not prepare what to say to the people, tempts God to come out of His ordinary way to his assistance; he that depends upon his own preparations makes a God of his gifts.”

Show a becoming love to those who differ from you, and treat them with affability. Brotherly love is very consistent with diversity of opinion. Rejoice in the usefulness of any to spread real religion, and encourage their good design by your conversation, advice and prayers. Avoid party matters, and what you see wanting in others, make up by moderation and forbearance in yourself.

As you have freely received, freely give. You have tried God often; be not afraid to trust Him. A man must have but a cold heart to ask the liberality of his people for Christ’s poor, who has not at the same time an open hand to relieve them himself. Sit, as far as may be, loose from the world while you are passing through it: remember that the fashion thereof (all its beauteous outside appearance) passeth away.

Begin and conclude every duty with prayer. Those sermons which are studied upon our knees are most reviving to our own and others’ hearts. Prayer for ourselves is the way to make us useful to others, or rather, as Dr. Owen observes, “Study is to make us useful to others;

prayer brings the Word home to our own souls and makes it profitable to ourselves. To preach the Word, therefore, and not to follow it with prayer, constantly and frequently, is to disbelieve its use, neglect its end and cast away all the seed of the gospel at random." Prayer for the church will increase your love to the church. It will give you a great concern to search out their wants, temptations and particular needed supplies. And the return of all will be peace and prosperity, growth and affection, in your own soul.

Abide in the things you have heard; and when Christ, "the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Amen.

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### CHRIST'S LOVE TO THE WORST OF SINNERS

*From Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) on John 20. 16, 17, especially:  
"Go to My brethren."*

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Christ chose Mary to go tell His brethren, and under the sweet title of "brethren" to deliver this sweet message: "I am going to My Father, and your Father; to My God, and your God." He telleth them the sweetest words in the worst times.

Christ's love is constant, and always the same. But now Christ most showeth His love when we are most cast down: in the worst times, if our casting down be with repentance. He never said "brethren" before, but reserved the term of "brethren" for the worst time of all. The sweetest discoveries of Christ are in the worst times of all to His children. Mothers will bring out anything to their children that is sweet and comfortable to them in their sickness. Though they frowned on them before, yet the exigency of the child requires it. When there is need, anything cometh out that may please the child. The poor disciples were not only in affliction, being the scorn of the world, the Shepherd being smitten and the sheep scattered, but their inward grief was greater. They were inwardly confounded and ashamed to see Christ come to such an end. They were full of unbelief. Though Christ had told them He would rise again, they could not believe, and so what with fear, and what with doubt, and what with grief for their using of Christ so unkindly and leaving Him, certainly they were in a perplexed and disconsolate condition. Yet now, "Go and tell My brethren." We see then that after relapses, when we be in state of grace, to deal unkindly with Christ must needs be matter of grief and shame; yet if we be humbled for it and cast down, even then Christ hath a sweet message for us by His Holy Spirit: "Go, tell My brethren."

In the Canticles, the church, the spouse of Christ, had dealt unkindly with Christ by losing Him and forsaking Him. In the third chapter, she had lost Him, and sought Him on her bed, but found Him not. She rose, and went to the watchmen, and then went through the city, but found Him not. At length she found Him whom her soul loved. Then Christ speaks most sweetly and comfortably to her in the beginning of the fourth chapter, but especially in the sixth chapter, after she had dealt most unkindly with Christ. He standeth at the door knocking and waiting, till His locks dropped with rain, in resemblance of a lover that standeth at the door and is not suffered to come in.

Afterwards He leaveth her for this unkindness, yet not so but that there was some sweet relish left upon the door. God always leaveth something in His children to long after Him; and at length, after much longing, Christ manifesteth Himself sweetly to her (chapter 6. 4, 5), and breaketh out, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Turn away thine eyes from Me, for they have overcome Me: thy hair is as a flock of goats," etc., and so goeth on, "My love, My dove, My undefiled one." He could not satisfy Himself in the commendations of His church being, as it were, overcome with love.

And this showeth that after we have dealt unkindly with Christ, and our consciences are ashamed and abashed with it, as it is fit they should, yet if we will wait a while, and be content, nor be desperate, nor yield to temptation, if we stay but a while, Christ will manifest Himself to us and show that He valueth and prizeth the hidden graces we cannot see. He can see gold in ore. He can see hidden love, and hidden faith and grace, that we cannot see in temptations; and He will manifest all at length, and show His love when we stand most in need of it.

We see it in David, who was deeply humbled for his folly with Bathsheba, for there was not one, but many sins, as murder and adultery, etc. Yet being now humbled, God sent him and Bathsheba wise Solomon to succeed him in his kingdom. He forgetteth all, and so you see our Saviour Christ forgetteth all their unkindness. He biddeth her not, "Go, tell My renegade disciples, that owned not Me; they care not for Me; I care not for them; I am above death and all, and now will use them as they did Me." O no. But, "Go, tell My brethren," without mentioning anything that they have done unkindly.

What is the reason? It is sufficient to a gracious soul that it is thus; it is the course of God. But there be reasons to give satisfaction.

Reason 1. *The love of Christ to a poor, disconsolate, afflicted soul is most seasonable.* When they have relapsed and dealt unkindly with Christ, then Christ not only forgiveth, but forgets all; nay, and calleth them under the term of "brethren," which is more than forgiving or

forgetting. O now it is seasonable! For there is a wonderful dejection of spirit after unkind usage of Christ in a soul that knows what Christ means. It is as a shower of rain after great drought. It falleth weighty upon the soul.

Reason 2. *The freedom of Christ's love most appeareth then, when no desert of ours can move it.* For is not that love free, when we have dealt unkindly with Him, and joined with the world and with the flesh, and dealt slipperily with Him, that then He would speak kindly to us and make love to us? Lord, if I had had my due, what would have become of me? If He had sent them word according to their deserts, He might have said, "Go, tell the apostate, base people that have dealt unworthily with Me, whom I will send to hell." O no. But, "Tell My brethren." His free love appeareth most at such times, when our souls are most dejected.

Reason 3. *Satan roareth then most, then he most of all showeth his horns, when we are relapsed.* O, saith he, if thou hadst never found kindness, it had been something; but thou hast dealt unworthily that hast had so many favours, and dost thou so requite the Lord of glory? Now this love of Christ doth exceedingly confound Satan and trouble his plots. He knoweth then that God leaveth men, and he joineth with a guilty conscience, and a guilty conscience maketh them to fear all they have deserved. Shall I look God in the face and Christ in the face when I have used them thus? Shall I receive the sacrament and join with God's people? Now Satan doth join with guilt of conscience, and carrieth it further; and when God seeth them dejected and humbled for this, He speaketh more comfort to them than ever before.

There is none of us all, I can except none, but had need of this. Have we dealt so unkindly with Christ since our conversion? Have not we dealt proudly, and unkindly, and carelessly with Him? And if we have the love of Christ in our breasts, it will shame and abash us. Now if we have joined with a temptation, Satan will say, Will you go to God, and to prayer, that have served God thus? Shall I yield to this temptation? If we can shame ourselves and say, Lord, I take all shame to myself, I have dealt most unworthily with Thee, we shall hear a voice of comfort presently. And therefore whatsoever our conditions be, be invited to repentance, though thou hast fallen and fallen again. "I have dealt unkindly." Did not Peter so? And yet, "Go, tell My disciples, *and tell Peter.*" The Pope will have him head of the church. I am sure he was head in forsaking of Christ, and indeed Christ never upbraided Peter with forsaking of Him. Now only He biddeth him feed, feed, feed, that he might take more notice of it; but He was so kind that He never cast it into his teeth (John 21. 15-17).

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## SYMPATHY IN AFFLICTION

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My dear Friend,

Your letter touched me deeply. I do feel for you and your husband in the sad and most bitter trial which has befallen you, and in my petitions I beg that a way may be made for your escape. No new thing has happened to you (1 Pet. 4. 12). But this is *your* trial. We may comfort others in their sorrows, but when we are touched ourselves we find how we are. Yet the Scriptures are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of them may have hope (Rom. 15. 4). May the Lord open them to your understanding in those parts which meet your troubled case, and speak them to you. He supports where He will not deliver (1 Cor. 10. 13). It is wonderful to escape despair when we cannot run from troubles which are of a kind to plunge us into it. What a mercy it is that the throne of grace is not blocked up and shut against you! With one hand God broke up Job; with the other He held him in life, and *when* he was “vile” turned his captivity (Job 40. 4; 42.10).

May you and your husband and his dear, aged, godly mother have a gracious silence wrought in your spirits. To view “second causes” alone will only produce more and more sorrow which will only work death. The prophet’s place was good and safe (Hab. 2. 1, 2). Micah got the best of it (Mic. 7. 9). The good man was not far out who wrote:

“To Thee every blessing we owe,  
Above what the fiends have in hell.”

You may be ready to say to me: “If you were in our case, you would know.” Yes, and I should feel all you do, and much more that is bad most likely. But how good I have found a *wrought silence* (Hab. 2. 20). How Proverbs 16. 20 has in some of my things spoken to me, bidding me call upon the Lord, my sins confess. Who knows if He will return and leave a blessing behind Him, open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys, make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water? The Lord has begun to show you His greatness, and who knows but this most grievous and bitter temporal destruction may bring both temporal and spiritual good? He is a God which doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number (Job 5. 9). *All resurrections come, can only come – out of death.* The death of the daughter brought this word from the Fountain of Life: “Be not afraid; only believe.” I pray your death may bring you some good, though seemingly trying word.

Now if you look to the earth you can see only “trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish”; but the light shone *just then* (Isa. 8. 22; 9. 1, 2). Then, if not in that precise place, yet in the trial of it you would sanctify



the Lord of Hosts. But I should not be surprised if you do so in the place of deliverance. You know it is no uncommon thing for living cries, promises, hopes, appearances, beginnings, divine approaches, all to have sad, dark and terrible deaths befall them. But O when the life of all good things comes again, all deaths must give way! Nothing can hinder Christ's holy, mighty approach (John 11. 14, 15). No corruption, no stone, no unbelief, no time can affect life's power over death. May this be your experience in soul and in circumstances at this sad juncture.

May the Lord appear for you, help, sustain and teach you, give you to hear this rod and who hath appointed it. While He is silent to the multitude, may He graciously, privately turn to you and say as to His disciples, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."

Thank you for writing to me. Many petitions in early days went from my heart that the Lord would make me a true, sympathising friend to His poor, afflicted people – the only way I could hope to help them.

With love and sympathy to you all,

Yours very truly,

J.K. Popham

April 23rd, 1892

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### ETERNAL INHERITANCE

*By John Shower (1657-1715)*

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After millions of years and ages, the felicity of the saints shall be as far from ending as when their souls were first received into paradise. The infinite love of God, the everlasting merit of Christ and the unchangeableness of the covenant of grace assures us they shall be happy for ever. They shall eat of the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God, and be pillars in the divine temple, and go out no more.

To live forever in the light and love and joy of heaven, O what a thought is that! How may it swallow up all our other thoughts! If one day's communion with God on earth is better than a thousand elsewhere, what shall we think of immediate, everlasting communion with God in heaven? We shall see Him as He is, and love Him more than we can now think, and that not for a day or a week, but for thousands of millions of years, yes for a long, blessed eternity that will never be over. For it is an immortal inheritance; it is an everlasting kingdom. We shall reign with God and with the Lamb forever. We shall see Him, love Him, praise Him, and enjoy Him for evermore. What we shall see and know will never lessen in our eye and esteem; what we shall love will never cease to be lovely. What we shall praise will always deserve our praise, and what we shall enjoy, we shall never be weary of enjoying.

## THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

*By Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843)*

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“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Heb. 5. 1-4).

Last Sabbath morning we entered upon the priestly office of Christ. I showed you:

1. *That when there was no sin in the world there was no high priest needed between man and God.* Adam was his own priest and, together with his beloved Eve, could enter freely into the presence of Jehovah and offer his praise and adoration. No sin had been committed and therefore no blood needed to be shed for sin. There was no veil between God and man, and therefore no high priest needed to go within the veil with blood. Man was, as it were, the sinless priest of a sinless world, the mouth-piece of the universe giving God all the glory of His works.

2. *That when sin entered into the world, then a great gulf was fixed between guilty men and the holy God.* That text was fulfilled, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.” No sinner could approach God for “our God is a consuming fire” to sin. And no sinner could give a ransom for his brother, because all we had was forfeited and under the curse. Every offering was polluted.

3. *Here came the need of a great High Priest:* One that should be a Daysman to lay His hand on God and the sinner; One that would stand in our place and make His soul an offering for sin; One who would reconcile us to God and bring us a present to the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and trodden down (see Isa. 18. 7). This High Priest was Jesus the Son of God. He was the only Being in the universe who had love enough in His bosom and worthiness enough in His Person to be the High Priest of poor, guilty sinners.

But here another question arises. Since this great High Priest was not to come into the world till “the fulness of the time,” how could men be instructed in the way of approaching to God? How shall the church before His coming be enlightened in this amazing way of pardon and peace with God?

Now for this purpose it pleased God to set up the Aaronic priesthood (the priesthood of Aaron and his children). God did thus set up a vast, clear and glorious representation of the priesthood of Christ,

so that the believers who lived at that time could see clearly through the broidered garments and breastplate and golden crown of Aaron the features of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest who was to come. The law was thus the schoolmaster to bring them to Christ.

In Hebrews 5. 1-4, he goes over the principal features of the priesthood of Aaron, which is now abolished, and then in verses 5-10, shows the glorious features of the Lord Jesus shining through the veil. At present, I shall only go over the features of the Jewish priesthood. And while I enter now on this deep and difficult but most blessed subject, do you lift up your heart to God for me that my sin in speaking unworthily may be pardoned and that I may have my lips touched with a live coal from off the altar.

### 1. *The Origin of the High Priest*

“Every high priest [is] taken from among men.” “Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother ... from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me in the priest’s office” (Exod. 28. 1). God did not choose a holy angel and send him down to wear the shining garments and the precious breastplate. He did not choose a stranger from some other country, but He took one from among the children of Israel: one who was bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh; one who had Jewish blood flowing in his veins. Such a one did God choose to wear the holy garments for glory and for beauty, to wear the curious girdle of the ephod and the shining breastplate and to have “Holiness to the Lord” graven on his forehead. There were two reasons for this:

i. *The children of Israel could come to him without fear.* Had he been an angel, they might have shrunk back from him and been afraid; but now he is bone of their bone. They saw the features of a brother in his face. The blood of a Jew mantled his cheek. The friendship of a brother sparkled in his eye.

ii. *He could understand their feelings.* He had a fellow-feeling for everything human, being himself a man. When he laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confessed “over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and [sending] him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness” (Lev. 16. 21), he did it in a way that an angel could not, for he himself felt the burden of sin. When he went within the veil with the names of the children of Israel upon his breast to offer sweet incense before the Lord, he could bear his brethren upon his heart quite in a different manner than if he had been an angel. He knew their sorrows, their pains, their trials.

Such, dear friends, is our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. Every high priest is taken from among men and so was Christ. “Such an High Priest became us.” “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers

of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2. 14).

It is true He was the Son of God. There is not a drop of love, wisdom or grace in the heart of the Father that is not also in the heart of the Son. Still He was God manifest in the flesh. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” The blood of David flowed in His veins. He is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He is of our own kindred. A rod out of the stem of Jesse, yet without sin.

He that is the Ancient of Days became a Child of a span long. He that is the infinite, eternal and unchangeable One became a praying, weeping Man of sorrows, “a worm and no man” – all this that He might die in the nature that had sinned and that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.

Brethren, have you made use of this High Priest taken from men? Ah surely such an amazing condescension must have been on account of our great necessity! How shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Ah, what fearful wrath must fall on that man who tramples under foot the Son of God! “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.” All of you will see Him soon, including those that pierce Him now....

“See the Judge our nature wearing,  
Clothed in majesty divine!  
You who long for His appearing  
Then shall say, ‘This God is mine!’  
Gracious Saviour,  
Own me in that day for Thine.”

## 2. *The Employment of the High Priest*

He is “ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that He may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.” This is the peculiar work of a high priest: to stand in the place of men and transact for them with a holy God. His part was to stand in the chasm made by sin and to make atonement by sacrifice, and then to offer their gifts. Take the example of Aaron on the great Day of Atonement, as described in Leviticus 16. He stood between the people and the holy, sin-avenging God. He alone stood by the altar and slew the goat and carried the blood within the veil. The children of Israel all stood beholding and gazed after him till he was hid from their sight by the veil of the tabernacle. “And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place” (verse 17).

And so when he came out again and laid “both his hands upon the head of the live goat,” he stood alone. In the whole work of atonement he was alone. He was ordained for men in everything pertaining to God. The same was true in offering the gifts of the people. Whatever gifts the

people brought, they were always offered up through the hands of the high priest. In the holy place there was a small, golden altar on which the high priest offered incense for the people. He alone went in and burned incense with the names of Israel upon his breast. It was against this that Korah and his company rebelled, and were swallowed up alive (Num. 16). And their censers were kept as a memorial “that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord” (Num. 16. 40). So also is Christ. He was ordained for men in everything pertaining to God.

i. *He alone hath made atonement for us.* He was ordained for this very thing, to stand in the breach, that He might reconcile us to God. He stood alone in that awful chasm between God and sinners. He Himself was the great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. His holy body and soul were the Lamb without spot and blameless. His divine nature was the altar. The sword of divine justice was the sacrificing knife that pierced the Lamb of God. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. He, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God. “Now once in the end of the world hath Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9. 26).

Ah, brethren this is the finished work of Christ! Christ hath done all that needed to be done with God on our behalf. He has made a complete sacrifice for sins so that the guiltiest and vilest of sinners may draw man to God by that one sacrifice. O what a vain struggle are some of you making to attain to salvation by some other way: some trying to come to God without thinking of the High Priest, some trying to add to His finished sacrifice.

All has been done by which any of you can ever come to the Father. What then is needed? That you be made willing to take this High Priest as yours, that you be made willing to be saved in His way not in your own.

ii. *He alone must offer your gifts.* “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually” (Heb. 13. 15). He has the censer. Many are like Korah. They rebel against the priesthood of Christ, and therefore they go down to the pit.

### 3. *The Tender Character of the High Priest*

“Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity” (Heb. 5. 2).

#### i. *Aaron was himself compassed with infirmities.*

He not only had infirmities but he was compassed with them on every hand. Wherever he went, whatever he engaged in, however solemn, whether he went to the altar of burnt offerings or burned incense

at the golden altar or entered the holiest of all, he was compassed with infirmities as with a garment.

a. *Natural infirmities.*

He knew what it was to be hungry and thirsty in the wilderness. He often sank down under the heat of the scorching sun. He suffered pain in his body and anguish in his mind. He lost both his sons in one day. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and they died before the Lord. He knew a father's bleeding heart. But "Aaron held his peace" (Lev. 10. 3).

b. *Moral infirmities.*

Aaron knew what it was to have a body of sin and death. Beneath his glorious ephod and breastplate, he felt the beating of a deceitful and desperately wicked heart. He was compassed with infirmities. This showed itself in his making the golden calf at the bidding of Israel (Exod. 32); and again in his speaking against Moses, along with Miriam, when Miriam became a leper as white as snow (Num. 12); and again when he spake unadvisedly, along with Moses, at the waters of Meribah, for which sin he died upon Mount Hor (Num. 20). So that it was too true that Aaron was compassed with infirmities.

Two consequences flowed from this:

ii. *That he had to offer sacrifice for himself:* first, for his own sins, and then for the people. This was remarkably shown in the consecration of Aaron to his office (Exod. 29). When Moses was commanded to take the blood of the sacrifice and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the great toe of his right foot, and to sprinkle it upon him and upon his garments, this was plainly to signify that he needed to have his own sin taken away before he could be a priest for others. See also Leviticus 4. 3; 9. 2; 16. 3.

Christ had no sin of His own to offer for, so that He far excelled Aaron's priesthood in this. "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled."

iii. *He could "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way."*

The high priest was a father in Israel. His lips kept knowledge, and they sought the law at his mouth. Every Israelite could freely go to him and open his heart before him. If any were in distress of body or mind or in family affliction, they knew they would find an open and compassionate ear in their high priest, for he himself also was compassed with infirmity. If any felt the burden of their ignorance, the darkness of their mind as to the way of pardon, if any were awakened to feel themselves out of the way, they could freely go to their high priest who would open up to them the way of pardon and peace. He could "have compassion on the ignorant."

Such is Christ, dear brethren. He also was compassed with all sinless infirmities. He was tried in all points like as we are, yet without sin. So then He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.

Are any of you in pain of body or mind, or family distress? Jesus says, "I know your sorrows." When Israel were working at their bricks under the scorching sun of Egypt, they little thought that anyone knew or cared for their sorrows. But Jesus says, "I know their sorrows" (see Exod. 3. 7). So He says to you. He can have compassion.

Do any of you feel yourself "ignorant, and out of the way"? Has the Spirit made you feel the load of your sins, and yet you know not where to turn for mercy and pardon? You feel that you have wandered out of the way. Do you feel ignorant? You do not know the greatness of your guilt, the depth and depravity of your heart. You do not know the glorious way of forgiveness. You do not know where to find Jesus, where to find the way to heaven. You "grope for the wall like the blind" (Isa. 59. 10).

Do you feel that you are out of the way, that you have wandered from God, that you have gone like the prodigal into a far country; like the lost sheep you have wandered over the mountains, so that you are lost? Jesus is one that can have compassion on such. He Himself once felt the load of unforgiven sin laid upon Him. He Himself once felt the frown of an angry God.

The Lord Jesus is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. Do not be afraid to put your case in His hand. Though your sins be infinite, more in number than the sand, though your sins be very heinous, reaching up into heaven, yet the Lord Jesus will not cast you out. "This Man receiveth sinners." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." He can "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." Amen.

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Unity is the best bond of safety in every church and commonwealth. We shall be invincible if we be inseparable. And this did the Scythian king in Plutarch represent lively to his eighty sons. He, being ready to die, commanded a bundle of arrows fast bound together to be given to his sons to break; they all tried to break them, but being bound fast together, they could not; then he caused the band to be cut, and then they broke them with ease. He applied it thus: "My sons, so long as you keep together, you will be invincible; but if the band of union be broken betwixt you, you will easily be broken in pieces."

*Thomas Brooks*

## BLESSINGS FOR THE UNWORTHY

*From a sermon preached by John Kershaw at Eden Street Chapel,  
London, in 1849*

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” – who will bless us on the ground of our obedience and good doings? That will not do: we cannot walk one step *that* way. And why not? Because we are such poor, unworthy, worthless creatures; such sinful and polluted worms. We cannot come before the Lord and plead any worth, worthiness or goodness as a meritorious procuring cause of the enjoyment of these blessings. O no! There are some sayings in the Word of God that fit into the very hearts and consciences of God’s people a thousand times better than coming before the Lord for the blessing on the ground of our own obedience. Tell us, say you, if they are so good, what these sayings are. I will give you two or three that entered into my heart and soul more than forty years back.

The first is where poor Jacob came before the Lord and said, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.” Does that confession fit you? If it does, you are a worm Jacob.

Again, the psalmist David, coming before the Lord, said, “If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.” He said again, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”

Good old Jeremiah, too, has a mode of expression entering deeply into the feelings of the child of God. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.”

Now, the people who feel these things in their very hearts and souls, do they come before God with a price in their hands, as something to recommend them? No, no, my dear friends. My soul blesses my Lord and Master because He wants no price. No; He says, “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.” Come just as you are, with all your misery, weakness, wretchedness and helplessness. Let the cry of the publican be the cry of your soul: “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Now what does the Lord say in return? I will tell you what He says. It has done my soul good many times. It has reached my case when I have been very low and very miserable; it has reached my case when I have been crying and sighing to God for mercy as a poor, filthy, vile wretch. The word has dropped into my soul and under the bedewing



influence of the Holy Spirit has most blessedly fitted: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Here, you see, there is no condition, nothing to be performed by us as a ground upon which we are to have the blessing. It does not say, "I will bless sinners on the ground of worth or worthiness." If so, it would cut off all the living family as having no share in the blessings, and put the self-righteous Pharisee and hypocrite in. Bless the Lord, it is the poor and needy, the undone, the helpless, the miserable, the lost, to whom salvation is secured.

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### **JONATHAN: DAVID'S PLEASANT FRIEND**

*By G.D. Buss*

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There are just one or two people mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, of whom the Holy Spirit has seen fit not to mention any of their faults. Such characters as Joseph and Joshua spring to mind. One of the most attractive of this small band of believers in the Old Testament is Jonathan, the son of Saul, first king of Israel, the loyal friend to David. Perhaps there are two scriptures which sum up the witness of Jonathan and they are these: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17. 17), and, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (Song 8. 7). Both of these truths were wonderfully fulfilled in the life of Jonathan, especially in respect of his loving regard for David.

Jonathan means, "God has given, or gift of God." How often must David have been thankful for the gift of his friend, Jonathan, in those lonely years when Saul hunted him so persistently and cruelly!

In Jonathan, in New Testament language, we see the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ wonderfully exemplified.

Firstly, his love for the cause of God and truth, and for David in particular, was unselfish. As soon as Jonathan witnessed the amazing scene in the Valley of Elah, when God so wonderfully wrought for Israel through David's sling, but without his own or his father Saul's sword, he was ready to take second place to David. And it was not a grudging acknowledgment either, for we read in 1 Samuel 18. 1, "And it came to pass ... that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." In token of his love, he stripped himself of his own robe, garments, sword, bow and girdle, and gave them to David. How like the Lord Jesus Christ this was, of whom we read, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2. 4, 5). King Saul immediately saw David as a threat to his position,

especially when the women sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18. 7).

Jonathan and Saul eyed David from that day forward. But what a difference in their eyes! Saul eyed him with an almost insane jealousy, whereas Jonathan eyed David with unreserved affection. To Jonathan, the cause of God and of truth came first, and if it was God's will that His cause should be furthered by David taking the lead and not him, then he was willing to take the lowest place, we may say "for Jesus' sake." What a difference this makes in the cause of God and of truth when rather than seeking who should be the greatest, there is that seeking of the honour and glory of God in whatever instrument He may sovereignly choose to use!

Secondly, Jonathan's love was a practical love. Apart from the aforementioned gifts, time and time again Jonathan warned David of his father's evil intentions. More than once at the risk of his own life he defended David, and how gracious an act it was when Jonathan, at the height of David's sufferings, encouraged his persecuted friend. We read that he "went to David in the wood, and strengthened his hand in God" (1 Sam. 23. 16). He reassured him that it was the Lord's will that he would have the throne of Israel, and that all the opposition of his father would not and could not annul God's purpose in this.

Thirdly, it was a tried love. Throughout the course of this close spiritual friendship, Jonathan sought at the same time to remember the commandment, "Honour thy father." Only divine grace could have enabled him to walk this narrow way between his devotion to his dear friend David and his filial duty to his father Saul, who was also still God's anointed king of Israel. Many a child of God has been called to walk in a similar narrow way, particularly for example when there is a godly husband or wife married to an ungodly partner, or a godly child of ungodly parents. The precepts of God's Word are to be followed in each responsibility. How little room it left Jonathan to please himself! But then we read, "For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me" (Rom. 15. 3). The dear Saviour's path was much narrower even than Jonathan's where on the one hand there was His love for His Father and divine justice, and yet the other hand His love for His people. It was this narrow path which nailed Him to the cross. This was the baptism of suffering of which He speaks when He said, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12. 50). What a mercy that those many waters of Gethsemane and Calvary could not quench the love of Christ for His people! How sacred to see that the "threefold cord" of the love of a triune God to His people could never be broken. It has endured the awesome storm of Calvary, and will withstand every

other storm which might come against it. With Jonathan it was also, God first, others second and himself last. This sacred principle survived all the many waters which swirled around, and sometimes over Jonathan.

Fourthly, Jonathan's love for David was unending. The natural bond between his father Saul and he, as his son, came to an end in Mount Gilboa, where they were both slain, fighting the Philistines. However the bond that united David and Jonathan was that of sovereign grace. It had its origin in the covenant of grace ordered in all things and sure. Both were loved of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, were united as John speaks: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14).

"Not death itself, that last of foes,  
Shall break a union so divine."

No wonder David said in his lament over Jonathan's death, "I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (2 Sam. 1. 26).

It would be a great mercy if the Lord would grant many of us much of the same grace, humility and love that is displayed in Jonathan's life. Such are no troublers in Israel, and are a true and tried strength to the church of God and the cause of truth on earth.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The King James Bible – Its History and its Excellence**, edited by J.R. Broome; paperback; 142 pages; price £3.50; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Publications Centre at 12(b) Roundwood Lane, Harpenden, AL5 3BZ.

We welcome this commemorative book published to mark the 400th Anniversary of the Authorised Version of the Bible. Included is a lecture given by Mr. Stephen Hyde (a former Chairman of the Trinitarian Bible Society), and a series of articles by Mr. John Broome on the history of the English Bible. Added to this is a reprint of the excellent booklet *The Old is Better* by Mr. Alfred Levell, first published in 1990 (and still available).

One unusual feature of the book is the inclusion of *The Translators to the Readers* written by Myles Smith (Bishop of Gloucester 1612-1624) for the readers of the new version. This is no longer included in present-day editions of the AV. Although lengthy (25 pages), and not easy reading, there is much in this preface of interest to those who take a historical and scholarly interest in the unfolding of the English Bible.

We believe the book will make a valuable further contribution to the commemoration of the 400th Anniversary. It is nicely produced, and is being sold at an extremely low price.

T.H.W. Scott, Harpenden

**The Law Established by the Faith of Christ**, by William Huntington; 50 pages; stiff paperback; price £3.75, and, **Arminianism in the Oven**, by Samuel Turner; 42 pages; stiff paperback; price £2.40; both published by Gospel Mission Inc., P.O. Box 318, Choteau, Montana 59422, U.S.A., and obtainable from Ossett Christian bookshop.

*The Law Established by the Faith of Christ* is a treatise addressed to his congregation, based on Romans 3, verse 31, in which William Huntington defines the law as the ten commandments, saying that they are not the believer's rule of life, as the law can only condemn, and there is no mention of mercy in it. He says, "I conclude, that the whole will of God in Christ, as it is revealed in the Scriptures of truth, is the Christian's only and all-sufficient rule" (see page 37). This is a well-reasoned exposition of the text quoted. It is contained in volume six of Huntington's Select Works, page 609.

*Arminianism in the Oven*, by Samuel Turner, is two sermons preached by Samuel Turner on October 12th, 1808, the text being, "They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened" (Hos. 7. 4). In speaking from these words he described his subject under five headings. These were 1. Adulterers; 2. The Oven; 3. The Baker, and his heating it; 4. His kneading the dough; 5. His ceasing from raising, until it be leavened. Although the sermons were directed against the errors of the Arminians, they are equally relevant today as a warning against familiar false religions. These are two excellent scriptural expositions, and we recommend them to our readers.

J.A. Hart, Chippenham

**John Knox and the Reformation**, by D.M. Lloyd-Jones and Iain H. Murray; paperback; 132 pages; price £5.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

Most people have heard of the Scottish reformer, John Knox (1514-1572), if only that Mary, Queen of Scots, feared his prayers more than an army of soldiers. Worldly historians speak of him as very harsh and extreme.

*John Knox and the Reformers* consists of three addresses given at different times, one fifty years ago. The book is published in commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation in Scotland and the approaching 400th anniversary of Knox's birth.

This book clearly shows that Knox was *not* hard and extreme, but loving and gracious – though like granite in his defence of the truth. He had a remarkable influence, under the blessing of God, and not only in Scotland, but also in Geneva and especially in England. That is why one of the addresses is entitled, "John Knox: the Founder of Puritanism."

In an interesting way the Reformation in Scotland and the story of John Knox's life are told; but especially the emphasis of the book is: what this means for us today, and the vital need for men like Knox to stand for the truth.

We found this well-written book really profitable.

**John A. Watts.** A booklet has been produced containing the address at the funeral of Mr. John Watts at Bethel Chapel, Luton, on July 1st, and also the memorial sermon preached on the following Lord's day morning. Copies can be obtained, free of charge, from Mrs. Alison A. Kingham, 11 Sutherland Place, Luton, LU1 3SY.

## OBITUARY

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**Donald Charles Edward Wheatley**, a member of the church at Zoar Chapel, Dicker, for 30 years and deacon for 26 years, passed peacefully away on December 16th, 2010, aged 82.

He was born on September 18th, 1928. He was the first child of godly parents, Benjamin and Ivy Wheatley, who put up many prayers for him and their other children.

Our dear friend from an early age feared the great God of heaven, who can see us at all times. He was determined to join the army but the Lord hedged up his way and frustrated all his attempts to join up.

At the age of 19 he was struck down with an appendix abscess which burst before he was rushed into hospital. Being dangerously ill, the words from the hymn dropped in,

“When rolling worlds depart on fire  
And thousands sink to hell.”

They were brought powerfully to his mind and the solemn issues of eternity. The Lord wonderfully spared his life, and after five weeks in hospital he came home with thanksgiving and praise to the Lord. He was told that he would have to return to hospital for another operation after two months, which he greatly feared. After three months he had peritonitis and spent another five weeks in hospital. He said, “The dear Lord weakened my strength in the way but spared my life.” At that time he had such a desire to be right in the sight of Almighty God.

When he was stronger, the flesh wanted to have its way, and he went to the theatre on Saturdays, but he still had the dread that Almighty God could see him. One Saturday while he was waiting for the film to start, he said that a voice said to him, “Where will you be if the roof caves in? Where will you go?” He came out of the place, never to return.

He often was confessing his sin and begging for mercy. He had a real love to Mr. Jabez Field, the pastor at Blackboys Chapel where he attended, and the Lord blessed the Word preached to his soul. When Mr. Field died, he felt that the Lord led him to Zoar Chapel, Dicker. He prayed that the Lord would provide him with a dear wife, which the Lord did, and they were married on May 5th, 1956. The dear Lord has favoured them with 54 years of happy married life and blessed them with six children.

The Lord wonderfully led them about in providence and supplied their every need. They had some remarkable answers to prayer and remarkable deliverances. They lived at Plumpton for eight-and-a-half years and they travelled seventeen-and-a-half miles to the Dicker Chapel and felt this was their home. The Lord fed his soul under the ministry of his late pastor, Mr. J.W. Sperling-Tyler.

The Lord mercifully preserved his life as he had several tractor accidents; he felt the Lord was teaching and correcting him. While he was on the Plumpton Downs, he felt they were some of the most sacred times of his life.

When he had an operation the Lord spoke to him, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

His dear wife was constrained to join the church and was baptized at Zoar Chapel, Dicker on April 18th, 1965. He was very rebellious that she had

ventured without him, but the night after her baptism, the Lord so drew near to him and so blessed him that he woke his wife and said, "The dear Lord has come and looked on me. I feel I want to climb out on the roof and shout His great and holy name for all the world to hear. It was such a blessed time I could have flown away to be with the Lord."

His pastor's (Mr. Sperling-Tyler's) ministry was life and power to him. He preached him out of Plumpton to Hailsham. One sermon that he often spoke about was from Exodus 14. 13: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."

One day while on the Downs, the Lord spoke these words to him: "Ye shall serve God in this mountain." He wondered if this meant the ministry or being elected as a deacon. He said from that day his proud nature contrived to steer clear from joining the church so he would not have to be appointed, but the Lord by terrible things in righteousness made him willing and he was baptized on March 6th, 1980. The word that his pastor gave him after he had given his testimony to the church was Deuteronomy 33. 24, 25: "And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." At the pool before baptizing him, Mr. Sperling-Tyler spoke the following: "My beloved brother, it is my holy joy and delight (and I certainly am not worthy of it) to take you through the waters of baptism. Think of the dear ones in heaven who prayed for their dear children, and what is the issue. So we pray you will long be spared to this honoured church to be a pillar in it when some of us are with the Lord. I am persuaded you will. Pleading with the Lord for a word, He gave me this: 'Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith unto him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.' And remember the Lord said, 'Thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, verily, verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.'"

The dear Lord wonderfully blessed him while he was working at East Hoathly with the pardon of all his sins. He was so burdened about his sins and the Lord came, and took all of his sins away; he looked for his sins and they were all gone. He was appointed deacon, March 27th, 1984. When he was appointed deacon, he said what Gideon said: "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." This office he faithfully carried out unto the day of his death.

Our dear friend was a well-exercised man for his own soul and the souls of others. After his pastor was taken home, he was so exercised that the Lord would provide the flock with another pastor, which the Lord brought to pass. The Lord wonderfully blessed him under our present pastor's ministry, especially when he preached from, "I will make all My mountains a way." His prayers were so real; they were brief and to the point. How he wrestled for his own soul, for his family and for others, and that the Lord would prosper Zoar Chapel! He prayed earnestly for this dear church; we shall miss his prayers so much. He often praised the Lord that "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities," yet he praised the Lord for His great mercy.

He fell off a ladder a few years ago and since then he has held the things of time with a very loose hand. When lying on his back after falling, this came to him, "He causeth it to come." Of late he has often given out hymn 934:

“Jerusalem, my happy home!  
Name ever dear to me;  
When shall my labours have an end  
In joy, and peace, and thee?”

When questioned why, he said, “That’s where I long to be.”

The last hymn that he chose to give out at chapel was 607. This was four days before he passed away:

“Rejoice, ye saints, rejoice,  
In Christ, your glorious Head;  
With heart, and soul, and voice,  
His matchless honours spread;  
Exalt His love, proclaim His name,  
And sweetly sing the Lamb once slain.”

We as a church have lost a pillar, but we believe that our loss is his eternal gain. His pastor was much helped to take the funeral on December 30th, 2010, in the presence of a large congregation, and his mortal remains were laid to rest in the chapel graveyard awaiting the glorious resurrection morn.

His widow writes: “As a family we have lost a beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. His fervent prayers are greatly missed, but,

““Their faith and patience, love and zeal,  
Should make their memory dear;  
And, Lord, do Thou the prayers fulfil  
They offered for us here!”

R.D.G.F.

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**“YE ARE CHRIST’S”**

*“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”  
(Gal. 5. 24).*

O glorified Redeemer, Lord, enthroned in light above,  
Pleading before the Father’s face Thy wondrous, dying love,  
Thou once didst tread this weary earth, endured man’s scornful frown,  
Didst hang on Calvary’s bitter cross, and wear the thorny crown.

Exalted high at God’s right hand with victory on Thy brow,  
In heaven and earth all power is Thine, and all dominion now.  
Yet Thou didst stoop for man’s lost race, a servant’s form to wear,  
And grief and shame and agony, Thou didst for sinners bear.

And they who of Thy life partake and own Thy hallowed name,  
Must travel in the rugged path by which the Master came,  
Must suffer with Him if they would hereafter with Him reign,  
And bear on earth a daily cross if they the crown would gain.

They who are Thine, O risen Lord, the flesh have crucified,  
 Denied themselves and ventured all upon the Lamb that died;  
 Dead to this world, no longer then its charms enchant their soul,  
 The hidden life which they possess earth's power shall ne'er control.

Jesus, with sorrow and with shame, my weakness I would own,  
 The treachery of this evil heart, to evil sadly prone,  
 The worldliness I often feel, the coldness of my love,  
 Affections too much fixed below, too little rest above.

Is such lukewarmness ever felt, such vileness ever proved,  
 By those of Thine whom Thou hast cleansed and all their guilt removed?  
 Do they not rather oft obtain fresh victories over sin,  
 And daily find Thy mighty grace triumphant reign within?

Then can I hope that Thou wilt own a creature so defiled,  
 So foolish, wavering and weak, and so unlike a child?  
 Yet is there not a deep-drawn sigh, though smothered oft it be,  
 Which yearns for inward holiness and would from sin be free?

O great High Priest, whose pitying love our human frailty knows,  
 E'en towards the ignorant and weak Thy deep compassion flows.  
 Those who are wandering from Thy way Thou kindly dost restore,  
 And even on rebellious sons Thy heavenly gifts dost pour.

Dear Saviour, Prince, to Thee alone my hopes and wishes tend,  
 The sinner's only Refuge, Thou, his one almighty Friend.  
 All fulness of redeeming love, wisdom and righteousness,  
 And pure, unspotted holiness he doth in Thee possess.

Much of Thy sanctifying grace upon me then bestow,  
 And let the purifying stream through my whole being flow.  
 Thy living, healing, cleansing Word may I in faith receive,  
 And feel its oft-reviving power lest I Thy Spirit grieve.

Uprising in my inmost heart the warm desire regard,  
 Nailed to Thy cross be ever seen, O bleeding, suffering Lord.  
 Subdue the evils of my heart, this horrid self dethrone,  
 And though amidst Thy enemies, rule Thou and reign alone.

Ruth Hammond, March 1882

Transcribed from J.H. Gosden's shorthand where one or two words were not clear.

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True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown to take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory of this world. Godfrey, first King of Jerusalem, refused to be crowned with a crown of gold, saying that it became not a Christian there to wear a crown of gold where Christ had worn a crown of thorns.

*Thomas Brooks*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
SEPTEMBER 2011

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

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**CHRIST ALONE NEEDED**

*Sermon preached by J.K. Popham at Galeed, Brighton,  
on January 14th, 1934*

**Text:** "But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat" (Matt. 14. 16).

"About five thousand men, beside women and children." The day was waning, evening approaching, and this hungry multitude distant from their homes. "Five loaves, and two fishes." The disciples were concerned as to what was to be done. They said, "Send them away; let them go, as they ought to do, to their homes. There they have provision; why let them remain here in their hunger?" Natural reasoning, questioning very properly, as we should say, and advice which we should give, if we were in the same circumstances: Send them away, let them go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. They forgot, for the moment, that they were in the presence of a compassionate, almighty Man, Jesus Christ. So do we. Trouble comes, necessity presses, and we begin to reason: "What shall we do?" How often have I said, "What shall I do?" Some of you have perhaps trouble here, trouble there, and say, "What shall I do?" The moment your eyes and my eyes look at the boisterous wind, we begin to sink. Jesus said to these reasoning disciples of His, "They need not depart." "They need not." Why? What is there to give them? "Five loaves, and two fishes." They saw the small quantity of food, and they saw about five thousand men, and how many women and children we are not informed – probably a very large number. "They need not depart."

Dear friends, by the help of the Lord I will speak from this wonderful word, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." The condition of the people needed supplies. They would very soon have night on them, and they were hungry and away from their homes. There were villages adjacent, but still they were in the wilderness, with no place of provision to resort to. You may be in trouble, a necessity is on you, and you feel it. God knows the nature of it. You are weak, you are hungry, you need some token for good, or you need a hand stretched out to help you; and you see nothing likely at the present moment to suffice, or to help, or to satisfy; and you forget, as who would not? – you forget the ever-compassionate and almighty God in our nature. It is written that the Lord "was moved with compassion." There was a tender regard for

this hungry people, away from their homes. He did not take notice of the motive for which they followed Him, because they were filled and satisfied; but He said, "I have compassion on the multitude; I will not send them away hungry; bring Me the handful of provisions; bring it to Me." And they gave Him the five loaves and the two fishes; and lifting His eyes to His Father, "He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude."

Now we are in the presence, first of all, of Almighty God. Wherever we are in the wilderness, whatever our condition may be, whatever our needs are, we are in the presence of Jehovah Jesus. And that is the first reason I would give to you why you should not depart to another place, another person, another remedy, another sort of provision.

Is there anything too hard for Him? Did He not create the world? Does He not sustain it by the word of His power? Did He not send ravens to feed Elijah by a flowing brook? And when the flowing brook dried, what then? He sent His servant to a widow who was gathering two sticks wherewith to make a fire, to bake the last cake for herself and her son, and then they must die. What cannot God do? Devils have to obey Him. Men's hearts are in His hand: He turned the hearts of the enemies of His people to pity them. Omnipotence, almighty power!

Why depart from this great Person, O tried child of God, to an arm of flesh? O that we could believe! The Apostle Paul in the Hebrews exhorts the saints thus: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." A grievous departure that is, when a true believer has come under the power of unbelief, and so departs from the living God. You "need not." There is no bettering of your case by departing from God; there is no alleviation of your pain and trouble by departing from this living God. You get no sustaining power apart from Almighty God. Hence the importance of the word at this point, "They need not depart." There is an arm to sustain them; there is a power to keep them; there is Omnipotence to interfere for them. If there is nothing on the land, He can send to the sea to bring food for them. If your pocket is empty and you cannot pay your taxes, then He can send a fish to you with money in its mouth, for you to take and pay therewith. So is Omnipotence set before us in Holy Scripture. Therefore may this word be spoken to us who may need it particularly: "They need not depart" from Omnipotence. Stand there and sing, if you can,

"He who has helped me hitherto,  
Will help me all the journey through;  
And give me daily cause to raise  
New Ebenezers to His praise."

But you may say, "I have got into a strait now, and do not know which way to turn." Nor need you know; no need that you should know. The psalmist prayed, "Shew me the way wherein I should walk." And He may say to you, "The way for you to walk is as a blind person. I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known." Omnipotence does the work in the soul; nothing else can, nothing else. O for faith to abide in that place the Holy Ghost sets before us in the Hebrews: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Jesus said, "Abide in Me. Almighty power I possess. All power in heaven and in earth is Mine. Men are Mine; devils are Mine by creation; providence is Mine; men's hearts are Mine. I turn the hearts of kings as rivers of water whithersoever I will" – that is "in whatever direction I think best." Therefore in this one point "they need not depart."

Secondly, "They need not depart" from infinite fulness.

"A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,  
And ever abides to answer our need."

And yet so foolish are we and so wicked, that we leave the living Fountain and hew out to ourselves "cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." I suppose there are fools of that nature here. I know one; I have often done it, woe unto me! But there is a fulness from which may we never depart. It is, first, a fulness of life. Do you feel the life in your soul getting lower and lower, becoming more and more feeble, that you have hardly power to send a sigh to heaven? Sometimes you have as little disposition as you have power to send a sigh to God; and where shall you go to have that failing life – failing as you feel – replenished? It is not a creature's life; it is the life of God in the soul; therefore only God can replenish it. He does it by pouring out His Spirit as showers, so that the saints on whom those showers fall grow "as willows by the watercourses."

You need not depart for fresh life from the Fountain of life, to animate your soul, to strengthen your faith, to confirm you in your confidence in God. God alone is able to satisfy the soul by giving new life.

"He to the needy and the faint  
His mighty aid makes known;  
And when their languid life is spent,  
Supplies it with His own."

Therefore no languishing soul need depart from the Lord Jesus. "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." We perish in our feelings; we perish in our faith; we perish in our comforts; we perish

in the walk of faith; proving the scripture to be true, “No man can keep alive his own soul.”

And departing makes a case worse, not better. You grow worse when through unbelief you see trouble and not the Lord; as Peter grew weak and began to sink when he saw the boisterous working of the wind. So poor, languishing soul, pray that you may not depart from this glorious living Head, Jesus Christ. Go not to an arm of flesh; go not into yourself; go not to this or to that source; it will prove emptiness and vanity; but, as enabled, abide here. Though it be a wilderness, though you be faint with hunger and thirst, though you have no home, as it were, just away from all comforts, away from all supplies, and all sources of supply, you “need not depart.” What! not go where there appears to be a remedy? not lean on what promises to be a support? No. The apostle abode here when he said, “I count all things but loss” – all riches, every kind of comfort – “I count all but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

O how wise, how gracious of Christ to compassionate these people! And if I may so express the matter, to use this occasion to glorify His omnipotence, to make it known to the wondering eyes of His disciples that there was in Him a creating power still; that it mattered not to Him that there were but five loaves. The world was His. And as out of nothing He made the world, so out of these five loaves He created enough to feed many thousands of hungry people. Is there anything that this fulness cannot supply? any empty place, any need, any circumstances that He is not able to fill? I am afraid of my own poverty, but I know it is a wrong thing to be looking only at one’s poverty. I am afraid of my emptiness, but I know it is a wrong thing to be gazing on my emptiness. O the fulness of Jesus! Fulness of life, fulness of wisdom is His; therefore we “need not depart.”

There is a *fulness of compassion*, tender mercy, in Him. Can He allow a seeker of Himself to die of hunger? Can He permit one who says, “Lord, save, or I perish!” to perish? Peter began to sink, but the Lord stretched out His hand and held him up. He was full of compassion to Peter at that moment. He is full of compassion. Then you may argue, “I am full of sin, and my sin has brought this chastening, this trouble on me, and therefore I cannot expect that He will have compassion on me. I have treated Him so basely, how can I think He will look on me?” When we measure Christ and His compassion by our sins, we are sure to make a mistake, and dishonour Him. But when He kindly says, “I will heal their backslidings”; “Is Ephraim My dear son? This Ephraim, is he My dear son? is he a pleasant child? Did I ever take pleasure in him? Was he ever beautiful in My eyes? Did he ever please Me? O yes!” As if He should say, “I remember him; I remember when ‘he went after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown’; when he did not look at anything

but Myself. I remember when his heart was full of love to Me, and I delighted in him.”

Christ does remember things; He remembers the kindness shown to Him when the love of youth moves a sinner to go after Him. And now that same sinner is in necessity of the compassions of Jesus, the moving compassions of Jesus melting toward him, running toward him; and this poor, self-condemned sinner need not leave Him, need not run away to some other source of help and comfort. Christ is full of compassion, and as a High Priest, the High Priest of our profession, He is able to have compassion on us, ignorant though we be; able to have compassion, and teach and help us.

He is *full of wisdom*, and when your wisdom has gone, has failed you, then He says, “Come unto Me.” “I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.” Many “witty inventions” have the Lord’s people seen in their adversities. Empty places are an opportunity for Christ to pour out of His fulness. Yes, He is full of wisdom. “The Lord,” says the Holy Ghost by Peter, “knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.” They do not know how to get out of temptation; they feel they cannot overcome it. It surrounds them; it pursues them; it perplexes them; it brings them to realise that they have no wisdom; then He finds out “knowledge of witty inventions.” When you get to the last – it is the beginning of Christ’s dealing. We fear things, and we fear where no fear is. We “need not depart” from the Fountain of wisdom. Christ is the Wisdom of God. O He knows how to deliver!

They “need not depart” away from Him who declares Himself to be *the Bread of life*. “I am the Bread of life.” Do not go to yourself, to your reading of the Scriptures, to your interest in the Scriptures, to your acquired knowledge of the Scriptures, for that Bread. Do not go to what you imagine this or that scripture to mean. It is not wrong to consider this scripture and that, but if you go for nourishment to what you think this or that may mean, then you are going away from the blessed God of all grace, who says, “I am the Bread of life.” You cannot live on what you have picked up; you cannot live on your own notions of truth. “O but may I not think this?” Yes, you may; but if you try to live on it, if you try to get nourishment for your immortal soul out of it, then you are wrong. Only the impartation of the Bread of life will satisfy a living soul.

“They need not depart.” These thousands of people were in the presence of Jehovah Jesus, who is the Bread of life, and literally provided bread for them; so spiritually He provides Bread for His hungry people.

“They need not depart,” because here, in our very midst, is that glorious One who has *living water to give*. “The water that I shall give

him, shall be in him a well of water," and, "he shall never thirst." Hence, the scripture, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

"They need not depart" from Christ for *the forgiveness of sins*. Forgiveness of sins is His peculiar prerogative: "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins," and every child of God has to find that, and lives on it. He lives on that blessed One whose precious death is the life of his soul, the peace of his conscience, and the stability of his faith. Everything depends on Him here. Guilty sinner, what are you, what are we, to do? Your cry is,

"Save me, O God, my spirit cries,  
And on Thy faithful Word relies."

And this word is such food to the soul at times that it looks to, lives on it: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Where must the soul go that is guilty? Nowhere is there any remedy, but that which is in Himself; no cleansing but by that blood that removes every stain, every sin.

"They need not depart." Waiting here is not in vain. "The day is declining, evening is coming, death is advancing, and hell," says the soul, "is before me." Do not run away from this spot. "They need not depart." Says the dear Saviour to sinners, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"They need not depart" from the precious *fulness of infinite love*. Love takes different ways to manifest itself, very different. It draws: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." One of the ways of love is this, to allure into the wilderness. Those people of Israel went into the wilderness after Him, who in some way attracted them. Love draws its objects into the wilderness. And God says to those who ran after Him into the wilderness, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown," and where you could not obtain supplies. That is one way that love shows itself.

Another way is *chastening*. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten – I rebuke every son whom I receive." In the face of trouble, under the burden of affliction, you may cleave to the Lord and say, "I have brought this on myself"; and He says, "I have sent it in love." So do not leave a chastening God. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

"They need not depart" from *heaven*. Christ is heaven. His presence, when manifested in a particular way to a living soul, is heaven in that soul. Earth is dead; self is death; He is life. Earth and self have hell in them; He in the soul is heaven. You cannot express it. I am

always at a loss here. I know, "Living tongues are dumb at best." But to those of you who have been with Him, with whom He has walked, to whom He has spoken kindly, whom He has drawn to His bleeding side, His divine, wondrous cross, His presence has been heaven in the foretaste of it. So, as He here says, "They need not depart." There is no heaven out of Him, apart from Him.

He said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." O but the way is rough! You will not say it is too rough when you have got a little farther on. A godly old woman I knew in Leicester said to me, when she was near heaven, that she could bless God for every twig of the rod He had laid on her. That was a good experience. The widow of Thomas Hardy told me that when her husband's corpse was lying in the room, she knelt down by the side of the bed and was committing herself to the Lord, when He said, "You have cared for My servant; I will take care of you." She was poor, had no home, and in a few days God provided a home for her for the rest of her life. You "need not depart" from Him; there is a heaven in Him, O a blessed heaven! And God brings His people to this, that they get again and again such foretastes of it as that they praise and bless Him for what He has done.

Now I will say this to you in the form of a question. Do you know what His presence is, what it is to feel a sacredness, an awe, a fear on your spirit, a fear of God; not slavish fear tormenting you, but a sacred, holy fear, that you are thankful to feel? Do you know what it is for some sacred word to be on your spirit, making His name "as ointment poured forth" into your heart? what it is to feel that you can, and at that time that you do, commit yourself to His keeping, His management, to draw out of His fulness the supplies that you will always be needing? Now if you know that, you know what it is to have the presence of the Lord with you. He is with you when you do not feel it. He is always near, though we may see Him not; but the realisation is what I at this moment am meaning.

Then if you have felt that, you "need not depart." For all that you will need in the future He has supplies; every need He can and will supply. All the props that you need He has in His own power. Therefore look at this gracious word: "They *need* not depart." No necessity to go anywhere else. Yea, there is hunger to pinch, there is thirst to consume, when souls through unbelief depart from Him. Take your case to Him; put your hunger before Him; put your trouble, whatever it may be, into His management; commit it to His care and His dealing, and all things will come right.

Yea, and you will say one day, "He hath done all things well." I shall be glad if on my dying bed I can say that. I have said it before that day; I have said it more than once in spirit: "He hath done all things well." What! when He has stripped you? what when He has thoroughly

emptied you, made you realise your destitution, ignorance, weakness, felt sin and guilt? Yes, even then. When He has laid the rod on you? Yes, even then: "He hath done all things well." The testimony borne of Him by enemies is this: "Never man spake like this Man." And we may say, Never man dealt with us as this God-Man has dealt with us. Never has such love flowed into our hearts from any source but this one Source. Therefore faith says, "Lord, leave me not to depart from Thee." Yea, faith says, "Abide with me and let me abide with Thee." And He says, "Abide in Me. If you abide in Me, you will bring forth fruit; if you abide in Me, you will understand My lovingkindness, My compassion, My mercy and My power."

May the Lord help us to look at this beautiful little passage. In the midst of need, against natural advice tendered Him by His disciples, He said of this hungry people, "They need not depart." So may it be said to us, "There is a Fountain, abide by it; there is a God-Man, cleave to Him with purpose of heart; there is a full Christ, cleave to Him in His fulness. There is a mighty Saviour, a wise God, able to save and able to bring out 'witty inventions,' of which you can have no idea or imagination naturally." Amen.

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## GOD THE SAINT'S HAPPINESS

*By George Swinnock (1627-1673)*

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There are some things in God which speak Him to be the saint's happiness and chiefest good.

First, because of His perfection and all-sufficiency. That which makes man happy must have no want, no weakness in it. It must be able both to secure him against all evil, and to furnish him with all good. The injuries of nature must be resisted, and the indigencies of nature must be supplied. Now this Sun of righteousness – as the great luminary of the world when it mounteth above the horizon – doth both clear the air of mists and fogs, and cheer the inhabitants with His light and heat. And according to the degree of our enjoyment of Him, such is the degree of our happiness, or freedom from evil and fruition of good.

Those that enjoy God perfectly in heaven know no evil; they are above all storms and tempests, and enjoy all good. "In His presence is fulness of joy" (Psa. 16. 11) They have a perpetual spring, a constant summer, never understanding what an autumn or winter meaneth. The Christian, who enjoyeth God but imperfectly, as all saints on earth, doth but in part enjoy these privileges. His life is a vicissitude of day and night, of light and darkness, of good and evil. Evil cannot hurt him, but it may fright him. He may taste of the chiefest good, but his full meal is reserved till he comes to his Father's house.



God is able to free a man from evil. The Greeks call a happy man μακάριος, one that is not subject to death and miseries.

That which is the happiness of man must be able, by its power, to secure him against all perils; but creatures cannot afford this help, therefore cannot be our happiness. He that trusteth to second causes is like him that being on the top of a tree, setteth his feet on rotten boughs, which will certainly break under him; or like the passenger who in windy, stormy weather runs to some tottering out-house which falls upon him. But God is the almighty Guard.

The schoolmen tell us the reason why Adam in his estate of innocency felt no cold, though he were naked, was because of his communion with God. God is the saints' shield to protect their bodies from all blows (Gen. 15. 1). He is therefore compared in Scripture to such things and persons as shelter men in storms, defend them in dangers. Sometimes He is called a wall of fire, because travellers in a wilderness by this means are secured from wild beasts (Zech. 2. 5); those creatures fly from fire. Sometimes to a river of broad waters, because a city, well moated and surrounded with waters, is thereby defended against enemies (Isa. 33. 21).

A good sentinel is very helpful to preserve a garrison in safety. God is therefore said to watch and ward: "I the Lord do keep it ... lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. 27. 3). And though others, when on the guard are apt to nod and sleep, and so to give the enemy an advantage, He that keepeth Israel never slumbereth nor sleepeth (Psa. 121. 4). He is so far from sleeping that He never slumbereth. Some naturalists tell us that lions are *insomnes*, possibly because their eyelids are too narrow for their eyes, and so they sleep with their eyes partly open. But it is most true of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. As Alexander told his soldiers, he wakes that they might sleep in safety. He is compared to a refuge: "Thou art my refuge and my portion" (Psa. 142. 5), a metaphor from a stronghold or castle, to which soldiers retreat, and in which they are secure when beaten back by an overpowering enemy. But above all, He is called the Lord of hosts, or general of His people, because a faithful commander goeth first into the field and cometh last out of the field. God looketh danger in the face before His people, and seeth them safe out of the field before He departeth. "The Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward" (Isa. 52. 12).

Travellers tell us that they who are at the top of the Alps can see great showers of rain fall under them, but not one drop of it falls on them. They who have God for their portion are in a high tower, and thereby safe from all troubles and showers. A drift-rain of evil will beat

in at the creature's windows, be they never so well pointed. All the garments this world can make up cannot keep them that travel in such weather from being wet to the skin. No creature is able to bear the weight of its fellow-creature, but as reeds, break under, and as thorns, run into the sides that lean on them. The bow drawn beyond its compass breaks in sunder, and the string wound above its strength snaps in pieces. Such are outward helps to all that trust to them in hardships.

But Christians, being anchored on this Rock of Ages, are secure in the greatest storm. They are like Zion, which cannot be moved. The church, according to the motto of Venice, *Immota manet* [Remains unmoved]. In time of trouble He hides them in His pavilion, and in the secret of His tabernacle He sets them upon a rock (Psa. 27. 5). God's sanctuary is His hidden place (Ezek. 7. 22), and His saints are His hidden ones (Psa. 83. 3), and there He hides them from whatsoever may hurt them. Therefore He calls His children, when it rains abroad and is stormy, to come within doors out of the wet: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isa. 26. 20).

The Christian therefore is encouraged against evils, because God is his Guard. He knoweth, whilst he hath this buckler, he is shot-free, not to be pierced by any bullet. He covereth him with His feathers, and under His wings doth the saint trust (Psa. 91. 4). As the hen secureth her young from the kite and ravenous fowls by clucking them under her wing and sheltering them there, so God doth undertake to be the protection of His people, and through His strength they can triumph over trials and defy the greatest dangers. At destruction and famine they can laugh (Job 5. 22), and over the greatest crosses, through Him, they are more than conquerors (Rom. 8. 37).

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## REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS

*From a sermon by Jesse Delves, 1961*

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Repentance and remission of sins is a choice and sacred experience. Repentance can be moral or spiritual. There is a moral repentance to which people may be exhorted in relation to their outward course of life. But true repentance preached here is Christ's gift. He is exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

In this repentance are several ingredients. First, there is conviction of sin. If there is no conviction how can there be repentance? This conviction is the work of the Spirit of God, when righteousness is laid to the line and judgment to the plummet in a sinner's conscience, when the

law of God is so applied as to bring the sentence of death. Conviction is necessary to repentance. We see this in the 51st Psalm. What an opening up there is in that Psalm of what real repentance is! "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest."

But repentance goes deeper than this. In true repentance is *compunction and godly sorrow for sin*, felt under a faith's view of a suffering Saviour. It is fellowship with a suffering Christ that brings godly repentance, grief, mourning and sorrow on account of sin. When you can feel it is *your sins* that were as the nails and the spear that wounded His hands and His feet, then it is sweet to repent; then the graces flow, faith, hope and love. Love to Christ is never more fervent than when favoured to repent in this manner.

When the Lord Jesus is pleased to reveal Himself as a personal Saviour on our behalf, and we get some opening of the cost of our redemption, and feel that He died for us, that breaks the heart. A touch of this mercy, the application of His atoning blood to the conscience, a taste of forgiveness, produces the sweetest repentance.

"Law and terrors do but harden,  
All the while they work alone;  
But a sense of blood-bought pardon,  
Soon dissolves a heart of stone."

Can we believe that? We shall believe it when we feel it. Some may understand it better than they can express it. That mercy flowing into the soul will humble us in the dust of self abasement. To look upon Him whom we have pierced and mourn for Him is sweet mourning. Worship is never so sweet as when the heart is softened thus and one falls at His blessed feet, viewing an open way to heaven for one who knows he deserves hell. Repentance will lay the sinner low and lift the Saviour high. From the little I hope I have seen, I have found a sweet view of Him by faith more conducive to repentance than anything else.

"My sins, O how black they appear,  
When in that dear bosom they meet!  
Those sins were the nails and the spear  
That wounded His hands and His feet."

"And remission of sins." What is remission? Sin is spoken of as a debt; it is our duty as creatures to fulfil the law of God, to serve God with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. That is the summary of the law, and every breach, however small, of that law, even in a sinful thought, is a debt; and we accumulate this awful debt till every one of us becomes an insolvent debtor, overwhelmed with

debts we cannot pay. How clearly this is set forth in the parable of the two debtors, one owing five hundred pence and the other fifty, but – and this is the point – when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. How sweet that has been sometimes! “’Tis perfect poverty alone that sets the soul at large.” By this remission, we understand the debt of sin to be cancelled, completely remitted, blotted out.

“Come, then, repenting sinner, come ;  
Approach with humble faith;  
Owe what thou wilt, the total sum  
Is cancelled by His death.”

This is remission, and forgiveness, indicating that the debt we owe is blotted out as though it had never been; blotted out, remitted, cancelled by His death.

This is to be preached. What a gospel for the Lord’s ministers to preach! Repentance and remission of sins is to be preached in His name among all nations.

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### COMMUNION AT THE LORD’S TABLE

*Address given at the Lord’s table by Dr. John Owen  
on November 26th, 1669*

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10. 16).

There is, in the ordinance of the Lord’s supper, an especial and peculiar communion with Christ, in His body and blood, to be obtained. One reason why we so little value the ordinance, and profit so little by it, may be because we understand so little of the nature of that special communion with Christ which we have therein.

We have this special communion upon the account of the special object that faith is exercised upon in this ordinance, and the special acts that it puts forth in reference to that or those objects: for the acts follow the special nature of their objects. Now,

1. The special *object of faith*, as acted in this ordinance, is not the *object of faith as faith*; that is, the most general object of it, which is the divine veracity: “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true” (John 3. 33). The divine veracity, or the truth of God, that is the formal object of faith as faith; and makes our faith to be divine faith. But now this is not the special object of faith in this ordinance, but something that doth suppose that.

2. The special object of faith, *as justifying*, is not the special object of faith in this ordinance. The special object of faith, as justifying, is the promise, and Christ in the promise, in general, as “the Saviour of sinners.” So when the apostle called men “to repent and believe,” he tells them, “The promise is unto you” (Acts 2. 39). And I suppose I need not insist upon the proof of this, that the promise, and Christ in the promise as Saviour and Redeemer, is the object of faith as it is justifying. But this also is supposed in the actings of faith in this ordinance; which is peculiar, and gives us peculiar communion with Christ. Therefore –

3. The special and peculiar object of faith, the immediate object of it in this ordinance, in its largest extent is:

i. The human nature of Christ, as the subject wherein mediation and redemption was wrought. Christ is considered to come as a sacrifice; that is laid down as the foundation of it (Psa. 40. 6; Heb. 10. 5), “A body hast Thou prepared Me,” which is taken for the whole human nature. Faith, when it would lead itself unto the sacrifice of Christ which is here represented, doth in an especial manner consider the human nature of Christ, that God prepared Him a body for that end. This we are to have peculiar regard unto when we come to the administration or participation of this ordinance. For that end we now celebrate it. Nay –

ii. Faith goes farther, and doth not consider merely the human nature of Christ, but considers it as *distinguished into its integral parts – into body and blood*, both which have a price, value and virtue given unto them by their union with His human soul; for both the body of Christ and the blood of Christ, upon which the work of our redemption is put in Scripture, have their value and worth from their relation unto His soul; as soul and body, making the human nature, had its value and worth from its relation unto the Son of God. Otherwise He saith of His body, “Handle it, it is but flesh and bones.” But where the body of Christ is mentioned, and the blood of Christ is mentioned, there is a distribution of the human nature into its integral parts, each part retaining its relation to His soul; and from thence is its value and excellency. This is the second peculiar [particular] in the object of faith in this ordinance.

iii. There is more than this: they are not only considered as *distinguished*, but as *separate* also – the blood separate from the body, the body left without the blood. This truth our apostle, in this chapter and the next, doth most signally insist upon; namely, the distinct parts of this ordinance – one to represent the body, and the other to represent the blood – that faith may consider them as separate.

The papists, we know, do sacrilegiously take away the cup from the people; they will give them the bread, but they will not give them the cup. And as it always falls out that one error must be covered with another, or else it will keep no man dry under it, they have invented the doctrine of *concomitance*, that there is a concomitance [each accompanying of the

other]; that is, whole Christ is in every kind, in the bread and in the wine, the one doth accompany the other, which is directly to overthrow the ordinance upon another account, as it is to represent Christ's body and blood as separated one from the other. Our Lord Jesus blessed the bread and the cup, and said, "This is My body"; ["This is My blood"]; which cannot be spoken distinctly, unless supposed to be separate.

Here then is a threefold limitation of the act of faith, even in this ordinance, in a peculiar manner restraining it to a special communion with God in Christ: that it hath a special regard to the human nature of Christ; to His human nature as consisting of body and blood; and as it respects them as separated, body and blood. Yea –

iv. It respects them as separate in that manner. You all along know that I do not intend these objects of faith as the ultimate object, for it is the Person of Christ that faith rests in, but those immediate objects that faith is exercised about, to bring it to rest in God. It is exercised about the manner of this separation; that is, the blood of Christ comes to be distinct by being shed, and the body of Christ comes to be separate by being bruised and broken. All the instituted sacrifices of old did signify this, a violent separation of body and blood: the blood was let out with the hand of violence, and so separated; and then sprinkled upon the altar, and then towards the holy place; and then the body was burned distinct by itself. So, the apostle tells us, it is "the cup which we bless, and the bread which we break"; the cup is poured out, as well as the bread broken, to remind faith of the violent separation of the body and blood of Christ.

From this last consideration, of faith acting itself upon the separation of the body and blood of Christ by way of violence, it is led to a peculiar acting of itself upon all the causes of it, whence it was that this body and this blood of Christ were represented thus separate: and by enquiring into the causes of it, it finds a moving cause, a procuring cause, an efficient cause, and a final cause; which it ought to exercise itself peculiarly upon always in this ordinance.

a. A *moving* cause; and that is, *the eternal love of God* in giving Christ in this manner, to have His body bruised and His blood shed. The apostle, going to express the love of God towards us, tells you it was in this, that He "spared not His own Son" (Rom. 8. 32). One would have thought that the love of God might have wrought in sending His Son into the world, but it also wrought in not sparing of Him. Thus faith is called in this ordinance to exercise itself upon that love which gives out Christ not to be spared.

b. It reflects upon the *procuring* cause – whence it is, or what it is, that hath procured it, that there should be this representation of the separated body and blood of Christ; and this is even *our own sin*. "He

was delivered for our offences” – given for our transgressions, died to make reconciliation and atonement for our sins: they were the procuring cause of it, upon such considerations of union and covenant which I shall not now insist upon. It leads faith, I say, upon a special respect to sin, as the procuring cause of the death of Christ. A natural conscience, on the breach of the law, leads the soul to the consideration of sin, as that which exposes itself alone to the wrath of God and eternal damnation, but in this ordinance we consider sin as that which exposed Christ to death, which is a peculiar consideration of the nature of sin.

c. There is the *efficient* cause – whence it was that the body and blood of Christ were thus separated; and that is threefold: principal, instrumental and adjuvant [things which assisted].

What is the *principal* efficient cause of the sufferings of Christ? Why, *the justice and righteousness of God*. God hath set Him forth to be a propitiation, to declare His righteousness (Rom. 3. 25). Whence it is said, “He spared Him not.” He caused all our sins to meet upon Him: “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.”

Again, there is the *instrumental* cause; and that is *the law of God*. Whence did that separation, which is here represented unto us, ensue and flow? It came from the sentence of the law, whereby He was hanged upon the tree.

Moreover, the *adjuvant* cause was those outward instruments, *the wrath and malice of men*: “For of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together” (Acts 4. 27).

Faith considers the cause whence it was that Christ was thus given up, the eternal love of God; the procuring cause was our own sins; and if once faith takes a view of sin as that which hath nailed Christ to the cross, it will have a blessed effect on the soul. And it considers the efficient cause, which is the justice and righteousness of God: the law of God was the instrument in the hand of righteousness, which was holpen on by those outward instruments who had a hand in His suffering, but none in His sacrifice.

d. Faith considers in this matter *the end of this separation* of the body and blood of Christ which is thus represented; and that is, ultimately and absolutely, *the glory of God*. He set Him forth to declare His righteousness (Rom. 3. 25; Eph. 1. 6). God aimed at the glorifying of Himself. I could easily manifest unto you how all the glorious properties of His nature are advanced, exalted, and will be so to eternity, in this suffering of Christ.

The subordinate ends are two; I mean the subordinate ends of this very peculiar act of separation of the body and blood:

Firstly, it was *to confirm the covenant*. Every covenant of old was to be ratified and confirmed by sacrifice; and in confirming the covenant

by sacrifice, they divided the sacrifice into two parts, and passed between them before they were offered; and then took it upon themselves that they would stand to the covenant which was so confirmed. Jesus Christ being to confirm the covenant (Heb. 9. 16), the body and blood of Christ, this sacrifice, was to be parted, that this covenant might be confirmed. And,

Secondly, a special end of it was, for the *confirming and strengthening of our faith*. God gives out unto us the object of our faith in parcels. We are not able to take this great mysterious fruit of God's love in gross, in the lump; and therefore He gives it out, I say, in parcels. We shall have the body broken to be considered; and the blood shed is likewise to be considered. This is the peculiar communion which we have with Christ in this ordinance, because there are peculiar objects for faith to act itself upon in this ordinance above others.

The very nature of the ordinance itself gives us a peculiar communion; and there are four things that attend the nature of this ordinance that are peculiar: it is commemorative, professional, eucharistical and federal:

1. The ordinance is *commemorative*: "Do this in remembrance of Me." And there is no greater joy to the heart of sinners, and a man knows not how to give greater glory to God, than to call the atonement of sin unto remembrance. It is observed in the offering for jealousy (Num. 5. 15), if a man was jealous, and caused an offering to be brought to God, God allowed neither oil nor frankincense; and the reason is, because it was to bring sin to remembrance.

But how sweet is that offering that brings to our remembrance the atonement made for all our sins! That is pleasing and acceptable unto God, and sweet unto the souls of sinners.

2. It has a peculiar *profession* attending it. Saith the apostle, "Doing this, 'ye show forth the Lord's death till He come'; you make a profession and manifestation of it." And, give me leave to say it, they that look towards Christ, and do not put themselves in a way of partaking of this ordinance, they refuse the principal part of that profession which God calls them unto in this world. The truth is, we have been apt to content ourselves with a profession of moral obedience; but it is a profession of Christ's institution by which alone we glorify Him in this world. "I will have My death shown forth," saith Christ, "and not only remembered." The use of this ordinance is to show forth the death of Christ. As Christ requires of us to show forth His death, so surely He hath deserved it by His death.

3. It is peculiarly *eucharistical*. There is a peculiar thanksgiving that ought to attend this ordinance. It is called, "The cup of blessing," or, "The cup of thanksgiving" – the word *ευλογία* is used promiscuously for "blessing" and "thanksgiving." It is called, "The cup of blessing,"



because of the institution, and prayer for the blessing of God upon it; and it is called "The cup of thanksgiving," because we do in a peculiar manner give thanks to God for Christ, and for His love in Him.

4. It is a *federal* ordinance, wherein God confirms the covenant unto us, and wherein He calls us to make a recognition of the covenant unto God. The covenant is once made, but we know that we stand in need that it should be often transacted in our souls, that God should often testify His covenant unto us, and that we should often actually renew our covenant engagements unto Him. God never fails nor breaks His promises, so that He hath no need to renew them, but testify them anew. We break and fail in ours, so that we have need actually to renew them. And that is it which we are called unto in this ordinance, which is the ordinance of the great seal of the covenant in the blood of Christ.

Upon all these accounts have we special communion with Christ in this ordinance. There is none of them but I might easily enlarge upon, but I name these heads, and my design is to help my own faith and yours from roving in the administration of this ordinance, or from a general acting of itself, to fix it to that which is its particular duty; that we may find no weariness nor heaviness in the administration. Here in these things is there enough to entertain us for ever, and to make them new and fresh to us. But while we come with uncertain thoughts, and know not what to direct our faith to act particularly upon, we lose the benefit of the ordinance.

For the *use*, it is —

1. To bless God for His institution of His church, which is the seat of the administration of this ordinance, wherein we have such peculiar and intimate communion with Christ. There is not one instance of those which I have named but, if God would help us to act faith upon Christ in a peculiar manner through it, would give new strength and life to our souls. Now in the church we have all this treasure. We lose it, I confess, by our unbelief and disesteem of it; but it will be found to be an inestimable treasure to those that use it, and improve it in a due manner.

2. Doth God give us this favour and privilege, that we should be invited to this special communion with Christ in this ordinance? Let us prepare our hearts for it in the authority of its institution; let us lay our souls and consciences in subjection to the authority of Christ, who hath commanded these things, and who did it in a signal manner the same night wherein He was betrayed: so that there is a special command of Christ lies upon us; and if we will yield obedience to any of the commands of Christ, then let us yield obedience to this. Prepare your souls for special communion with Him, then, by subjugating them thoroughly to the authority of Christ in this ordinance.

3. It will be good for us all to be in *a gradual exercising of our faith* unto these special things, wherein we have communion with Christ. You have heard sundry particulars: here is an object of your faith, that is given to be represented unto you in this ordinance, that God hath prepared Christ a body, that He might be a sacrifice for you; and that this body was afterward distinguished into His body, strictly so taken, and His blood separated from it; and this in a design of love from God, as procuring the pardon of our sins as tending to the glory of God, and the establishing of the covenant. Train up a young faith in the way it should go, and it will not depart from it when old. And new things will be found herein every day to strengthen your faith, and you will find much sweetness in the ordinance itself.

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### A WARNING AGAINST MIXED MARRIAGES

*By Octavius Winslow, 1840.*

*We especially recommend the careful reading of this to any young person who fears God, tempted to form an intimate friendship with an unbeliever, even if this is a chapel person.*

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There is another and a peculiar snare of the world to which the saints of God are exposed; and because many have fallen into it, and not a few have in consequence greatly embittered their happiness, stained their profession and dishonoured God, we would briefly, and in this connection, touch upon it with all tenderness and affection. We allude to the formation of matrimonial alliances between the saints of God and the unregenerate world. The Word of God is against a union so unholy and so productive of evil as this. Not a precept authorises it, not a precedent encourages it, not a promise sanctions it, not a blessing hallows it! Indeed, so far is God from authorising it that He expressly forbids it. Thus: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6. 14-18)

How strong the command, how conclusive the argument, and how persuasive and touching the appeal! Could it be more so? The command is – that a believer be not yoked with an unbeliever. The argument is –

he is a temple of God. The appeal is – God will be a Father to such, and they are His children, who walk obediently to this command. There are many solemn considerations which seem to urge this precept upon the believer. A child of God is not his own. He does not belong to himself. “Ye are not your own.” His soul and body are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and therefore he is Christ’s. He must not, he cannot, dispose of himself. He belongs to the Lord, and has no authority to give away either soul or body. O that this solemn fact could be written upon every believer’s heart: “Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” May the eternal Spirit now engrave it deeply and indelibly there.

But more than this, if this were not enough to urge the command upon a believer, his body is the “temple of the living God”! How solemn and weighty is this consideration! And shall he take “the temple of God,” and unite it with one who is a stranger to His grace, to His love, to His Son? with one whose “mind is enmity against God,” and whose heart beats not one throb of love to Jesus? God forbid! “Know ye not,” says James, “that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” Then for a believer to form with an unbeliever an alliance so close and so lasting as this, involving interests so important and so precious, is to enter into a league with an enemy of God. It is to covenant, and that for life, with a despiser of the Lord Jesus.

It is no extenuation of this breach of God’s command that the Lord has frequently, in the exercise of His sovereign grace, made the believing party instrumental to the conversion of the unbelieving party. He can, and often does, bring good out of evil, order out of confusion, “making the wrath of man to praise Him,” and causing events that were designed to thwart His purposes to be the very means of promoting them. But this is no encouragement to sin, and when sin is committed, this is but poor consolation. And to enter into a compact of the nature we are deprecating, with a conscience quieted and soothed with the reflection that “the wife may save the husband, or the husband may save the wife,” is presumption of the highest kind, a presumption which God may punish with a disappointment as bitter as it is overwhelming. Let no dear child of God be allured into an alliance so unholy by a consideration so specious as this. Many have fallen into the snare, and have covered themselves with shame and confusion.

To the believer himself, forming an alliance so contrary to the express injunction of God’s Word, the evils arising from it are many and grievous. To say nothing of the want of what must ever be considered essential to the mutual happiness of the union – oneness of mind, harmony of sentiment, congruity of spirit – there are lacking the higher elements of happiness – the mutual faith of each other in Christ, the communion of redeemed spirits, the holy intercourse of renewed minds,

the unutterable sweetness of talking of Jesus by the way, and as “heirs together of the grace of life,” the joy of looking forward to the reunion of the glorified beyond the grave. It is, from the very nature of things, impossible that these elements of happiness should exist in the relation we are considering. The individuals thus united are inhabitants of different countries; one is an “alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger and a foreigner,” the other is a “fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God”; they speak different languages, are travelling opposite roads, and are journeying towards different countries. Surely we may ask what real union and communion can exist here?

But more than this. There are not merely negative but positive evils resulting from such a connection. The influences that are perpetually exerting their power are hostile to all growth in grace and to an upright and holy walk with God. The temptations to inconsistency of Christian conduct are many, perpetual and alarming. The constant influence of worldly conversation, worldly example and worldly pursuits weakens by slow but certain degrees the spiritual life of the soul, impairs the taste for (and lessens the enjoyment in) spiritual duties, unfits the mind for communion with God and opens the door for an almost endless train of departures. We do not claim that all these evils are realised, but we do say that the believer who so shapes his course is fearfully exposed to them, and that he has not been, or may not be, overcome of them is of the mere grace of God. The evils themselves are the necessary consequences of his departure from God’s Word, and that he is preserved from the direst of them is only of the covenant mercies of that God, who, in the midst of all their temptations, is alone able to keep His people from falling.

A child of God passing through this vale of tears requires all the spiritual assistance he can meet with to urge him on his way. All the strength, the comfort, the encouragement, and all the support it is possible for him to obtain from any and every quarter, he needs to call into full exercise in order to bear up against the many and peculiar difficulties that throng his path and would keep him from advancing. Infirmities within and impediments without, inward corruptions and outward trials, the strugglings of sin and the assaults of Satan, all conspire to cast him down, and often to extort from him David’s exclamation, “My soul cleaveth unto the dust.” At such a period, how strengthening, how supporting, how encouraging and how animating the communion and soothing of a kindred spirit – a spirit one with himself! If it be true – and most true it is – that as “iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend,” to a much greater degree, and in a more endearing sense, is this reciprocity experienced in the high and endearing relation we are considering. The godly husband and the godly wife are true helpmeets to each other. They belong to the same family,

speak the same sweet language, are travelling the same happy road, and are journeying to the same blissful home.

For a child of God, then, to unite himself to one who can be of no assistance to him in his journey, but rather a hindrance – who, when he speaks of conflicts, cannot understand them; of burdens, cannot lighten them; of perplexities, cannot guide them; of trials, cannot share them; of sorrows, cannot soothe them; and of joys and hopes, cannot participate in them – is indeed to mark out for himself a lonely and a desolate path, which may know no termination of its trial until it conducts him to the grave.

We would say, then, guard against this needless and unscriptural entanglement with the world. Marry “only in the Lord.” “In all your ways acknowledge Him.” Let His Word be your guide, His fear your rule, His glory your aim, and He will direct your paths through life, sustain you in death and conduct you safely to His heavenly kingdom.

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### 1611 REMEMBERED

#### THE AUTHORISED VERSION

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Very remarkable has been the profound interest that has been shown in the 400th anniversary of our wonderful Authorised Version of the Bible. Even the secular media have shown interest, with even unbelievers expressing their admiration – as a piece of classical literature of unusually magnificent style. There have been events such as day-long readings in cathedrals and a display at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

Many are the books which have appeared – some learned and intellectual such as those published by Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press. From a spiritual standpoint, there has been our own Gospel Standard Trust Publication, *The King James Bible – Its History and Excellence* (reviewed last month); the authoritative work by a member of the Trinitarian Bible Society Committee; an excellent pamphlet published by the Society; and many others. We were specially impressed by a beautiful replica of the original 1611 Bible published by Zondervan, and sold at an extremely reasonable price.

It is with true gratitude to the Lord that we think of the gift of His holy Word, and the excellent translation we have in the 1611 Authorised (or King James) Version. We seek no other.

What is the reason for our firm adherence to the 1611 Version? It is not because of its majestic style, which some have emphasised so much. The style *is* majestic, especially when compared to the modern versions. We admire it; but it is the *accuracy* rather than the *style*.

Neither is it the claim so often made of the godliness of *all* the translators. From careful reading, we wonder what to make of one or

two of them! Archbishop Bancroft was the persecutor of the Puritans, while Daniel Featley (sometimes called Fairclough) was the arch-enemy of the Baptists. The *right* claim should be that each one was utterly committed to the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures they were translating and sincerely desired to translate them accurately.

What has really impressed us in reading the various publications is that here was a body of fifty-four men, some of the most brilliant Hebrew and Greek scholars this country has ever known, wholly committed to inspiration, and determined with the help of God to provide as accurate a translation as was possible.

We have been amazed at the time spent and the pains taken: the different committees; the checking and the re-checking; the comparing, etc. It seems almost incredible the lengths to which these learned men went in their search for perfection. How different from some modern translations which use what they call “dynamic equivalence”: that is, thinking what the original writers meant to convey, and then putting it in modern form – instead of a literal translation.

We thank God for the 1611 translation. The translators showed both honesty and zeal in their desire to do right.

How blessed it has been that for at least 250 years we had just the one Bible, and even up to fifty years ago people would just refer to *the* Bible, meaning the 1611 Version. Today with the plethora of Bibles, people are met with inconsistencies and contradictions; and who can say what is right?

*What follows is an exceedingly general and simply written account.*

### HOW WE GOT OUR ENGLISH BIBLE\*

What a wonderful thing it is that God has given us His holy Word! We have it in our own language; we can understand it. Solemnly it sets forth our great need as sinners and the way of salvation through Christ and Him crucified. Then we need the same Holy Spirit who inspired it to open our eyes and hearts to understand it savingly.

#### I

Now here are the first three verses in Genesis:

*in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram  
terra autem erat inanis et vacua et tenebrae super  
faciem abyssi et spiritus Dei  
ferebatur super aquas  
dixitque Deus fiat lux et facta est lux.*

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\* The following article, in a format for children and with interesting illustrations, has been published by The Trinitarian Bible Society, and is obtainable from them free of charge.

Had we been living in England a thousand years ago, that would have been the only Bible there was. It was called the Vulgate, and it was not a good translation of the original Greek and Hebrew. It was in Latin and hardly anyone could understand Latin – even among the priests of the Roman Catholic church. Even if they could, there were not many of these Bibles about.

So people in England were ignorant of God. They did not know the way of salvation. It is said that many of the priests could not repeat the Ten Commandments, or say where they were found, and most of the priests did not know whom it was who first taught the Lord's prayer.

Thus there were two terrible effects of this appalling ignorance of God's Word. One was there was a dreadful amount of superstition. People could not understand the Latin. They did not even know the simple stories of Scripture. So they were fascinated by all kinds of superstition. You could visit an abbey in Gloucestershire where they would show you what they said was a vial filled with the blood of Christ. In one place was a crucifix. If you put plenty of money down, the face smiled. If you did not put much money down, the face frowned. One church in Reading displayed many things: (supposedly) the wing of an angel; the spearhead that was used at the crucifixion; two pieces of the cross; one of Mary Magdalene's bones; the hand of James – and these things were venerated. A church in Somerset had a piece of bread from the first Lord's Supper and a fragment of the manger!

People scarcely knew what the name of Jesus meant, so they were fascinated by these strange, mysterious things. And visiting them and venerating them was supposed to have a blessed effect. So great was the ignorance.

The other terrible thing, springing from this appalling ignorance and superstition: wickedness and immorality abounded. So dreadful was the state of England during the Middle Ages when the Roman Catholic church held sway.

## II

Over the years there had been parts of the Bible which people had tried to put into English. But then the Lord in His mercy raised up an eminent and godly man, John Wycliffe (c. 1330-1384). He was both a most learned man, and a man blessed with much of the Spirit of God. He saw through the evils of the day, and revealed to him was the way of salvation through Christ alone. His church at Lutterworth in Leicestershire can still be visited. John Wycliffe is usually known as *the morning star of the Reformation*. His great desire was that the Bible should appear in English, so with his helpers ("the Lollards") he translated it.

So really in the 1300s we had a Bible in English for the first time. But there were difficulties. One was that printing had not been invented, so the Bible had to be copied out by hand and it took about ten months to copy out the Bible. One or two are still in existence. A single Bible would cost about £40 – which would equal thousands today. It is said that one farmer offered a whole sack load of hay if in return he could have one page of Wycliffe's Bible.

But there was another difficulty. It was just a translation of the Latin Vulgate, so it was a translation of a translation. Wycliffe did not have the original Hebrew and Greek. It was a translation of a translation, and there were one or two bad mistakes in the Vulgate. Where the Lord Jesus and John the Baptist preached, "Repent," the Vulgate had, "Do penance" – something different; something you had to do, like going on pilgrimage to Rome or telling your rosary so many times. Wycliffe, having nothing else, translated into English, "Do penance." Another example: where the angel said to Mary, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured," the Vulgate had, "Hail, Mary, full of grace." It is the Lord Jesus who is full of grace, not Mary.

So you had the first English Bible, but very expensive, very scarce, and containing mistakes.

### III

It was about two hundred years later when God raised up William Tyndale (1494-1536), and never did England receive a greater blessing from the Lord. Tyndale was blessed with a wonderful knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, and he had an ambition. As he expressed it, it was his desire that the most ignorant ploughboy would be able to understand the Scripture as much as the most learned prelate. So he began translating the Word of God into English from the original – but to his sorrow and amazement he did not receive any help. When Wycliffe translated his Bible it was made illegal, and anyone found reading it would be put to death. So great is the enmity of Satan to God's holy Word. It was the same with Tyndale. Thinking the Bishop of London would be sympathetic, he sought his help; the only response was that the Bishop tried to put him in prison.

So William Tyndale realised there was no place of safety in England and fled to the continent, there to proceed with his loving work of translation. It is a long and sad yet wonderful story: Tyndale fleeing from place to place, working in damp, cold cellars or in dusty attics – till at last betrayed by a supposed friend, and then put to death by strangling and burning: a martyr's death.

We owe much to the memory of William Tyndale. It is one thing to be a popular preacher, admired by the crowds; another to labour in



obscurity and difficulty for the honour and glory of God. Though Tyndale was little over forty years of age at the time of his martyrdom, the only surviving portrait shows him as an old man.

Much of our Authorised Version of the Bible today is the same as Tyndale's translation. He was godly, he was learned, he was accurate, and he was helped by the Spirit of God. Sadly, he never lived to translate the whole of the Word of God.

As the New Testament was translated, these Testaments had to be smuggled into England, often in bales of cloth. When the Bishop of London bought as many of these Testaments as he could and had them burned, the money was used to send more, better-produced Testaments to England. It is said that on one spot where Bibles were burned, in later years there was a printing press producing copies of the Word of God.

#### IV

About this time there was a wonderful invention, the invention in Germany of printing by Gutenberg. Gutenberg produced the first Bible ever printed in 1456, actually the Latin Vulgate.

A desire sprang up for England to have its own Bible in English – as Germany now had its own Bible in German. This was the time of the Glorious Reformation, and different Bibles began to appear. In 1535 there was Coverdale's Bible. He was not a translator himself, but used Tyndale, and the Vulgate, and Luther, and one or two others. (This was Anne Boleyn's Bible.) Two years later there was Matthew's Bible, and then in 1539 the Great Bible.

King Henry VIII in doctrine was always a bigoted Roman Catholic, but he quarrelled with the Pope and made himself head of the Church of England. However, he decided he was going to have a Bible in every church, and this was the Great Bible (so called because of its size), which contained much of Tyndale.

These Bibles were chained in churches; so great was the hunger for the Word of God that it was feared some might be borrowed or even stolen. Some of these old chained Bibles can still be seen.

Really the Reformation in England came as the effect under the Holy Spirit's influence of reading these Bibles. People would gather in a church, someone would climb up to the chained Bible and read it aloud, many people would be listening, and God the Spirit sealed home the Word.

On the continent we read so much of people like Luther and Calvin and Zwingli; but in England it was essentially the Word alone.

In 1560 the excellent Geneva Bible appeared, translated by exiles there from England. This was the favourite of the Reformers and the Puritans, and the Bible the Pilgrim Fathers took to America. (It is sometimes known as the Breeches Bible because of the translation of

Genesis 3. 7.) It contained very striking notes, strongly Calvinistic and strongly anti-Popery.

It was in the Geneva Bible that italics first appeared. Chapter divisions had first been used in 1250 (devised by a cardinal named Hugo), and an Englishman, Sir Robert Stevens, had later divided the chapters into verses. The marginal references did not appear till our Authorised Version.

Thus by the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I there were a number of translations of the Word of God; in all of them the influence of godly William Tyndale was seen.

## V

When Queen Elizabeth died in 1603, King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England. As he came from Scotland, the Puritans hoped they might receive a number of favours from him. He agreed to a conference of ministers in 1604 at Hampton Court Palace, over which he presided. Most of the Puritan ministers' requests were refused; but the one important thing agreed was that there would be a new translation of the Bible.

Fifty-four of the most eminent Hebrew and Greek scholars were appointed to undertake the translation, meeting in six groups: two at Westminster, two at Oxford and two at Cambridge. They did not start from a blank page. They had the former translations, especially Tyndale, on which they heavily relied. They also had Geneva – which, though a good translation, was abhorrent to the king because of some of the marginal notes. It was agreed there would be no comments or notes in the new version, which was to appear seven years later in 1611, and be known as “the Authorised Version.” (In America it is usually known as “the King James Version.”) The phrase at the beginning, “Appointed to be read in churches,” means that it had to be prepared in such a way that it would be suitable and easy to read in churches.

It is amazing to read of the exceedingly great care that was taken in laboriously comparing, re-comparing, discussing, etc., with the one desire: *accuracy*. So our wonderful version of the Bible appeared in 1611.

Apart from its religious influence, the Authorised Version has fashioned our English language more than any other book. Many of the expressions we use continually day by day come from the Authorised Version of the Bible. For instance:

To lick the dust – he fell on his face – a man after his own heart – the land of the living – under the sun – sour grapes – from time to time – pride goes before a fall – the skin of my teeth – to stand in awe – to put words into his mouth – to go from strength to strength.

Our English language has been moulded by the Bible.

## VI

Queen Victoria was once asked by an Indian prince, "What is the secret of England's greatness?" She took up a Bible (and, of course, it was the Authorised Version), and she said, "This is the secret of England's greatness."

So we bless God for this precious gift and in true gratitude to the Lord we celebrate its 400th Anniversary.

"O may these heavenly pages be  
My ever dear delight;  
And still new beauties may I see,  
And still increasing light."

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**GOD'S HOLY WORD**


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Father of mercies, in Thy Word  
What endless glory shines!  
For ever be Thy name adored,  
For these celestial lines.

Here may the wretched sons of want,  
Exhaustless riches find;  
Riches above what earth can grant,  
And lasting as the mind.

Here the fair tree of knowledge grows  
And yields a free repast;  
Sublimers sweets than nature knows  
Invite the longing taste.

Here the Redeemer's welcome voice  
Spreads heavenly peace around;  
And life, and everlasting joys,  
Attend the blissful sound.

O may these heavenly pages be  
My ever dear delight;  
And still new beauties may I see,  
And still increasing light.

Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,  
Be Thou for ever near;  
Teach me to love Thy sacred Word,  
And find the Saviour there.

Anne Steele (1716-1778)

## NO NEW TRANSLATION

*J.C. Philpot's answer to an enquiry concerning his opinion at the time the Revised Version was contemplated. It is well known that Philpot in his sermons often commented on the meaning of the original Greek.*

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We express our opinion upon a question of late much agitated, viz., whether it would be desirable to have a new, or at least a revised translation of the Scriptures. We fully admit that there are here and there passages of which the translation might be improved, as, for instance, "love" for "charity" all through 1 Corinthians 13, but we deprecate any alteration as a measure that for the smallest sprinkling of good would deluge us with a flood of evil. The following are our reasons:

1. Who are to undertake it? Into whose hands would the revision fall? What an opportunity for the enemies of truth to give us a mutilated, false Bible! Of course, they must be learned men, great critics, scholars and divines. But these are notoriously either Puseyites or Neologians, in other words, deeply tainted with either popery or infidelity. Where are there learned men sound in the truth, not to say alive unto God, who possess the necessary qualifications for so important a work? And can erroneous men, men dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a book written by the blessed Spirit? We have not the slightest ground for hope that they would be godly men, such as we have reason to believe translated the Scriptures into our present version.

2. Again, it would unsettle the minds of thousands as to which was the Word of God, the old translation or the new. What a door it would open for the workings of infidelity or the temptations of Satan! What a gloom too it would cast over the minds of many of God's saints, to have those passages which had been applied to their souls translated in a different way, and how it would seem to shake all their experience of the power and preciousness of God's Word!

3. But besides this, there would be two Bibles spread through the land, the old and the new, and what confusion would this create in almost every place! At present, all sects and denominations agree in acknowledging our present version as the standard of appeal. Nothing settles disputes so soon as when the contending parties have confidence in the same umpire and are willing to abide by his decision. But this judge of all dispute, this umpire of all controversy, would cease to be the loser of strife if present, acknowledged authority were put an end to by a rival.

4. Again, if the revision and re-translation were once to begin, where would it end? It is good to let well alone, as it is easier to mar than mend. The Socinianising Neologian would blot out "God" in

1 Timothy 3. 16, and strike out 1 John 5. 7, 8, as an interpolation. The Puseyite would mend it to suit Tractarian views. He would read “priest” where we now read “elder,” and put “penance” in the place of “repentance.” Once set up a notice, “The old Bible to be mended,” and there would be plenty of workmen who, trying to mend the cover, would pull the pages to pieces. The Arminian would soften down the words “election” and “predestination” into some term less displeasing to Pharisaic ears. “Righteousness” would be turned into “justice,” and “reprobate” into “undiscerning.” All our good Bible terms would be so mutilated that they would cease to convey the Spirit’s meaning, and instead of the noble simplicity, faithfulness and truth of our present version, we should have a Bible that nobody would accept as the Word of God, to which none could safely appeal, and on which none implicitly rely.

5. Instead of our good old Saxon Bible, simple and solid, with few words really obsolete, and alike majestic and beautiful, we should have a modern English translation in pert and flippant language of the day. Besides its authority as the Word of God, our present version is the great English classic – generally accepted as the standard of the English language. The great classics of a language cannot be modernised. What an outcry there would be against modernising Shakespeare, or making Hooker, Bacon or Milton talk the English of the newspapers or of the House of Commons.

6. The present English Bible has been blessed to thousands of the saints of God, and not only so, it has become part of our national inheritance which we have received unimpaired from our fathers, and are bound to hand down unimpaired to our children. It is, we believe, the grand bulwark of Protestantism, the safeguard of the gospel, and the treasure of the church, and we should be traitors in every sense of the word if we consented to give it up to be rifled by the sacrilegious hands of Puseyites, concealed Papists, German Neologians, infidel divines, Arminians, Socinians, and the whole tribe of enemies of God and godliness.

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There was a holy man that rarely heard of other men’s crimson sins but he usually bedewed the place with his tears, considering that the seeds of those very sins were in his own nature. In thy nature thou hast that which would lead thee, with the Pharisees, to oppose Christ; and with Judas, to betray Christ; and with Pilate, to condemn Christ; and with the soldiers, to crucify Christ. O what a monster wouldst thou prove should God but leave thee to act suitably to that sinful and woeful nature of thine!

*Thomas Brooks*

## PRIDE HUMBLLED

*From the Life of John Warburton*

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When I went the second time [to preach for William Gadsby] the room was quite full, and the Lord was with me very sweetly and precious, and the people seemed all alive. As soon as I had finished my message, pride began to boil up in my heart: "They think you will be a very great preacher. See how the people are pleased, and how cheerfully they sing." And I thought so myself too. After concluding, I overheard some of the people whispering how well I had preached, and they had no doubt I should be a very great preacher, and one of them whispered to another that he was sure I should be a second Gadsby. O how sweet was this to my old man! How it gratified him to the very heart! Poor fool! I was carried away with pride to such a degree that I blush to write a thousandth part of it. All the way home I was so carried away with my greatness and what I was likely to be, that at times I hardly knew whether I was upon my feet or my head. Sometimes I wondered in what place I should be settled. Surely, thought I, it must be in some great town or other; it will be in London. If I am to be so great a man and to have so great a work to do, it must be in London, for all the great, thought I, go there, and that, thinks I, will be my place in the end.

I must add one thing more about this accursed pride, how far it carried a poor blind fool. I had thought to have kept it out of sight, for I do confess it is too base to name, but it must come out, base as it is. Before I went again the third time, I actually went to Manchester to see Mr. Mouncey, the acting deacon, with a pretence to tell him that I could not come and preach any more, on purpose to draw it out of him whether he thought I was likely to be a great man. When I arrived at his warehouse, there was another deacon, a Mr. Holt, with him. They were both very glad to see me, and asked how I was getting on. I told them that I was come to inform them that I could not attempt to speak any more, for that I was such a blind fool that it would be madness in me to attempt it, and that I therefore hoped they would not expect me to come again. And I tried to put on as miserable a dejected countenance as I could while relating my lying cant, and tried with all my might to squeeze out some tears.

The two deacons, believing I was an honest lad and that the devil was tempting me to give up the work, encouraged me to go on, and spoke very freely how well they were satisfied, and how confident they were that God had a work for me to do, and there was no more fear of my going on than of Paul's going on; for they believed that Paul's God was my God, and that He would bring me through. O, thinks I, what! am I likely to be a second Paul, then? But I told them that I was certain they

would never speak to me in that way if they knew my unfitness; and sure I am that, if they had known my abominable hypocrisy, they would have kicked me out of the warehouse, and served me right, too. But God knew how to manage me better than they. One of them said he did not wish to lift me up with pride, but to encourage me. He would say that he had no doubt God had a great work for me to do. O that word, "a great work to do!" I was blown up by it like a bladder. He said, further, that he durst not but insist on my coming at the time appointed. Many things more they said to me, which suited my old man very well. So, having got such a bundle of food for the old wretch, off I went home and began to think what text I should preach from, for, thinks I, as they have such views of my becoming a great man, they will expect that I shall come with some grand, mysterious text. I was safe enough, however, from meddling with any part of God's Word but what I had myself experienced. I tried with all my might to get into some dark text, but in vain. Well, then, thinks I, I will try an old text, one that my soul has been in hundreds of times. I am sure to get on with it, and shall have plenty to say. This was the text: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14. 22). O, thinks I, that is the text! O how pleased I was in thinking how I could divide it! Such wonderful light and such grand things were brought to my mind, day after day, that I was quite astonished. "O," thinks I, "whatever will they think when I come to preach of these things? They will be quite astonished." And indeed, it proved so, for they were astonished, but not at my greatness, but at my littleness.

The time came and off I went, hoping there would be many people present. The most I could ask God for was that He would incline many to come and hear what I could do, and this but my third time of preaching. When I got there I found the house quite full of people. I gave out a hymn with wonderful zeal and boldness, and then went to prayer, in which I had great liberty. O, thinks I, this will do! But when I had read my text, such darkness and confusion overwhelmed my soul that I could hardly read the words a second time. I trembled till my knees smote together. For about five or ten minutes I tried to say something, but what I said the Lord knows; I cannot tell a word of it. All my pride and presumption, my hypocrisy and lies, stared me in the face, and stopped my mouth completely. I was forced to confess before all the people that God had stopped my mouth and that I could not speak another word. I dropped on the seat, and verily thought that God would have struck me dead and sent me to hell, as I so richly deserved. There was a profound silence for some time. The people were all astonished, and wondered what it could all mean. Dear Mr. Mouncey,\* as soon as

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\* John Gadsby speaks most highly and affectionately of his father's old deacon, William Mouncey.

his feelings would suffer him to speak, said, "The Lord opens, and none can shut; He shuts, and none can open. I have often read it, but never have been an eye-witness of it in such a public manner until now." He begged of me to try again. "Perhaps," said he, "the Lord may open your mouth to speak, for it is all in His hands." But I assured him that I durst not attempt it, for the Lord had stopped my mouth, and I was determined never to try any more. The dear man concluded with prayer, and I believe it was a time of prayer with him and the people, for I believe there was not a dry cheek in the place. But as for me, I was distracted nearly beyond my senses.

After he had concluded and dismissed the people, I got my hat, being determined to put an end to my existence that very night. I had something else to do now than to wonder where so great a man as I was to be settled. O the miserable journey I had home that night! What with the sight of my most abominable conduct in going to the deacon's house with such lies and devilish hypocrisy, and the dreadful accusations of the devil, I felt confident that I could be nothing but a hardened wretch whom God had given up to a reprobate mind, and who would soon be proved to be a complete apostate. I was determined to go that very night and try to get on board a man-of-war, and leave wife and children and all.

Just before I got home, I turned out of the road to go to Liverpool, wringing my hands, sobbing, crying and groaning, till my very soul was in an agony. When I had gone on the Liverpool road about two stone throws, these words sounded as loud as if someone had spoken them aloud behind the hedge:

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."

I stood astonished, and got over the hedge to see if any person was there. Finding no creature there, a hope sprang up. "Who can tell," thought I, "but the Lord will make *this* plain?"

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## MINISTERS' MEETING

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Another meeting of our ministers for prayer has been arranged, if the Lord will, for 11 o'clock on Friday, November 11th, at Clifton chapel. All ministers who are in membership with Gospel Standard chapels are warmly invited. Refreshments will be served. It would be helpful if those hoping to come could let the Secretary, Mr. D.J. Christian, know.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
OCTOBER 2011

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

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ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM

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Of one Lord will we sing,  
And spread His fame abroad;  
Jehovah Jesus is our King,  
And be His name adored.

In Zion shall He reign,  
And make His wonders known;  
His greatest honours there maintain,  
In glory and renown.

In Israel He bestows,  
A living faith in Him;  
By which they overcome their foes,  
And vanquish hell and sin.

One living vital faith,  
Each Christian will approve;  
A faith that triumphs over death,  
And sweetly works by love.

One baptism we own,  
A sacred, solemn sign  
Of what the Saviour's undergone,  
To wash away our sin.

His overwhelming pain,  
And burial we see;  
His rising from the grave again,  
To set His children free.

Baptizèd into Christ,  
By His own Spirit's power,  
We claim Him as our King and Priest,  
And love Him and adore.

He hides our guilt from view,  
And buries all our sin;  
And He ordained this way to show  
That we are one with Him.

Here we by faith may view,  
That every Christian's dead  
To Satan, sin and Moses too,  
Through Christ our living Head.

In rising from the flood,  
Saints solemnly proclaim  
Their life is hid with Christ in God,  
And they shall with Him reign.

And though the body dies,  
This ordinance maintains,  
The saints shall like their Master rise,  
To recompense His pains.

William Gadsby (1773-1844)

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### A BAPTIZING SERMON

*Substance of sermon preached by F.L. Gosden at Ebenezer Chapel,  
Heathfield, on January 26th, 1949*

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**Text:** “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8. 35).

It is very evident from the Word of God, and from an observation of His work in the church, that He has been pleased to connect the preaching of the gospel with the salvation of souls. Preaching the gospel is one method ordained by the Lord to make known His purposes of salvation in the covenant of grace to those whose names were written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. This is indeed a mercy, for it gives us to understand a little of God’s goodness and wisdom in the institution of the church of Christ. Salvation is great; great because it is of God, great because of the glorious Author of eternal salvation, great because it is *eternal* salvation. Salvation is great because of the complete ruin and wreckage and the desperate condition of His dear people, from which He alone could save them. The method of it also is blessed, manifesting His wisdom and goodness. Had it pleased God, He could have called His people by His Spirit in an isolated way – individuals – and brought them to Himself. But He instituted the church. The direction which primarily, and in the most blessed sense, He gave to His beloved Son – the command – was: “Gather My saints unto Me.” The Lord Jesus, the Father’s Servant in the covenant, made Himself of no reputation in order that He might redeem the church, that the ransomed of the Lord might return, that He might become to them a new and living way back to God.

The Lord gathers His people together. There are three gatherings of the same people, designated as those whom He did foreknow. Those foreknown people in the infinite mind of God in the love of His heart were chosen in the covenant of grace; they were gathered there, every one; He knew them, knew their names and recorded them in the Lamb’s

Book of Life. Those exact same persons, to the very last individual, will be gathered in time: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me" – all of them. O blessed saints!

"See the suffering church of Christ  
Gathered from all quarters."

This gathering effected by the individual calling of each person by invincible grace is the work of the Holy Ghost. When these are gathered into congregations, the Lord instituting the church and the ministry of the gospel that "through the foolishness of preaching He might save those that believe," it makes a real church a sacred place; it is where the Lord dwells, where His purposes, His eternal counsels, are brought to fruition. The third gathering of exactly the same people – right to the last individual – will be in heaven. Three gatherings of the same people according to the purpose of His own will. To see these purposes carried out in individual cases is very blessed.

The Lord knew that this eunuch would be on the road from Jerusalem where he had been up to worship. He was "a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure." He "was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Here was the foreknowledge of God. Ah, what a mercy if He should see some of you following afar off! It seems that the Holy Ghost had used Philip a good deal in the ministry to gather His saints together. You will remember it was Philip\* who found Nathanael. The wording of Scripture is very blessed when it is translated into experience. It says, "Philip findeth Nathanael." The Lord had seen him under the fig tree. I wonder how many here He has seen under the fig tree, seeking souls made to feel their need of Christ; Christ being made precious to them as He is revealed in the Word, "full of grace and truth," the Saviour of sinners. "Join thyself to this chariot." What would some of you say if the Lord (whose eye is upon His people, upon all them who fear Him) having seen you in secret perhaps upon your bed, longing for Him, hearing your inward prayer and desire: "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people" – heard you perhaps with Jabez saying, "O that Thou wouldest bless me indeed" – if He should cause the ministry to meet the work of the Holy Ghost in your soul? You may depend upon it something of this kind was going on in the eunuch's heart as he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

When the purposes of God meet the work of the Holy Ghost in a sinner's soul, what a meeting it is! And there *is* such a meeting. "Then

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\* The Philip of Acts chapter 8 is usually understood to be a different Philip from the one who found Nathanael in John chapter 1.

shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning.” And when His going forth in His eternal decrees and purposes of salvation meet your following after Him by the influence of the Holy Ghost, what a meeting it is! They met in the case of the eunuch, and that of Nathanael, and again in the case of the woman of Samaria. “The appointed time rolls on apace, not to propose but call by grace.” When that time comes, there is a joining. “Join thyself to this chariot.” Sometimes the Lord intends a blessing to some seeking, labouring, weary sinner. When the time of love comes, the “set time to favour Zion,” He may say, as it were, in the minister’s heart, “Join thyself to that person.” There will be a contact, a contact between the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, and the experience of that poor sinner. And what a union it is!

“And Philip ran thither unto him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?” I should think it quite warrantable to conclude that this eunuch was a man of some education; he was not an illiterate man; but he did not reply and say, “Of course I do; it is simple enough language – the 53rd of Isaiah.” No, the Holy Ghost had taught him the truth that “the world by wisdom knows not God”; that man by searching cannot find Him out. He realised that it needed a different kind of wisdom from human wisdom to know the mind of the Spirit in the Scriptures. What he needed and sought was revealed truth, a *revealed* Christ. “How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.”

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” Everything is there; the fulness of the Godhead bodily is there. I have no doubt that, in speaking to the eunuch concerning that chapter, he pointed out how that to many the Lord Jesus was but as a root out of dry ground, that He had no form or comeliness. He was that to His own people: “He came to His own, but His own received Him not.” O but there was a people who saw deeper than a mere man. John said, “We beheld His glory” – and felt it. Should He reveal Himself, you would behold and feel His glory with respect to your own case, with respect to your own deep, deep needs as a black, black sinner. The glory of Christ is all His divine Person. Had He been other than (blessed be God!) He was – had any other than the eternal Son of God become incarnate and condescended to be “made sin,” his sufferings, his death would have been of no value, no merit.

Another thing that Philip must have preached, when he took the eunuch through that chapter in Isaiah, was *sin*. “His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” If ever you received

Him by faith, you received Him as a lost, a ruined sinner; you received Him in all the universal needs of your fallen nature. You received Him also not only as to what you are, but you received Him as to what He is, a suitable Saviour. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Where there is a gracious and vital experience, sin will be outstanding; not outstanding in your conduct, but in conviction. That chapter we were reading (Rom. 6) shows that union with Christ will produce the fruits of righteousness and holiness in life.

"He preached unto him Jesus" – His Person. Of course, preaching is to all men; the great thing is, my friends, what God makes the preaching to you. If He has purposes of salvation towards you, He will from time to time convey through the ministry to you a sense of His glory. You will know Him. He is distinguished by His dear people, made to them "fairer than the children of men." They see a beauty in His Person, in His incarnation; and there is a connection between what He is and condescended to become, and your experience and your salvation. Have you ever perceived that connection?

"He preached unto him Jesus," and preached *into* him Jesus. The Holy Ghost through Philip's preaching did take of the things of Christ and bring them into the eunuch's heart. He preached unto him the sufferings of Christ. O my friends, it is one thing to read that chapter (anybody can read it – there is not a hard word through the whole), but O the depths of it! To have this chapter personally applied will give you to feel both that grief and joy, that repentance and godly sorrow, which accompany salvation. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." You will never have any adequate sense of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings unless you have been well convinced of sin by the Holy Ghost, and are given to feel the love of God in Christ as the Holy Spirit makes known in your heart that He was wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities. He preached this unto him. Ah, it is not a little thing to be delivered from the power and dominion and kingdom of Satan, and to be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

He preached unto him also the substitutionary work of Christ. That He was a Substitute is a comfort to a poor sinner who sees in himself nothing but sin, and realises that he deserves nothing better than hell itself. A Substitute, a perfect Substitute! In order to this perfection of substitution, He took upon Him not the nature of angels but of Abraham. "The children being partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same," that He might stand as a Surety, a Substitute, as Mediator between God and men. Has He ever stood that

in your soul? Has He ever dwelt – this Lord Jesus – in your heart as your hope of glory because you have felt Him to be your Substitute, your Mediator, your blessed new and living way to God, a consecrated way?

“He preached unto him Jesus.” We read just now of a “body of sin.” It is very solemn, but it shows the completeness of sin in that particular connection. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed”; that is, the whole of sin. Sin has a kind of body; it has a head, a terrible head, Adam. “As in Adam all die.” Sin infused into Adam by the devil brought death. And it has a kind of body. Some of you may perhaps feel that body of sin and death in you. O the terrible completeness of sin! The apostle says, “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” It reigned right unto the death of Christ. The reign of sin terminated at the death of Christ, although His people experience the solemn power of sin in their members. But, says the apostle, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Now this brings in the point of the blessed substitution of the Lord Jesus Christ. “He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” My friends, if the Holy Ghost preaches Jesus to you as hanging upon the cross, and gives you to see your “old man,” that body of sin crucified with Him – to see your sins upon His sacred head – it will melt you in godly sorrow. You will never hate sin like you will hate it as receiving the blessing of pardon from the cross of Christ, and viewing your body of sin crucified with Him. I feel in experience there is no greater attainment than that. The apostle saw it, the Holy Ghost preached it into his heart, so that he said, “I am crucified with Christ.”

Philip preached unto him Jesus – the Mediator, the Forerunner. O it is good to have a Forerunner set before us as having entered for us into that that is within the veil. It does indeed give strong consolation to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of that blessed hope. You may depend upon it, Philip preached the Lord Jesus as the door of hope. Has He ever been so preached to you by the Spirit of God? Has your faith so beheld His infinite sufficiency and suitability and His divine merit, that He has eclipsed everything else to you?

Another thing which must have been spoken to the eunuch was this: “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” Where does the Lord see of the travail of His soul? Why, in the work of His own Spirit in the hearts of His dear people – and He is satisfied. Where does He see of the travail of His soul? Often doubtless He has seen it, not only in Nathanael under the fig tree, not only in the eunuch in going after the Lord in reading the Scriptures, but has He not seen some of you in secret, repenting sinners, self-accused, self-aborred sinners, pleading

for His mercy? Did He not see of the travail of His soul in the publican in the temple, praying, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? In the work of His Spirit in the souls of His unworthy people, He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

And it is very strongly inferred that Philip preached to the eunuch *baptism*. "The Lord Jesus, when He was baptized, came up straightway out of the water." It is well to notice that every recorded case of baptism was evidently by immersion. John did not go down to the river and bring up some water and sprinkle it on the Lord Jesus Christ. And, lo, the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove, and there was a voice out of heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." O what a declaration that is in a poor sinner's heart! a declaration of the divine Father concerning His beloved Son, His Servant whom He upheld. And He viewed in Him all the election of grace, for He was set up in the covenant as the foundation of all the purposes and counsels of God with respect to all that were chosen in Him. When He sees of the travail of His soul in His own people, what the Father said concerning His Son can be virtually said of them: He is well pleased in His dear people for the sake of His dear Son.

"He preached unto him" Christ's resurrection from the dead. There is a connection very blessed to notice when faith recognises it – a connection between the birth and death and resurrection of Christ. When Christ took human nature into union with His divine Person, His was a pure, immaculate birth. The union of "that holy Thing," begotten of the Holy Ghost, to His divine Person affected the whole of His work and His sufferings, and it affected His death. For He was God and Man in one Person, and being sinless in His Person, in His birth, and in His whole life, He could not die of necessity. His death was voluntary, and the voluntary and vicarious nature of His death is the salvation of His people. "I lay down My life for the sheep. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." Had the Lord Jesus died of necessity, the whole of salvation would have fallen to the ground; He would never have been a foundation of the church. The reason why He rose from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6. 4) was, first, because after His life of perfect obedience He died in order to give infinite satisfaction to the law. He who never broke the law fulfilled it and suffered its penalty for those that did break it. "For what the law could not do ... God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...." He did for His people what the law could not do. But when He had finished that work, He could not be holden of death; so that He was justified in His resurrection; it declared Him to be what He said He was, it declared that His work, His vicarious sufferings and death, were acceptable to God; it declared that the law was

absolutely satisfied. And this is *salvation*, and this is why His people will be raised from the dead – no other reason.

“He preached unto him Jesus” – that He was “declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1. 4). O my friends, when the Lord Jesus stooped, infinitely stooped, to be a suffering Man, He did not cease to be the glorious Son of God.

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” So it is very evident that Philip must have spoken to him something concerning baptism. We have the same thing with respect to Peter’s preaching – the Lord honoured it. “While Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word.... Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” So you get two things here – the gift of the Holy Ghost, and water baptism. “See, here is water; what doth hinder me?” “Can any man forbid?” Baptism is not essential for salvation; there are many in heaven now who were never baptized. There is no virtue in the external rite itself, the ordinance of baptism, any more than there is virtue in the actual bread and wine in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. But it is a sign, it is a profession of faith. It is a sign which the Lord Jesus has instituted in the church, and a very blessed sign it is. It sets before us the overwhelming sufferings and death, and the glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And His dear people, having been favoured in their souls with the testimony of the Holy Spirit that these things were done for them, are made willing in the day of God’s power, and are constrained by His love being shed abroad in their hearts to follow Christ in this sign. “Buried with Him by baptism into death,” to be raised with Him; and the effect, the outward sign of this union is that we “walk in newness of life.” Says the apostle, “He died unto sin once.... Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6. 10, 11).

“What doth hinder me to be baptized?” There may be many hindrances to some of the Lord’s seeking people. But the eunuch had them removed. O it is great when the Lord so clears your sky, when He answers every hard question, when He sets before you an open door, when you feel the testimony of the Spirit in your conscience, and that sweet, divine, spiritual peace by His blood, so as to say, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?”

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Not, If you are certain you are one of the elect. Of course, a right character *is* one of the elect, but O the mercy of God towards His dear people! “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Philip had



previously baptized a hypocrite, Simon. He was a sorcerer, a manipulator, a religious conjuror. He deceived Philip; he did not deceive God. But the Lord in mercy to Philip directed him to the wilderness, the desert. Not a likely place for much usefulness, we should think. It is well, my friends, not to look at things in an outward way. We may be taught this by some very painful lessons. We may look at things that appear prosperous, we may perhaps have some secret inclination to be somewhere other than where we are placed, "a larger field of usefulness"; but O the Lord knows where His people are. He knew this eunuch; He knew the woman of Samaria; He had seen Nathanael under the fig tree; He knew Ruth was in Moab; and He knows where to send His servants. O it is a mercy if He makes the ministry useful to the salvation of *one* soul!

So He turned Philip to the desert – had a sinner there to save, a seeking soul to bring to Christ. It was the same, you remember, when Abraham sent his servant to look for a wife for Isaac. You see there traced out this same divine sovereignty, this same foreknowledge, this same divine power and wisdom. Abraham's servant took notice of every movement of the Spirit until he was directed to the very person, Rebekah; and then it was asked of her by her own people, "Wilt thou go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." Now the same thing is wrought in the hearts of the Lord's people in the day of His power. "I will go." Why would she go? Why, the servant had given a description of Isaac, the bridegroom; gave her to understand what glory he had, and how that the father had given to Isaac all that he had. And she believed the report. So Isaiah commences that chapter which the eunuch was reading with: "Who hath believed our report?"

Now I believe that our dear friend who is venturing to walk in the ways of the Lord this day has believed this report. When a pastor stands before the same people from time to time, in watching for their souls there is something in his heart which senses out the things of the Spirit of God in the people where it is. Yes, she believed the report, she received the Lord Jesus, received Him by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the gospel. It is a great mercy, a humbling consideration, that the Lord should make use of a poor, feeble man in order to execute His tremendous purposes in bringing His dear people unto Himself.

"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." No other condition; and so this is sometimes called, and quite warrantably, "believers' baptism." "And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Well how are you going to know that? How are you to know that the Son of God is come? By what He has done in your soul. In very beautiful and simple language this confession is sometimes made; perhaps you do not know that you make such a confession. For instance,

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to save my soul from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.”

What is that? It is believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Peter believed it, and Jesus said to him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” Flesh and blood will never reveal the Son of God.

Well, my friends, this is the right way, the way to be led into the ordinances of the Lord’s house. “They shall ask their way to Zion with their faces thitherward.” O it is good to realise that there are some askers with their faces in the right direction, with their backs to the world; with their will, their affections, their desires, their hearts, toward God in Christ, because they need Him and because He makes Himself precious to them. I know these things can be distinctly felt, and it is no small mercy to realise that there is yet a remnant, a people that gather together, as we are gathered now, and sit before the Lord, their faces toward Him.

“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

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### BAPTISM = IMMERSION

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We cannot understand why, but in recent months different magazines have published articles *against* baptism by immersion. Are we mistaken? We believe that to be scripturally baptized in water, a person must be completely immersed.

Of course, we believe that God has eminently used “infant sprinklers” in preaching the glorious gospel of the grace of God. Their memory is dear to us. Witness the many gracious articles by non-Baptists that have appeared in this magazine throughout its long history.

It is not for the sake of controversy we write on this subject but (as many of our readers will have read the articles) for two reasons: 1. lest it be thought we have no scriptural grounds for our position; 2. lest those who are not established should be stumbled.

We trust in the spirit of love, we will write on three points:

- I. The meaning of the Greek word.
- II. Recorded instances of baptism in the New Testament.
- III. The symbolic meaning of baptism.

### I

Our New Testament word “baptize” is the Greek word *baptizo* left untranslated. What does the word mean? We ourselves have never

learned the language, and so have to rely entirely on the opinion of others.

However, it seems clear that the normal, everyday meaning of *baptizo* is “to dip,” “to immerse.” We have open before us the book *Baptizo-Dip-Only* by W.A. Jarrell, republished in Valley, Texas, in 1973 and 1978. Jarrell wrote to dozens of paedobaptist Greek scholars in ten different countries, and in every case their answer was that the true meaning of *baptizo* is to dip. Many of the answers in the book are facsimile copies of the answers received. So it is wrong to speak of immersion as a *mode* of baptism (*c.f.* sprinkling or pouring). Baptism is immersion.

We quote from J.C. Philpot (a classical scholar and Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford) in answer to a book written against immersion:

“We have examined, we believe, nearly every passage in which the word *baptizo* is used in the Greek authors, besides consulting the best lexicons in Latin, English and German, and as we shall presently show, we cannot find in any one of them that the Greek word *baptizo* ever means pouring, or sprinkling, or putting on.”

He further writes:

“The chief pity is that our translators did not render it, as they ought to have done, *dip*.”

Well do we remember A.V. Alexander, a Baptist who was First Lord of the Admiralty during the last War, stating that whenever he received communications from the Greek government of a ship being sunk, the word *baptizo* was always used!

It is readily agreed by all that sometimes *baptizo* is used in a secondary sense (just as “dip” is in English: to dip one’s headlights; to dip into a book, etc.), but “immerse” is always its primary meaning.

Indeed, most of the old paedobaptist divines confessed that baptism in Scripture was by immersion. We name just four: Luther, Calvin, Wesley and Chalmers.

*Luther*: “I could wish that such as are to be baptized should be completely immersed in water, according to the meaning of the word and the significance of the ordinance, as also without doubt it was instituted by Christ.”

*Calvin*: “The word baptize signified to immerse, and the rite of immersion was practised in the ancient church.”

*Wesley*: Romans 6. 4: “The allusion is to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.”

*Chalmers*: Romans 6. 4-7: “The original meaning of the word *baptism* is *immersion*.... We doubt not that the prevalent style of the

administration in the apostles' days was by the actual submerging of the whole body under water."

These were all "infant sprinklers," and we have many others who could be quoted – but think this should suffice.

Many will be startled to know (what is so often concealed) what the Church of England prayer book (in use for over 300 years) states. We have the book open before us, and quote exactly from the service for "The Public Baptism of Infants":

"And then naming it after them (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it) he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily." This is followed by: "But, if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it."

So throughout the history of the Church of England, immersion was the established form, and pouring (sprinkling is not mentioned!) is only allowed as a second best.

## II

The Holy Ghost has used the symbol of a burial for the ordinance of baptism.

"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" (Rom. 6. 4).

And again:

"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).

Now if words mean anything at all, surely immersion can best be compared to a burial, rather than sprinkling or pouring.

But we have the recorded instances of baptism in the New Testament.

Matthew chapter 3, speaking of John's baptism, tells us, "[They] were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." But what need of a river if a few drops of water would suffice? And why *in* the river?

At the end of the same chapter, we have the beautiful account of the baptism of the Lord Jesus – we believe immersed in the waters of Jordan to prefigure His awful baptism of suffering when immersed in His Father's wrath against the sins of His people.

"The waves of swelling grief  
Did o'er His bosom roll,  
And mountains of almighty wrath  
Lay heavy on His soul."

We read (verse 16): "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." They must first have gone down into the

water. The famous painting of the baptism of Jesus shows the Lord with John standing in the water, and John pouring water over His head. But why go right down into the water so that water could be poured on His head?

Later on we read (John 3. 23): "John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there." Why are we told this (with a "because") if not to emphasise that baptism equals immersion?

To us one of the clearest passages of Scripture is the baptism of the eunuch (Acts 8): "They went down both into the water.... And when they were come up out of the water...." What could be clearer? And whatever could the import of these words be if this were not immersion?

But we also read (verse 36): "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" But why wait till reaching "a certain water" till he could be baptized if a few drops of water would have been sufficient for sprinkling or pouring? The wealthy eunuch, "a man of great authority," would have had plenty of drinking water for himself (and any servants) for that long journey back to Ethiopia.

### III

We come now to the significance of what we believe: that baptism *is* immersion – no other. So far we have been debating, quoting scripture, etc., but this is the part we really love. Baptism is a beautiful ordinance. It is an ordinance for sinners. The baptismal pool represents the grave of the Lord Jesus.

"View the rite with understanding;  
Jesus' grave before you lies;  
Be interred at His commanding;  
After His example rise."

We see four things.

1. There is nothing saving in the ordinance. Salvation is by Christ alone. But as in immersion we see the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, in being baptized we openly declare that as sinners here is our only hope – in what is symbolised, in what Christ has done.

2. But then as we are "buried in baptism," we profess that we have died: that we are dead to our past life and any hope of salvation through the law. Then, also, that we live and desire to rise again to newness of life. All this is firmly based on Romans 6. 3, 4.

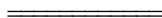
3. We see the sacred privilege of being favoured to follow our Lord and Master, as He Himself set the example:

"He Himself, in Jordan's river,  
Was immersed beneath the stream."

4. As Christ died, was buried, and rose again, our hope is that we too shall rise again at the resurrection of the just.

All this is very sacred to us and, we believe, firmly built on the foundation of the Word of God. These sacred things cannot be symbolised by a few drops of water, especially when poured on the head of an unknowing child.

In conclusion, we think of the many most sacred, solemn occasions when the beautiful ordinance has been administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. On many occasions the presence of the Lord has been felt, and those baptized have gone home “with the answer of a good conscience.” At one time such baptizings were in the river, and often those who came to scoff were silenced by the beauty and solemnity of the ordinance,\* some savingly affected. There are many instances of godly women venturing, even though their lives have been threatened by their ungodly husbands, and yet they were brought safely through.



### FAULTLESS

*From a sermon by Jesse Delves, 1968*

There is something necessary for a sin-defiled wretch to be presented faultless. What is that? It is that *blood must be shed*. Whose blood? The blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. Why so? Because without the shedding of blood there is no remission, and no possible hope of deliverance from the curse of a broken law. Invaluable blood! This is that sacred fountain opened for sin and all uncleanness, the wounds and blood of our incarnate God.

Well, if we are washed in that fountain, we shall be presented faultless. This most precious blood is beyond all material earthly value. The Apostle Peter states that we are “not redeemed 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). Silver and gold have their values in relation to things of this life, the necessities of this life and the provisions of providence; but the precious blood of Christ is necessary to our eternal redemption. The blood of Christ is necessary to everlasting life. The blood of Christ is necessary to the opening of the celestial gates and the welcoming in of every poor sinner,

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\* E.g.: “As I sat and looked on, my mind was greatly affected. I said within myself, ‘This is the baptism of the Bible’.... From this time I became a decided Baptist in principle.”  
*John Kershaw.*

as he feels to be in himself, but whose robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

I feel that it is vitally necessary to preach the atonement. When I was a boy I heard a minister preach in Sussex, and he said, "A lot of the preaching today is anaemic." I thought then it was a strange thing to say, but now fear it is perfectly true. There is a very sad drifting away from the great and vital and blessed doctrine of the atonement. But we are lost without the blood, *absolutely*. Yet if we are favoured to feel something of its application, then we shall realise more and more of its precious value to purge our sin-stained consciences and bring into the heart the sweet peace of heaven which passeth all understanding.

I am not talking fancifully; this is no flight of the brain. I believe, if not deceived, that I had a moment in my life once when there was, as I then felt, nothing between my soul and my God. How could that be? Through the precious blood of Christ which had made me nigh, so that every dark black cloud of sin disappeared and vanished. The hymnwriter says,

"It rises high and drowns the hills,  
Has neither shore nor bound;  
Now if we search to find our sins,  
Our sins can ne'er be found."

In a ministry of nearly forty years, I seem to have failed in setting forth as I would have done the tremendous value of the precious blood of Christ. But I do know this – I know my hope is there, and desire to say,

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die."

I wish it was more so; but now here is the point. We shall be presented faultless if we have a personal interest in the flowing wounds of our beloved Emmanuel. O to have just a moment to "creep beside Him as a worm, and see Him bleed for me"!

What a blessed presentation this will be in that day, will it not? But where will this be? "Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." I have looked at that verse many times in the Revelation where John saw in a vision that great multitude of whom it was said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Now if some blood gets on your clothing it stains it, does it not? But this precious blood of Christ purifies and cleanses. They are made "white in the blood of the Lamb." O what an amazing contemplation is this!

## THE GOSPEL IN JOB

*Dr. John ("Rabbi") Duncan (1796-1870) in a communion address  
on Job chapter 33*

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It is striking to have such a passage as we have in this chapter, with its bright gospel declarations, occurring in a book written at so early a period as the Book of Job. Sometimes, when brought to the light of the New Testament to shed light upon it, its very clearness has made it dark – as has been the case with many commentators, who say that it could not have been written at so early a time because it is so clear. But we have here some of these burstings forth of divine revelation in glimpses seeming almost to anticipate the light. Here then in this chapter in the Book of Job, drawn from the patriarchal time, from a family not Israelitish, by a man not an Israelite – Elihu – we have an account of how it comes to pass that God is a just God and a Saviour in saving this sinner, in delivering his soul from going down to the pit.

But how is any man brought to make the humbling, self-condemning confession here expressed? In the former part of this chapter some of the means which God uses to bring this about are enumerated. Here is one of them: "God speaketh once, yea twice.... In a dream, in a vision of the night" – frequent mode of communication then – "when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that He may withdraw man from his purpose and hide pride from man."

But another of the appointed means which God uses when He lays His hands upon a man is chastisement; He throws him upon a bed of sickness, of languishing: "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain ... yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers" (v. 14-22). O yes –

"Fools for their sin and their offence  
Do sore affliction bear;  
All kinds of meat their soul abhors,  
They to death's gates draw near."

But, "In grief they cry to God." And what do they cry? "I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profited me not."

The cry enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and He tells the man, "He will deliver his soul from going into the pit." But how? He deserves the pit, and how shall mercy be stretched out and exercised towards this poor wretch at the expense of the justice, the holiness, the truth of that God who has said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"? We are told how it is: "If there be a messenger with him ... one among a thousand, to shew unto man His uprightness." That is, to show unto man how God can be just and justify the ungodly, how He can be just and



deliver one who has sinned, and perverted the right unto no profit. If there be one "to shew unto man His uprightness, then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." We learn from this that afflictions are not sufficient. He was drawing near to death, he was on the brink of hell: God would thus hide pride from him, for the sinner was still proud, though he had sinned, and it profited him not. Affliction comes, but with it a messenger to show unto man how God can be just, and deliver the sinner. Then the man is brought in contrition, and by grace, to confess, "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not."

His confession is not meritorious, entitling to forgiveness, to deliverance. For it is added, "Then He is gracious unto him." It is an act of grace to deliver the self-confessed sinner. Confession and those penitential feelings which are in all true confession are not propitiatory. This man is making such confession, for it is to God, and so no lip-work; yet the confessing and forsaking of sin are no atonement for sin. If he do not go down to the pit, it will be of God's grace – free, and undeserved, and condescending grace. The man himself, from his very heart's core, will make this confession: "O to grace how great a debtor!"

God, who has "prepared Tophet of old, who has made the pile of it fire and much wood, His breath like a stream of brimstone kindling it," says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit." The pit is being dug for the workers of iniquity, but this worker of iniquity is a brand plucked out of the burning. Ah! but there is still the question, how? "I have found a ransom." A ransom there must be. Jehovah proclaims His name – "Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin"; but hear Him out: "And that will by no means clear the guilty." An enigma – "that will by no means clear the guilty." But God admits, and God hath "found a ransom." He who accepts the ransom hath "found" the ransom – hath "laid help upon One that is mighty" – "hath raised a chosen One from among the people." "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"; "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"; "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And God commendeth His love in this, for He hath found a ransom.

"Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ." "I have found a ransom" surpassing in value. The blood of Jesus Christ is surely a ransom for ten thousand pits. So He delivers this confessed transgressor. "He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit." It is heaven's mandate. And He who issues the command executes it. "He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the

light.” Deliverance from the pit – the conference of blessedness in light. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not *perish* (deliver him from going down to the pit), but have everlasting *life*” (his life shall see the light). The man’s due place is the pit, but the ransom was found. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” His place is the pit, but the ransom came into his place, and he shall not perish, but he shall live.

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### “THY SPEECH BEWRAYETH THEE”

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*“Let your speech be always with grace” (Col. 4. 6).*

The Epistle of James lays much emphasis on the way we speak. When made tender in the fear of God, we are very conscious of how far short we come – wrong words, sinful words, words spoken in a bad spirit. Yet there is a desire to honour the Lord in our speech. “Let the words of my mouth ... be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord my strength and my Redeemer.”

We realise what Charles Wesley meant when he said, “O for a thousand tongues ...” but often a child of God proves that one is too much! “The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (Jas. 3. 8).

We live in a day of lowering standards, and in a marked way the standard of Christian speech and conversation has deteriorated. The world, as in so many other things, has too much influence here.

A Christian should always be honest. It was said of the hymnwriter John Ryland that “you could trust his word as much as the angel Gabriel’s oath.” We would not willingly speak an untruth, but do we always do as we say? Are we punctual in fulfilling promises? If Christian business men, do we fall into the way of the world, saying we will do something, and then forgetting all about it?

How easy it is to slip into grumbling words! The world continually grumbles – about anything, everything, the weather, the government. “But ye have not so learned Christ.”

Also, how easy it is to fall into slipshod speech! In former days no one believing in divine sovereignty would use the words “lucky” and “fortunate”; but these are not only becoming part of Christian conversation, but are even appearing in print in Christian books. Also, it is not unusual to hear professed Christians, in giving directions, use such an expression as, “Your best bet is ....” No doubt all this is thoughtlessness; but in the Word of God, thoughtlessness is not an excuse, but a sin.

Yet another way in which the tone of Christian conversation is being debased is by the constant use of expletives. A Christian would not think of swearing but there are countless expletives which amount to swearing in a modified form. We have been surprised beyond measure during the last month or two to find respectable Christian magazines using expressions such as “by golly.” (It is not always realised that such, and similar, expressions were originated to take the place of the divine name.) “Let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay.”

Then what mischief is caused by the slanderer and backbiter! “A whisperer separateth chief friends.” How much havoc is wrought by gossiping! The old woman’s advice is still good. She said, “Before repeating anything it has to go through three sieves. Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?” The Lord deliver us from untrue, unkind, unnecessary conversation. “Report, say they, and we will report it.”

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” How sacred the example of the Lord Jesus! “Never man spake like this Man.”

To realise our sins and shortcomings will bring us with Isaiah to pray to have our lips touched with a live coal from off the altar (Isa. 6. 6, 7) – that is, to feel the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ to purge away the sins of our lips. We shall also seek to be kept: “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.” And O that we might speak more of the glories of Immanuel!

*From the 1982 Gospel Standard, published by special request.*

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## THE GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST 45th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Report of the Meeting held at Fenstanton Particular Baptist Chapel,  
Cambridgeshire, on Saturday afternoon, May 14th, 2011*

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The meeting commenced with hymn 88. The Chairman, Mr. G.D. Buss, then read Psalm 51, following which Mr. B.E. Izzard (Pastor, Fenstanton) prayed. The Chairman welcomed the good number of friends meeting, as he believed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church. Whilst we had much to mourn over and much to repent of, he felt that “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,” in Trust matters in being an instrument that God had used in the furtherance of His gospel in the support of His church over the years.

At the request of the Chairman, the Secretary, Mr. Playfoot then introduced the Annual Report and reported on the work of the Trust.

Drawing attention first to the printed report, he mentioned the stated objects and activities of the Trust. The crucial words were *to assist* the churches, and that is what the Trust tried to do. Much time is still spent with the sale of chapels, which is disheartening business, although from the sale proceeds benefit does accrue to others. For example, the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society and the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund had recently shared the net proceeds from Zion Chapel, Dartford, which had been sold to the Seventh Day Adventist Association for continued use as a place of worship. Out of chapel sales sometimes came another responsibility, the upkeep of a retained graveyard. In the last two years this had happened at Goodshawfold and Smallfield, and the Trust was in the process of being appointed trustee for another chapel site and graveyard in Wiltshire. Grants made to the churches were detailed in the accounts and the total paid out was considerably lower than in 2009, £26,000 against £64,000. He welcomed churches represented at the meeting which had financial needs concerning their chapel buildings to contact the Trust.

On the advisory side, the Trust was still helping with the documentation required on the retirement and appointment of trustees. This included making use of a provision in the Charities Acts to change the administrative provisions of trust deeds to permit the church to discharge a trustee who wished to retire. This power did not exist in most of our old chapel trust deeds. He again reminded trustees and churches of the need to register with the Land Registry the chapel property following new appointments of trustees. In referring to the trusts administered by the Gospel Standard Trust, he mentioned the Charity Commission guidance which, if followed, should enable the Trust to spend the capital in some of these funds. An example was the Zion Chapel Ely fund, where Fenstanton is one of the beneficiaries. The Annual Report included reference to the draft model constitution for Gospel Standard churches, and he referred to the progress report on page 127 of the April *Gospel Standard*. The Trust hoped to provide further information when available.

One area of real concern to the churches was the effect of the equality legislation, especially the Equality Act of 2010. Mr. Playfoot reported that the Trust's solicitors had advised on this difficult subject and the Trust had written to church correspondents earlier in May. The concern was to what extent, if at all, individuals favouring some alternative lifestyle could claim discrimination against a church. The advice from the Christian Institute was that churches would have protection against immoral equality laws, and a statement establishing the teaching of Scripture on these issues should be adopted by churches. The Trust prepared such a statement for our solicitors to consider in

conjunction with the exemptions for religious organisations, and they confirmed that the adoption of an equality statement would strengthen the churches' position if challenged. The idea was that discrimination is justified where certain behaviour conflicts with the religious beliefs of the church and is necessary to avoid causing offence on the grounds of religious belief to the persons of that religion or belief. The statement was being made available to church correspondents on request. It was felt it could be particularly beneficial to churches registered for marriage, but might also be relevant with respect to applications for membership, discipline and exclusion of members, appointment or removal of ministers and deacons. Each church might define its understanding of Scripture teaching on such subjects as marriage, same-sex relationships, all male ministry, female head covering, etc.

Turning to Publications, the printed report referred to the sale of the Sharnbrook Chapel, which had been used for book storage for almost twenty years. The Trust now had the funds to purchase suitable storage nearer to Harpenden, and meanwhile space was being rented in Luton. The Publications activities were small in financial terms, annual sales being less than £25,000, and another operating deficit had been suffered of over £20,000, but nevertheless our books were going far and wide, and it is the Lord's blessing on these books which the Committee seeks. The Trust was indebted to those who had written books over so many years, especially to Mr. Ramsbottom and to Mr. John Broome. Our books could be viewed online by visiting the Publications website.

Whilst the Gospel Standard group of churches is small, our books were being sent further afield into Africa and India via the Free Grace Evangelistic Association and Savannah Education Trust, etc., and the ongoing translation works of *Jesus the Way* into Portuguese and *Bible Doctrines* into Farsi, Urdu and Ugandan language all helped with the spreading of our books. Of the new books printed in 2010, Mr. Playfoot mentioned the little book for children, *When God made the World, the Six Days of Creation Explained to the Very Young*, which so far in 2011 was our highest seller. The extension of the *History of the Gospel Standard Magazine* published late last year had been well reviewed in the British Church newspaper which had reported that "this book is a fine production worthy of such a venerable little journal in the Lord's kingdom and a fascinating insight into one hundred and seventy-five years of remarkably uniform tradition and witness." The Committee sought to publish books of real spiritual benefit to both young and old, and one book he particularly mentioned was *According to Mine Heart*, the letters of Mr. J.K. Popham, compiled with an excellent introduction by Dr. Matthew Hyde.

The Secretary mentioned membership of the Trust, which had been gradually declining over the years. It was down almost nine per cent in the last ten years, and during 2010 there had been no new members. The Trust had been established to help the churches. The Committee and those connected with the Trust did what they could to help, so he encouraged others to join. Finally, he mentioned the Gospel Standard Library, the report and accounts of which are included with the Trust Report. Income was very much down on the previous year, and the Library did need financial support.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Playfoot for his report and for all he did for the Trust for love's sake on behalf of the churches. Likewise he thanked Dr. Philip Skelton for the work that he does in the Publications with much diligence and Mr. John Kingham for his great support. He also mentioned Mr. Abbott who does a tremendous amount behind the scenes. He said the Trust was deeply indebted to these friends who were willing to go the second and third mile on behalf of the cause of God and truth.

The members present then passed the resolution to receive the 2010 Annual Report and Financial Statements. By separate resolutions they also re-elected the three Committee members retiring in rotation, Messrs. T. Abbott, S.A. Hyde and J.A. Kingham, with no dissent.

The Chairman made a few more comments on the books, especially recommending the new book *The King James Bible, its History and its Excellence*. For this commemorative year Mr. Broome had done an excellent work in bringing together in one book articles he had written for the *Friendly Companion* some years ago, a lecture by Mr. Stephen Hyde on the King James version, the foreword to the original King James Bible written by Myles Smith, Bishop of Gloucester, and Mr. Alfred Levell's book, *The Old is Better*.

At the end of this business part of the meeting, the Chairman thanked the friends at Fenstanton for making us so welcome. Hymn 239 was then sung, following which Mr. Buss addressed the meeting on "The Necessity, Nature and Source of True Repentance." After the address, the meeting concluded with the singing of hymn 908 and the benediction.

*It is hoped that the address by Mr. Buss will be printed in a later Gospel Standard.*

D.J.P.

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Strong desires are like David's worthies, never satisfied till they come to the water of life.

*Richard Sibbes*

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**John MacArthur: Servant of the Lord and Flock**, by Iain Murray; hardback with coloured illustrations; 250 pages; price £14.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

After receiving this book with a request for review, we were struck by three things. How unusual for a minister's biography to appear during his lifetime! How completely different the background of John MacArthur's ministry to our own churches! How completely different this book from Iain Murray's last one on John Knox!

Now the name of John MacArthur was barely known to us – only that he is a popular evangelical minister in the United States (in Los Angeles), ministering to huge congregations. Much of the book we found uninteresting, and not particularly helpful – the places where he travelled; the conferences at which he spoke; the vast organisation behind his ministry, etc. Other parts we found very interesting and most profitable.

Some things about Dr. MacArthur were very pleasing: his seriousness; his modesty; his devotion to the infallible Word of God; his objection to "easy-believism" and insistence on a real work of the Spirit of God. We noticed that he met Mother Theresa and, despite her wonderful charitable work, was not convinced of any godliness. Likewise he would not support Billy Graham. What seemed so different was the whole ethos of his work, and the overemphasis on various musical instruments, etc., in worship.

Obviously John MacArthur is a very remarkable, able, sincere man.

To us, what was most enlightening was to learn of the general evangelical scene in U.S.A. – these things against which Dr. MacArthur contends. "Fundamentalism" is not what so many in England think, a sincere belief in the fundamentals of the Word of God, but rather an anti-Calvinistic, dispensational system. Most revealing was it to learn that a vast number of evangelicals in the U.S.A. do *not* expect any change of life after conversion, insisting that this is bringing in the law and works! It would be most helpful for our young people to be warned against these things.

Having written this, we still wonder *why* Banner of Truth have published this biography?

**John Calvin – Man of God's Word**, by Peter Barnes; paperback; 136 pages; price £5.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This book is not a life of John Calvin but rather a brief study to show the debt owed by the church to Calvin as a theologian, commentator and preacher. Calvin's teaching that "everything pertaining to Christianity was prescribed and included in the Scriptures" is examined in detail. Extracts from his sermons and commentaries are used extensively. To give just one example: "Our faith must be totally grounded upon that Word, as much as it would be if the heavens had opened a hundred thousand times and revealed the glory of God." The author endeavours to show that Calvin, contrary to popular thinking, was restrained in his expositions, never wanting to claim more than Scripture revealed. The modern debates about Calvin's position on the inerrancy of Scripture are dealt

with at some length. A number of Calvin's lively and forceful expressions are given: "When the devil lights the fire he also pumps the bellows."

There are many Scripture references throughout the book, although no Scripture quotations. At the end of the book we were very sorry to find in Appendix 1 five separate verses of Scripture which appear to be taken from a modern translation of the Bible, followed by Calvin's comments on the text. This treatment completely destroys the feel of the times in which Calvin preached. The book would have been much enhanced if the texts had been taken from the Geneva Bible (or the AV). Appendix 2 contains Calvin's Preface to the Geneva Bible of 1546. The book tells us nothing about the author, but we understand that Dr. Peter Barnes is a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

T.H.W. Scott, Harpenden

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## OBITUARY

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**John Albert Watts**, a member of the church at Bethel, Luton, for 43 years and deacon for 41 years, passed away on June 13th, 2011, aged 91.

Mr. Watts left a detailed record of his life, and the following is mainly taken from his writings.

"I believe the Lord began with me when I was very young. Long before starting school at the age of five, my young mind was full of questionings as to what I was, why I was born and where I would go when I died. I was a mystery to myself.

"When I was six or seven years old, my father was baptized and I distinctly remember feeling that something very wonderful had happened to him. I did not know what it was, but I knew that God had made him different. I looked upon him with a kind of awe. I knew that when he died, God would take him to heaven and I wondered whether one day something just as wonderful might happen to me so that when I died, I might go to heaven as well. Even at that young age I knew that Dad had not changed himself, but that God had done something inside him which meant that in some way I could not understand, there was a new and special relationship between him and God.

"At the age of eleven, I had a remarkable answer to prayer in a school matter. The memory of this has remained with me throughout my life." (Things were not going well at school and he felt absolutely bored. His mother had taught him every night to kneel down by his bed and say a prayer, but he had heard her say one day to his two older sisters, "If there is anything special on your mind, when you have said your prayer, you pray for it, because God will listen." So he thought one night he would do this, and prayed what he thought was really a very stupid and foolish prayer. He said, 'Please, God, let something happen,' and then he was so ashamed he jumped into bed and covered his head with the bedclothes. Shortly after this his parents made an important announcement. He was going to have to leave school and attend another school, which had a dreadful reputation. But he felt, There is a God in heaven; he is almighty, and He has answered my prayer. He never forgot this.)

When Mr. Watts was a youngish boy, everyone at Bethel thought he was very godly and he himself began to think so too – so much so that when he



started work at the age of fourteen, he spent most of his time, and the work time, trying to convert the workers, speaking to them about the things of God. His job was to go from place to place with messages and so on, and he spent much time speaking about religious things, warning the wicked, enduring much persecution and scorn, and in this he was sure that he was right, but his employers felt they could not continue him in employment with this going on, and he lost his job. He had one or two very striking, solemn experiences and it became clear to him that his religion was completely, utterly wrong, and for well over thirty years after that, he was in great darkness, spiritual distress, bondage, deep conviction of sin, feeling that he was lost.

His own account continues:

"I came into increased exercise concerning the safety of my never-dying soul. I knew there was a false profession of religion as well as a true one. This fact was ingrained in me from early childhood and I heard constant warnings from my parents and from chapel about a 'wrong religion.' The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 made a deep impression upon me. I was more religious than most other boys of my age, but I had great conflicts of mind for many years as to whether my religion was of God or whether it was all made up by myself. In providential things I felt I had received many answers to prayer, but I became very confused and muddled when so many things in my life went completely opposite to what I thought were clear answers to prayer.

"There was a time in my middle teens when I came under the influence of men at work and began to doubt the very existence of God and was persuaded to read infidel books. For a time I dabbled in a study of psychology and also tried to analyse religion logically, examining other faiths besides the Christian faith. These things did not help me at all, but they did bring me to feel that I lacked the one vital thing in real religion. I had to prove by bitter experience that I could not 'by searching find out God' (Job 11. 7). This hurt my pride, especially when I saw others believing so easily (as I thought), without all the turmoils and anguish of soul to which I was continually subject.

"In 1941, I was called up into the army to serve in the Second World War. During part of this time, I was stationed at Chilwell near Nottingham and whenever I could, I attended Chaucer Street Chapel, Nottingham. Here I met Mr. F. Foster, the pastor, who took a great interest in me and spent many hours talking with me, both in his own home and when walking along the banks of the river Trent on my 'leave days.' I shall never forget those penetrating talks and his searching questions. Dear Mr. Foster! He knew by experience the pathway in which I was walking and he was made the instrument in the Lord's hands of hunting me out of all my 'refuges of lies' (Isa. 28. 15, 17). His ministry and his private conversation cut me up root and branch and left me feeling completely destitute of any saving knowledge of divine truth. But it did something else as well. It brought me into the experience of Proverbs 2. 1-6, especially verses 3-6, which became the substance of my constant prayers.

"For a long time after this, I laboured under the curse of the law, sometimes being raised up to a hope of finding mercy, only to hear the words ringing repeatedly in my ears, 'Turn thee yet again, son of man, thou shalt see greater abominations than these' (Ezek. 8. 15). O the hidden evils of the human heart when revealed by the Spirit of God! I was troubled because I could not find any among my friends or companions who knew or understood this pathway. I

seemed to be like a 'sparrow alone on the housetop' (Psa. 102. 7). Yet I must testify to the help I frequently received from the ministry of the Word. O how valuable is an experimental ministry which traces out the experiences of a living soul labouring under the curse of a broken law! I could write much about those years when hymn 316 was the language of my heart, clinging to the last verse, knowing that 'Something yet can do the deed,' but more often than not, despairing of ever finding it. Well might John Newton exclaim, 'O could I but believe, then all would easy be.' This was my sad complaint for many years. Hymns 744 and 761 were the language of my soul perpetually.

"During my years in the army, passages of Scripture such as Hebrews 6. 4-6 and Hebrews 12. 17 followed me wherever I went and for a long time I feared I should never become a true believer. I knew the truth in my head. It is also true to say that I dearly loved the truth. Certainly I vehemently contended for it amongst my friends and in Christian meetings in the army camps. I would have nothing to do with free will or anything which detracted in any way from the sovereignty of God, but I knew that 'the one thing needful' was still lacking in my experience. My soul seemed almost to burst sometimes with the prayer, 'Give me Christ, or else I die,' but still the blessing was withheld and I went for long periods in this state, immersing myself in my army duties which were very demanding and in which I was given a remarkable measure of success, and in which I saw in unmistakable ways the providential hand of the Lord preserving and watching over me.

"After the war, I joined the family retail business and in 1948 I married my dear wife, and shared with her my spiritual experiences and anxieties. We used to talk for hours asking ourselves and each other, were these the operations of the Spirit of God upon our hearts – or was it all natural religion – just the effects of being brought up in a religious home and attending chapel all our lives?

"So we went on, year after year, often absorbed with the trials and concerns of business, home and family life, but spiritually 'still seeking rest but finding none.' Altogether I remained in a state of spiritual bondage for thirty-four years. But in 1964, when I was told that Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom was coming to Bethel, Luton, for the first three months of 1965 with a view to the pastorate, an intense longing sprang up in my heart that his ministry might be used to bring my soul into gospel liberty. I cannot describe the labour and anticipation of my heart during the last weeks of 1964. I was 'up to my eyes' in business troubles and problems, but underneath there was a hopeful feeling that these were the 'darkest hours before the dawn.'

"On the first Lord's day in 1965, Mr. Ramsbottom preached from Isaiah 45. 2 and this day left a deep impression upon me, but it was on the second Lord's day that the Word came to me with divine power. Mr. Ramsbottom preached in the morning about Lazarus being raised from the dead, his text being, 'Loose him and let him go' (John 11. 44). During his sermon he said that Lazarus needed two words of almighty power. The first was, 'Lazarus, come forth,' and the second, 'Loose him and let him go.' He then spoke as follows: 'When Lazarus came forth from the grave, he had life but he did not have liberty. Life had been communicated and every faltering step he tried to take was in the right direction – towards the voice that had called him out of the grave – but he was bound hand and foot with graveclothes. He could not free himself. He needed a second divine word of command, "Loose him and let him go."'

Mr. Ramsbottom then said that this is the spiritual condition of some of the Lord's people. They have been called out of nature's darkness – out of the grave of their lost and ruined condition – but they remain in a state of spiritual bondage. They have life but they do not have liberty. In Lazarus's case the interval between life and liberty was a short one but, in the mysterious providence of God, that interval spiritually may be a long one for some of the Lord's people.

"Remarkably, this was not the appointed time for my soul's deliverance. I had to wait for another three years before this took place. But this was the special time when a shaft of divine light shone into my dark soul under the preached Word. Mr. Ramsbottom's words were conveyed with divine power to my heart by the Holy Spirit of God. I saw that for about thirty-four years I had had spiritual life but had not yet found liberty. It was like a spiritual diagnosis. Something like going to a doctor feeling very ill and having the illness diagnosed. The diagnosis, in itself, does not remedy the condition, but what a relief to have the illness made known and to be given a good hope of finding a remedy! And what a hope sprang up in my soul that the wise Physician, who 'healeth all disorders of the soul,' might be pleased in His own time and way to have mercy and compassion even upon me! Strong hope was given that,

‘The time of love would come,  
When I should surely see,  
Not only that He shed His blood,  
But I should say, “For me.”’

"About this time, the words from Ephesians 2. 1, were applied to my soul with power: ‘And you hath He quickened,’ the emphasis being upon the word, ‘hath.’ This was a great comfort to me during the three years which followed.

"The three years 1965 to 1968 were among the most important years of my life. First, I had now ‘some solid ground to rest upon’ (see verse 2 of hymn 935). Second, I was, by degrees, made willing by the Lord to sell all my business interests and devote myself to the Lord's work if this was His will. Third, I was approached by Mr. Jesse Delves asking whether I would be willing to help my father with some of the Bethesda work. (Father was at that time the Secretary of the Bethesda Fund and owing to old age was finding it difficult to cope.) Fourth, there was the mysterious providence of God respecting the pastorate at Bethel, Mr. Ramsbottom feeling unable to accept the pastorate until January 1967 and then only as ‘a venture of faith.’ These were trying years indeed!"

In the early months of 1968 the confusion and perplexity of his soul had increased to such an extent that he was advised by his doctor to leave home for a complete month's rest. He fervently hoped that during this time the Lord would appear for the deliverance of his soul, but was disappointed to return home early in June without what he wanted. Although there had been some profit in the various services attended, and he was fully restored physically and mentally, there remained a thick cloud over his soul.

He wrote: "For a fortnight after my return home, there seemed nothing in the preaching to touch my case, but on Sunday, June 16th, Mr. Ramsbottom's morning text was from Genesis 5. 29, ‘And he called his name Noah’ (margin, ‘Rest’ or ‘Comfort’) saying, ‘This same shall comfort us,’ etc. In the course of his sermon, but more particularly in his prayer, Mr. Ramsbottom spoke of Christ as the sinner's Advocate and of the ‘rest’ or ‘comfort’ which a sinner finds when

he is enabled by the grace of God to look away from self and to place all his soul's concerns in the hands of the heavenly Advocate.

"On the following Sunday, June 23rd, Mr. Ramsbottom's text was from Job 5. 17-19, particularly the words, 'Despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty,' and I fell under the conviction of this, being persuaded in my mind that I had been guilty of despising the chastening of the Lord in refusing to heed the many warnings of a providential kind in connection with my business affairs, to give up the main part of the work in which I was then engaged. On the Wednesday of that week, acting under this conviction, I took the first positive step to heed the chastening hand of God, by writing to the Luton Corporation to give six months' notice to quit my business premises. In retrospect, it appears that the Lord honoured that step; it is also clear to me now that I should have taken the step much sooner.

"Tuesday, July 2nd, 1968\* is a day which I hope never to forget while memory lasts. The morning post brought a letter from Mr. Ramsbottom." This letter mentioned the safety of being brought to place all the concern's of the soul in the hands of the Advocate, and concluded, "I feel I can repeat what I said a fortnight ago concerning the Advocate. A person who can speak this language will get to heaven, because it is the nature of saving faith:

'Thou sinner's Advocate with God  
My only hope is in Thy blood,  
Thou all-atoning Lamb.'

"Then you can rest here. To rest elsewhere is to rest short. To seek more to rest on is to dictate. But to rest in Christ is faith. This is the 'rest that remaineth to the people of God.'"

Mr. Watts continues: "This letter suited my case entirely and I seemed to accept in my soul the inescapability of the conclusions contained in it. During the day, amidst much business activity, my mind constantly returned to the truths contained in the letter and the convictions deepened that I really had committed my soul into the hands of the Lord, and that, *if so* the Lord could not and would not fail. Then I looked for my burden, and somehow felt it had either gone or was not pressing upon me as it had been. Then came the question: 'Has the Lord taken it?' 'If I haven't got it, where is it if the Lord hasn't got it?' and similar questions.

"After getting to bed and re-reading Mr. Ramsbottom's letter, the third verse of Hymn 106 came to my mind and, not at that time knowing the number of the hymn, I looked it up in the index and read the last two verses:

'Satan avaunt; stand off ye foes;  
In vain ye rail, in vain oppose;  
Your cancelled claim no more obtrude,  
He's mine; I bought him with my blood.

'Sinner, thou stand'st in Me complete;  
Though they accuse thee I acquit;

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\* So sacred was this day to him that, in his instructions concerning the words on his gravestone, he wished for this date to be mentioned.

I bore for thee the avenging ire,  
And plucked thee burning from the fire.'

"As I read the hymn, it seemed as though the Lord was telling Satan to depart from me and to leave me quite alone whilst He took possession of my soul. Jesus appeared as the sinner's Advocate and spoke with authority to Satan who reluctantly but instantly obeyed. It was as though I saw a court of law, with God as an angry Judge frowning upon me and Satan accusing me; then to see the Lord Jesus rising on my behalf, rebuking Satan, and proceeding to intercede for me before the Father's throne. My soul seemed to leap within me as I saw Jesus rise on my behalf; my whole hope was centred upon Him: I had not one word to say in my own defence even had I been asked, but I felt I had completely lost my burden and that Christ had it in His possession and that He knew the intricacies of my case much better than I knew them myself. I saw that if He took the case in hand – and I felt that He was actually doing so – then the issue must inevitably be successful, and I would receive in due time, a full and complete discharge."

This was followed by several days of blessing, and taking his pastor to preach at Ripley Anniversary, the text was, "Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Mr. Watts felt he was in that joy which no man could take from him. At this time, many passages of Scripture and hymns were made precious to him, and he was so favoured that for days he could not work. He was overwhelmed with the love of Christ. He could only go to the houses of the godly and speak to them of the love that he had found.

Shortly after this he came before the church to give his testimony, and specially requested to pass over all the years of darkness and sorrow, and just begin with the last week or two. His heart was overflowing with the love of Christ. He started his testimony: "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until He please." And when he came to the end of his testimony, he said,

"But when this lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,"

and then he broke down in tears and could not speak another word.

One night around this time he was overwhelmed by a remarkable discovery to his soul of the joy of Christ in saving poor sinners. This seemed to be blessing upon blessing and the tears flowed copiously. He read the following passage from *Ears from Harvested Sheaves*: "God rejoices as much in saving your soul as you can rejoice in your soul being saved. Say I 'as much?' His joy is infinite, and yours is finite; His the joy of God, and yours but the joy of man. Do you believe that God rejoices to save, delights in saving? Why else should He have given His dear Son? Do the angels rejoice over repenting sinners? Is there no joy then in the bosom of God to save a sinner too?" He wrote, "The thought that Christ was more pleased to save me than I was pleased to be saved quite overwhelmed me: this seemed altogether too good to be true and with the Psalmist I cried out, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.' And me so unworthy! so stubborn; so unbelieving; so very hard and cold and so terribly unresponsive and at times indifferent. To think that while I was living in stubborn unbelief during thirty-four years of hardness, the Lord watched over me 'determined to save.'"

At his baptism, his Pastor preached from Psalm 98. 1: "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvellous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory." At first Mr. Watts thought Mr. Ramsbottom had chosen a very ordinary, unusual text to preach from, and could not see anything in it at all, but by the end of the service, he realised there was not a more suitable, better word in all Scripture.

In his days of darkness and bondage, Mr. Watts was always sceptical about people very enthusiastically singing, "Immortal honours rest on Jesus' head," but after his deliverance, while on holiday in Norfolk, he was at Norwich chapel, and he suddenly realised the hymn "Immortal honours" was given out and he was singing it for the first time from his heart, feeling it, with an interest in it. He was so overwhelmed that he had to leave the chapel and go out.

For twenty-one years, Mr. Watts was General Secretary of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund, and he was given much wisdom and ability to deal with the various matters which arose. His kindness to residents, staff and those on the waiting list was often appreciated, and it was not unusual in those days for elderly friends to be in urgent need of care, and yet there were no vacancies. In writing to them, Mr. Watts frequently quoted the lines,

"But when the Lord's people have need,  
His goodness will find out a way."

He is also remembered as an excellent member of the Gospel Standard Committee.

Following serious heart trouble, Mr. Watts had to undergo a heart bypass operation in May 1995, remarkably the operation being carried out at the same time as a special prayer meeting was being held at Bethel. During this illness, the words in Psalm 34. 7 were very special to him: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

In his old age, feeling that his memory was failing, he commenced a diary, and a few extracts follow:

"2.1.03: Last year, at this time, I thought that the year 2002 would prove to be my last. Through mercy, my life has been spared and I wonder for what purpose? May the Lord enable me to honour Him in whatever remains of my life here below. May He also prepare me for eternity. What a wonderful thing it is to have a 'good hope through grace' of eternal life when this present life ends! Cannot help thinking that this year will probably be my last.

"5.1.03: Very thankful to be well enough to attend both services at Bethel today – the first Lord's day in the year; also the Lord's supper in the evening. Felt the privilege of a faithful ministry now entering its 37th year – 39th year calculating from the first three-month trial period in 1965. Felt it to be a sacred privilege to be at the Lord's table at the beginning of another year.

"15.1.03: A good day spiritually! The February *Gospel Standard* proofs arrived at last from the printers – much later in the month than usual (Mr. Watts ably assisted with the proof-reading for forty years, until a few months before he died). It was essential to leave everything else to concentrate on checking these. Devoted practically the whole day to this work. 'Work,' did I say? No! This has been a real pleasure and 'a means of grace' to our souls today! If anyone who reads this wishes to know more, let him (or her) obtain a copy of the February

2003 *Gospel Standard* and read it from cover to cover! The sermon by John Hazelton entitled 'The Blood of the Lamb' was especially profitable.

"23.1.03: During the evening I had a glimpse of the glory of Christ and was overcome by it. The promise of Revelation 1. 3 had led me to pray one night that the Lord would grant me a blessing and the Lord most graciously answered prayer. How compassionate is our gracious God! And how great is His glory when He is seen, as John saw Him, as in Revelation 4. 2, 3: 'And behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.' Meditation was sweet on such a glorious subject!

In August/September 2003, he spent over a week in hospital, and wrote: "I was taken by ambulance to hospital in the early hours of Sunday morning, August 31st. I will not record the details of my physical troubles, but I should like to place on record that a little time before the ambulance was called at about 2.30 a.m. on Sunday morning, I prayed silently to God that He would be with me to help me in my time of pain and need and almost immediately the words came to me, 'I am with thee, Israel passing through the fire.' This produced a feeling of calmness in my soul – complete submission to the will of the Lord, whether my illness was for death or not.

"This calmness remained with me throughout my stay in hospital. Incidentally, as I thought upon those words, I assumed they were in Scripture just as they came to me, but of course they are not. The exact words are in hymn 758 but the truth of them is in Isaiah 43. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ... when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.'

"Also, I was told on the day previous to my discharge from hospital, that I 'could go home tomorrow.' I awoke early the following morning and I immediately thought, 'going home,' and that my wife would be bringing my clothes to the hospital. This led to very beautiful thoughts about the day which I hoped would come at some time, when I should go home to heaven and be clothed then, not in garments of my own, but in the white robe of the righteousness of Christ. For a few moments my soul was melted by a view by faith of that blessed time which will come to all the Lord's chosen people and I felt, 'Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing, while heaven's resounding mansions ring, with shouts of sovereign grace.'"

It was Mr. Watts' delight to speak of sovereign grace, and it was his special request that the hymn, "Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding" should be sung at his graveside.

In July 2008, at the end of the quarterly church meeting, Mr. Watts asked to speak. He said, "It is exactly forty years to the day since I gave my testimony before the church here at Bethel." But he said, "I didn't finish it. Could I have permission to finish it now?" He said, "I will quote the whole verse:

'But when this lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,  
Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing Thy power to save.'"

Coming to his last days, Mr. Watts often suffered with angina and by the beginning of 2011 was becoming increasingly unwell and weak. In the Pastor's absence, he gave out the hymns at chapel for the last time at the new year's service, and was unable to be at Bethel many times after this. He often felt his end was near, and on one occasion quoted, "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," and added, "Blessed prospect." He then said, "I think I am nearly finished with things here," and quoted, "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

In March he suffered a heart attack and was taken into hospital. About ten years earlier, the Lord had spoken the word powerfully to him: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty," and while in hospital, he was favoured with a foretaste of heaven, and heard the singing of the redeemed in heaven. He said he could see them in three companies, and the third company were blowing the trumpets of victory, and all this joined up with his baptizing sermon, singing to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously. When his Pastor asked him if he saw the King in His beauty, he replied, "No; He was there, but He was just a little bit beyond. I could feel His presence, but I couldn't see Him. That is something I have to wait for."

Although not expecting to come out of hospital, he was eventually discharged and entered the Harpenden Bethesda Home, where he spent the last few weeks of his life. He was specially helped in hearing a sermon over the relay on May 29th from Hebrews 8. 1: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

On June 14th, Mr. Watts had been due to attend an appointment at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital, and his widow writes, "I wanted to cancel this, as he was so unwell and I felt sure he would be kept in hospital. Previously we had made an agreement between us that neither of us wanted to die in hospital. John did not wish me to cancel the appointment; he felt there might be something that could be done to relieve the pain and suffering. The Lord in His compassion and mercy took the whole disposing of the matter right out of our hands and took my dearly-loved John to Himself only hours before the day of the appointment." She felt that the Lord's interposition was so remarkable at the end.

Mr. Watts enjoyed the chapel anniversary services on June 12th and the prayer meeting the following day, and shortly after this he was peacefully taken to enjoy the fulfilment of that promise, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty."

Mr. Watts was one of my deacons for many years, and was always loyal to me, especially to my ministry. He had a great love for Bethel. It was his delight to hold the new babies after the service when they were brought to chapel for the first time, and we know he prayed for them. He had a great interest in the young people, and was most kind when any came forward for church membership. He will be much missed.

*Editor*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
NOVEMBER 2011

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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 GOSPEL MINISTER**

*Sermon preached by Mr. G.D. Buss at the Meetings of the  
Gospel Standard Society at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester,  
on September 10th, 2011*

**Text:** “Whereof I was made a minister” (Eph. 3. 7).

The Apostle Paul in this chapter and the next is dwelling on the office of the gospel ministry, and – I use the word guardedly and rightly – his own qualification for it. In laying before us the nature of the gospel ministry and his own credentials that he felt he had, he has left on record under the Holy Ghost’s divine inspiration a pattern for the church of Christ to the end of time.

One thing is very certain: whenever a church or a group of churches begins to undervalue the gospel ministry, you can be sure the Spirit is beginning to depart. It was the Reformation principle that the Word of God should be central to worship, and the only command given to the gospel minister to use as his reference is *the Word*. “Preach *the Word*” – not opinions, not theories, not speculation. He is to preach *the Word*. You may say, “But I am not called to be a gospel minister.” No, that may be so. God alone knows what He may do in the hearts and lives of one and another in due course; we know not, nor are we going to speculate this afternoon. But of this I am sure, that when I sat in the pew, if I had understood more about the nature of the gospel ministry, I believe I would have been – and I say this rightly – a better hearer. The ministry does not come like turning on a tap for a drink of water whenever you want one. No, it is something profoundly deeper than that. This is what Paul is emphasising before us, particularly that word *made*. “Whereof I was *made* a minister.”

Really, there are just three things I want to bring before you. First of all, who is it who makes the minister? Who made Paul a minister? Did he make himself? Did the other apostles make him? The second question we must ask is, to whom was he to minister? For be sure of this, a man rightly made a minister has a ministry, those to whom he is to be ministering. And thirdly, what is his ministry? What is he to be about? What is to be his task, his labour? So we have three questions. Who makes a gospel minister? To whom does the gospel minister, minister? And thirdly, what is his ministry? All three questions Paul

answers both here and elsewhere in his epistles, and may the Holy Ghost help us to answer those three questions.

But before we come to that, what do you understand by the word *minister*? The Lord Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry – and He is the Minister with a capital M – had this to say about it: “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Now listen to this verse, dear friends. O what an abundance of sermons could be preached from this next verse if God the Holy Ghost gave us liberty to do so: “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

I judge, dear friends, that was Paul’s pattern when he considered what the word *minister* meant. It is a servant. In the context of the church of Christ, it is a servant whom Christ has ordained to minister, and to attend to the needs of His church. That word *edifying* is spoken of in the next chapter, and the gospel minister if he is rightly sent is to be one who edifies, a minister then who ministers to the needs of the church of Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ set the pattern when He gave His life a ransom for many. John in his Epistle says that if Christ laid down His life, as He did, we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Not, dear friends, that we lay them down to atone for the brethren’s sins. That could never be. Paul could never atone for anyone’s sins, nor could John either. But just as our Saviour laid down His life a ransom for many on the behalf of the church, the election of grace, so a gospel minister is called to do the same in this sense: wholeheartedly to engage in that which God has called him to for the church’s sake.

“Whereof I was made a minister.” Now with God’s help let us look at those three questions and may God help us to answer them.

1. The first is, *who makes a minister*? It is a very important question, for one thing is very certain: not all are called to be ministers in the sense I am speaking of this afternoon. Of course, in one sense, every member of Christ’s mystical body is a witness. There is no doubt about that. As one good man put it,

“We are living a gospel, a chapter each day,  
In the things that we do and the things that we say.  
Men hear what we say, they watch what we do;  
So what is the gospel according to you?”

So that is a word which may be apposite in our work place, in our home, in the church of God, where we live. What sort of gospel are we living and what sort of witness is it giving, and what sort of ministry in that sense is it giving?

But that is not what Paul is speaking of here. No, Paul is speaking of a distinct office in the New Testament church of Christ as ordained by the great Head of the church Himself, who alone has a right to raise up, appoint, anoint gospel ministers. So a minister is not man-made. He is not self-made. He is not church-made. He is not book-made. He is Holy Ghost-made, and I say that most reverently. It is under the anointing work of the Holy Ghost, bringing a divine appointment in that man's life and in the outworking of it under God's hand. It is God that makes a minister. And dear friend, those of us who stand in a pulpit need often to examine our credentials, for if we are self-made, man-made, church-made or book-made, or any other way of putting a man in the pulpit, we cannot expect God to honour it or to bless it. Paul could say, writing to the church through Timothy, God "who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." Paul had been put into that office by God Himself.

"Whereof I was made a minister." Well then, we must ask the next question. How does God make a minister? What does God do to make a minister of a poor, sinful man? For though the angels are called ministering spirits, they are not called to the ministry in the sense that sinful men are called by God's grace to proclaim the gospel as sinners to sinners. It is "by the foolishness of preaching God is determined to save them that believe." So to answer that part of our question, let us see how Paul was made a minister.

First of all, we read of Paul as Saul of Tarsus. No doubt the poor man thought he was exercising quite an effective ministry. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was keeping the law, as he thought, in all its extent. His prayers no doubt were admired and his advice looked up to. He had had the very best education, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. Saul of Tarsus thought he was a minister among ministers. Yet dear friends, that was all of the flesh, and when God did take him in hand and made him what he says here, all that had to go. He had to be emptied of all that self-made religion, all of that self-made profession, and he had to become a poor, guilty, undone, lost, wretched sinner needing mercy, and that is what happened on the Damascus road when Jesus of Nazareth, Immanuel, spoke from heaven with that audible voice: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? ... It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." "Who art Thou, Lord?" was the question. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And there it began as clay in the hands of the Potter. This humbled, emptied, stripped man began to serve a Master he had never served before and to begin a ministry he had never entered into before. God made Saul of Tarsus into a minister, Paul. The word Saul means "destroyer." The word Paul means "worker." God changed him

from being a destroyer to a worker. He was a chosen vessel unto God. The Lord said that to Ananias who demurred at going to see him and visit him. "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me." I have raised him up for this very purpose, that he should be a minister, to minister to the church of the living God, particularly among the Gentiles.

What else did God do with His servant Paul? Friends, He taught him three vital things. First of all, he came face to face, as every minister must in degree according to the degree that God gives the Spirit, with *a holy God*. Friends, I do believe, and I speak to myself as much as to any other man who stands in our pulpits, in many respects we have lost a sense of God's holiness. Dear Isaiah in chapter 6 of his prophecy tells us when he came face to face with it, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." There was Isaiah trembling like an aspen leaf. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." But dear friend, that was essential for what Isaiah had to be later on as God's able prophet in the Old Testament, bringing forth actually many New Testament truths in prophecy in his most remarkable part of God's holy Word.

But that sense of holiness was vital. Ezekiel had it; John had it on the Isle of Patmos; Daniel had it. Every God-called minister must know something of God's holiness. To think that a holy God should call a poor sinner to stand in His name makes that minister tremble at times, especially when he feels so unworthy of God's notice, is plagued with sin within and without; and yet it is so. God has ordained such to be ministers who are taught a little, just a little of God's holiness. I think it was Murray M'Cheyne who wanted to feel more of it, and for a split second God gave him a little sense of His holiness that he could not bear it any longer. So dear friends, we have to be careful what we pray for.

But it is a holy God in whose name we stand; it is a holy matter we are engaged in, holy principles on which it is founded, and it is to the honour and glory of a holy God that the gospel ministry has been ordained. I do believe, friends, if a day of reviving should come in our churches – God grant it may be – this will be the feature in the pulpit and in the pew: a renewed, deeper sense of a thrice-holy God who searches the heart inside and out. He does not look upon sin with any degree of allowance. He cannot excuse even the least sin (if there is such a thing as a least sin). One who must deal with it to the honour and glory of His name and will deal with it. A man who knows something of hell as well as heaven, of judgment as well as mercy, what it is to tremble as well as to rejoice. This is what God must do and will do in measure according to the gift of Christ in that minister's heart. He will teach him something of His holiness. And why? Because that is what is needed in the pew.

There will not be good hearers until they know something of God's holiness, until those sinners tremble under a sense of divine justice, till they are made to cry for mercy and long themselves for deliverance in a precious Christ. All the while the pew is devoid of this sense of God's holiness, friends, it will be like beating the air in the ministry.

Secondly, Paul had to learn this, and he speaks of it more than once in his epistles, that *in his flesh there dwelt no good thing*. Whether it be ministerial good or as a professor of the name of Jesus Christ, he found within him nothing good. He found his heart devoid of that which was good, faith, repentance, hope and love. None of these graces did he find in his natural man and carnal mind; rather the reverse. It was a great plague to this dear man, now called by grace, to recognise he had a heart that was at enmity against God and godliness, and friend, those whom God calls to stand in the pulpit have to know much of that side of real religion, the plague of the heart, the futility of the flesh, the emptiness of notion. They have to know much about that side of divine teaching, and generally speaking that is a large part of the ballast of a gospel minister's life, what he has to contend with within. And why? Because those to whom he is preaching, if they are alive unto God, know that they have an old nature, and they have a carnal mind, and they have a natural man, and they are labouring under the same sins and the same temptations and the same guilt, and they want a man who understands where they have been. Like Ezekiel, "I sat where they sat." So Paul had to learn this, and that made him a minister.

Thirdly, dear friends, he had to learn and he did learn *the preciousness of Christ*. He had tasted, handled and felt of the good Word of life in Christ. He knew what it was to find mercy in Jesus. He could speak of the power of the atonement, made nigh by the blood of the cross. He knew what it was to have sin pardoned, put away. He knew what it was to live under the smiles of God in Christ Jesus. He knew what it was to feel the inditing of the Holy Ghost. He could join with the psalmist, "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Like the dear woman of Samaria, there was a well of water springing up within him unto everlasting life, and so great was that well, dear friends, that when the fire burned within him, he had to speak. It had to come out. The very stones would have cried out if he had not spoken of a precious Christ that had been revealed to him. All this made Paul a minister. But other things too. The very path he was called to walk, the thorn he had to live with, the ballast God put in his boat in affliction, in his daily concerns. All that made him a minister.

In Philippians 1 we read that word, "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather

unto the furtherance of the gospel.” In that sense Joseph was made a minister. Jacob spoke of him as “a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.” What was the secret of Joseph’s fruitfulness? There were two things in particular. One was the well, the source of his strength and his grace. And God’s ministers are called to live close by the well of the gospel and salvation, and the “streams of mercy never ceasing.” They need them every day, because the people need them. And secondly we read this: “The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him ... but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)” Dear friends, Joseph knew that. The hatred of the brethren, the misunderstanding even of his own father, the misinterpretation of his path by others, all that man went through in the home, in the pit, in Potiphar’s house, in the prison. All of it was making him what God would have him be at the right hand of Pharaoh. We read, “He sent a man before them, even Joseph ... whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him.” He had to wait for the time the word came – in other words for God’s commission, God’s anointing, and the sending forth to that work to which God had called him. But dear friends, that waiting time was so essential, so vital. He could not move until God moved him. That is the right way too. “The vision is yet for an appointed time ... though it tarry, wait for it,” Joseph, “because it will surely come.” But how it tried him while he waited for it! Yes, how impossible it seemed. Yet those very things through which he passed made him so suitable to sit where God had put him.

The same with Paul. We read of him in 2 Corinthians 1, the comfort wherewith he had been comforted in his tribulations was the consolation with which he was enabled to edify the church of God. In other words, he tasted, handled and felt of the good Word of life. This, my dear friends, I would have you know, and there are those here I know who pray for a living ministry – and keep praying for it – but when you pray for it, remember what Hezekiah said. “By these things men live.” What things? Those things a gospel minister has to pass through to be a living minister. Hezekiah, apparently on a death bed, pain throughout his body, desolation of spirit, guilt hard on his conscience, no prospect, feelingly in the pit of corruption. Yes, “By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.” The Lord brought him up, brought him out so that he could speak as Paul did in 2 Corinthians 1: “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.” So Paul could speak to those poor, imprisoned souls, those bound in affliction and iron, those staggering to and fro like a drunken man. He could point to them. Look, he said, I have been where

you are. Look what the Lord did for me. I am a poor vile sinner; I am the chiefest of sinners, but listen! I can tell you of a God who delivers, who answers prayer. So like Joseph's bow it abides in strength. Yes.

"Whereof I was made a minister." All these things God uses by His blessed Spirit in sanctifying the path. In meditation I thought concerning the dear Saviour Himself, and how careful we must be in referring to these things, but there are two things about Him we would remember. It is a very sacred word concerning our Lord's ministry: "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten Thee." If Christ did not put Himself into the office of the great High Priest, how presumptuous for a man to put himself into a pulpit without God's permission! How solemn! How we should tremble! And the second thing is, listen to this: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." And again, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Friends, the Minister with a capital M, that merciful and faithful High Priest walked this path, "holy, harmless, undefiled," though He is and was and ever will be; then this is the way His ministers must walk and this is the way His people must walk too. It is through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom.

2. We go on to the second question I asked: *to whom was Paul to minister?* and we may answer that question in three ways. First of all it was *to sinners*. When Paul was taken up to the third heaven and saw things which it was unlawful for men to utter, no human words could describe what he saw within the celestial city gates, you might have thought that would make him a minister, but no, we read this, "Lest I should be exalted above measure," and friends, pride is a snare that has to be watched against in any minister's pathway. "Lest I should be exalted above measure ... there was given to me" – and God gave it – "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan" – what to do? "To buffet me." And friend, that thorn in the flesh, whatever it was, and we need not speculate this afternoon as to what it was; you know what your thorn is and I know what mine is. But friends, it made Paul feel a guilty sinner. It made him need mercy every day. It made him need patience, grace, humility, perseverance. Yes, his poor soul needed washing every day because of that thorn. It exposed what he was as a poor, weak, fallible,

fallen man by nature, depending entirely upon grace, and so he could preach as a sinner feelingly to sinners.

One of the Lord's dear servants of the past century had by nature a very quick temper. One Sunday morning the family were around the breakfast table and for some reason he lost his temper. The family looked on aghast, and some of the older children wondered, "Was this man going to stand in the pulpit in an hour or so's time? How ever will he be able to preach?" His wife turned to the children and said, "Don't worry, my dears. We will have a good day after this." And so they did. He went into the pulpit, dear friends, as a poor, penitent sinner preaching to sinners. So Satan over-reached himself in it. It did not excuse the fall – our falls are inexcusable – but how wonderful, as David found in Psalm 51, when out of it a sinner could preach to sinners – not down to them, not at them. No, a sinner to sinners. "This is a faithful saying," says Paul, "and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." And friends, he did not say that with mock humility. He did not say that because he felt that he ought to say it. He felt it. That is the man for the pulpit, a guilty sinner who has to struggle up the steps like this: "Lord, help me; Lord, have mercy upon me."

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall,  
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, yea my All."

That is how William Gadsby came into this pulpit, I am sure. May God send another man of like grace into the pulpit again as the pastor of the dear people here. That is what is needed.

Secondly, Paul preached to *saints*. Yes, he says that he was commissioned so to do. What is a saint? Well, just as a minister is not man-made or self-made or book-made or even church-made, a saint is God-made. What is a saint? Friends, a saint is a sinner whom God has set apart. We read in John 17. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." This is a saint who is in that path. "They shall all be taught of the Lord." This is a saint, one set apart, being sanctified by the Word of God and by the grace of God, by the God who has taken him in hand, plucked him as a brand from the burning, yes, put a cry in his heart for mercy, taught him to cry to a precious Jesus, to flee to His wounds for salvation. That is a saint. Yes, one who is being sanctified, one who draws sanctification from a precious Christ.

It is a wonderful word in 1 Corinthians at the end of the chapter: "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and



sanctification, and redemption.” It is a wonderful thing that: “made unto us,” imparted to the poor sinner. Sanctification in a precious Christ comes down from Him, as He is the Vine into the branch, and it brings the fruit. There is no fruit in any other way. “Ye cannot bring forth any fruit unless you abide in Me,” says the dear Saviour. “Abide in Me, and I in you. So shall ye bring forth much fruit.” But these saints to whom Paul was preaching, like him were “wrestling on toward heaven ’gainst storm and wind and tide.” They had inward struggles and outward fightings. There were troubles on every side, and Paul in the same path could preach as companions in tribulation to these heaven-bound pilgrims. So he was to preach to saints and he was to remember they were God’s people.

I remember our dear friend Mr. Walshaw, of blessed memory, told me that once, one Saturday night he was pondering his subject and he could see this thing and that thing he wanted different in his church, so he determined he was going to give a sharp sermon the next day and sort things out. He went to sleep fully intending that would be what he would do. But he said, “I awoke with these words: ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.’” So he went into the pulpit in a different spirit. He said, “I preached as a poor sinner to sinners and a poor man struggling to heaven to others in the same path, and we had a good day.” O dear friends, what a mercy when God uses a gospel minister like that! True, there is a place for reproof; do not mistake me. That is part of the ministry, but we must be careful in what spirit we do it. So who was Paul sent to? The second thing was to saints.

The third thing was to *Gentiles*. That tells us something very important. A gospel minister can only be useful where God has placed him. You might have thought Paul would have been profitable wherever he went, but no. On two occasions we read – on one occasion God forbade him to go into Asia, and suffered him not to go into Bithynia. And friends, had he forced his way through those shut doors, God would not have honoured him. But no, he had to go to Macedonia. We know what happened in Philippi, and the wonderful things that were done there in the furtherance of God’s gospel. Paul was a man who was an instrument in God’s hand and could only be used as God took him in His hand and used him as He would. So he writes again to the church at Corinth, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” Every gospel minister can only go profitably where God puts him. Some of us initially would gladly have gone elsewhere to where we were placed. I speak for myself. But we prove God has put us where He

would have us. Yes, and that is the place you and I must be, whether it be preacher or hearer. The bounds of our habitation are fixed, not by chance, not by luck, but by God.

Paul was directed by God to preach just where God would have him preach. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" That is not just in the sending of the minister the first time, but it must be every time he goes into a pulpit and wherever he goes. That is why in the time of the year in July when we seek to make engagements for another year, God willing, it ought to concern us more than it often does. We go through that period so quickly, making these engagements, but how much exercise is there? How much burden is there to be where the Lord would have us be? We hope the Lord overrules – I believe He does – but dear friends, it would be much better for the churches if we were more weighty in that matter, and more burdened who should be in the pulpit and where the minister should be himself. It is the sovereignty of God in the church we look for, not an automatic system. So we have then the second question.

3. Now we come to the third question and the most blessed of all: *what was his ministry?* What was Paul to preach? Not himself. "We preach *not* ourselves." No. Now I am no fisherman, but I understand if you are fishing by a river, you stand well back so the fish cannot see you, the fisherman. So when we come into a pulpit we are not to preach ourselves, not to fill the pulpit with ourselves. That will not do; it is not honouring to God, nor to the gospel that we are called to preach. True, we are to be experienced men; we are to preach out of our heart what God has taught us, what He has led us into; but we are to stand well back like John the Baptist, a voice. You cannot see a voice. No, you can hear it, but you cannot see it. So dear friends, we are not to preach ourselves, and Paul says, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

So he says in the next verse what the subject of the ministry ought to be: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints" (Yes, when he speaks about sinners he is the chief; when he speaks about saints he is "less than the least") "is this grace given," and that is not saving grace he is speaking of there. He is speaking of the grace in the gift of the ministry. There is a difference. "That I should preach among the Gentiles" – what? "The unsearchable riches of Christ."

O what a subject that is: "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the unsearchable riches of His Person, as truly God, truly Man in one glorious Person; no intermixture of the two natures; God and Man and yet one Person, Immanuel, God with us. The glory, the unsearchable riches of that covenant of grace He entered into ere time began with His dear Father and the Holy Spirit that there should be a gospel to be

preached and ministers to go forth to preach it as well. The unsearchable riches of that holy life He lived, in that pure temple of His body. How He magnified the law and made it honourable, exalted it in a degree that all the sons of Adam could never have done had they never sinned. The unsearchable riches of His tenderness, His meekness, His humility, His patience, His perseverance, His love. Yes, the unsearchable riches of grace in His temptations. "In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

The unsearchable riches of those unspeakable sorrows in Gethsemane's garden when that mysterious conflict took place. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Can you explain that? No; we are not called to explain it. But dear friends, there the dear Redeemer gives just a hint of what it cost Him as the Man Christ Jesus to drink that cup put into His hand by His heavenly Father, and were He not incarnate God, He could never have drunk it. The unsearchable riches of His cross, bleeding and dying between two thieves, one saved, the other lost – divine sovereignty. The unsearchable riches of that rich stream that ran from hands and head and feet and side. Not like Abel's blood crying for vengeance, but no –

"Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,  
Mercy, eternal mercy, cries."

O the riches of His blood! If ever you have felt that in your heart, dear friends, you will know that. What else could soften it? What else could quicken a good hope through grace? What else could impart faith and hope and love into your poor, otherwise barren soul? O the blessings of the riches of His blood, and it is as powerful today as it was when the dying thief proved it. It is as full of those blessed graces you need for your soul as it was when the dying thief sued for mercy.

Again, the riches of His finished work. "It is finished." Friends, what a resting place for a believer. What a resting place! Nothing need be added to it, nothing taken from it. No.

"On Christ, the solid rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."

"Upon a life I did not live,  
Upon a death I did not die,  
Another's life, Another's death,  
I hang my whole eternity."

O the riches of it! And the riches of His lying in the tomb, sanctifying the tomb for believers who must lie in their tomb till He come again. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

The riches of His ascension after His glorious resurrection. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Yes, the very gifts of apostles, and where He gave prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." All these gifts come from the great Head of the church, sovereignly given both in degree and in the particular application of them.

The unsearchable riches of His interceding breath. "He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him," never ceasing to pray for them, never ceasing to plead His precious blood. His very presence at the right hand of His Father is the success of His people's prayers.

"This is the name the Father loves  
To hear His children plead;  
And all such pleading He approves,  
And blesses them indeed."

And then the unsearchable riches of His eventual return. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel ... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." O says Paul writing to the church at Thessalonica after proclaiming that glorious mystery, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." That was the essence of Paul's ministry, to minister to the church in their sorrows and sins and guilt and temptations, to bring near the Christ he had proved, to display to them the Saviour whose mercy and word of life he had tasted, handled and felt, to commend to the living church of God that One able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

Well, dear friends, we have only just scratched the surface, but this is what the gospel ministry is. This is what we need God to do for us in our churches, to raise up men anointed, equipped, qualified and sent with these graces. Nothing else will bring prosperity. Unless God bless the pulpits with such men and the pews with such hearers who value, not a dead letter, not just a dry orthodoxy, but who value doctrine that descends as the dew, experience in the heart of a precious Christ and to whom the precepts are not a bondage, but a sweet obedience. "If ye love Me," says the dear Saviour, and commanded Paul to say it elsewhere concerning Himself as he did also to John: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

May God add His blessing. Amen.

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## THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETY NORTHERN MEETINGS

*Report of Meetings held at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester,  
on Saturday, September 10th, 2011*

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### PRAYER MEETING

Mr. B.E. Izzard (Pastor, Fenstanton) read 2 Corinthians 5. 17-21 and Philippians 3. 7-14, and then spoke from Philippians 3. 13, 14: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: 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" (especially verse 14).

We wish to notice that the apostle speaks of the heavenly race. No doubt he saw many things all around him, the things of sport and the races (the Olympics). Friends, his mind and heart were on heavenly things. He counted it all but dung and dross that he might win Christ and be in possession of Him. This really is a sweet testimony of the Lord's grace, as the apostle had been brought through many things and, in the last part of his journey, he is pressing toward the mark. The mark must be pressed unto. It must be passed before he attains the prize. He looks right on. The man is blessed of his God and maintained. He gives a sweet witness to the Philippian church that esteemed him so highly.

Now I wish to speak from these words really in three ways. He says, "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do," but he says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." I wish to speak of this high calling in three ways. Firstly, it is *a high calling*. We are called to speak of it. This high calling the apostle speaks of is of God Himself. It sets before us the greatness of Jehovah, the littleness of those that are called by grace as to any sufficiency of themselves. May we ever have those sobering, right and gracious views of the being of God, the holiness of God, and especially, friends, we need to consider before whom we are coming this morning to present our supplications. It is before the most high and holy God. May the Lord have mercy upon us.

At home I have spoken to my people of a place in Sussex, a well-known beauty spot. It is called High and Over. It seems to remind me of how high God is and over all. May we never forget it. There is a right approach to the Almighty of dust of the earth.

And then it is *a holy calling*. The apostle speaks of it here to the Philippians. It is a holy calling and it is set before us in the word here of the apostle who seeks after true holiness. Not his own righteousness, but

he thirsts for a holiness to be bestowed upon him without which, we read, no man shall see the Lord. The call of God's grace in all its glory is to this end: to make poor, wretched, sinful sinners under the curse of the law, holy through the merits of Christ. O what a high calling, a holy calling! It sets before us the holiness that only God can impart, and yet there will be in the hearts of those that God calls by grace, by the very nature of it, a thirsting after God and holiness. We can never truly know anything of the holiness of God without a knowledge of our own unholiness. How terrible our state and condition! The hymnwriter says,

"That we're unholy needs no proof;  
We sorely feel the fall."

It is a holy calling in this regard: that the law is holy and demands perfect, holy obedience. But then this high calling is a holy calling too. In the exceeding wonders of God's redeeming grace, this holiness is imputed by faith through the Holy Spirit of God and His sacred operations unto holiness which is in Christ Jesus. We need to be reminded of it. There is no room for slackness, nor is there room for glibness. It is a wonderful thing if we are called by grace. It is a high calling. It will be a calling whereby we are called to see God's holy law, but called also to the feet of the Lord Jesus, there to see in Him all that a poor sinner can need which is holiness and every attribute that only God can give.

A high calling; a holy calling. It is a calling above all other callings which belong to this life, right in their place, but there must be things left behind. He speaks of those things: "I press toward the mark," "forgetting those things which are behind," not forgetting God's mercies and goodness. But it is pressing so hard toward the mark, with his eyes right on, seeking Jesus. And in the latter stages of life's journey, how wonderful that persevering grace that God gives! He says, "I press toward the mark." Sweetly attracted, drawn. God is his refuge, his exceeding great reward, and it is a doctrine that stands out this morning in our text, in these words: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

It leads me to the third consideration I want to dwell upon. It is a *heavenly calling*. O may we ever view it as such, a heavenly calling. It could be said it is the calling of the heavenly Bridegroom of His church. It is a heavenly calling. The heavenly Bridegroom calls and it is a matter of His love, His grace, and poor sinners *shall* be called, and they *shall* repent, and they *shall* live through the merits of Christ alone.

We come, then, to this consideration especially, a heavenly calling. It is the doctrine of it. It has been said that there is no vital, gracious

experience without doctrine. How true! And then it strikes me, friends, that doctrine stands alone in many sweet considerations. Before man was born were the doctrines of God – how sweet and sacred – the covenant, the mercies that God reveals. Let me point out one thing in our reading, that God was in Christ – heavenly doctrine! “Reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” It is a heavenly calling.

There is one aspect I want to touch upon. That is, we need a vital, living knowledge by experience of the doctrine. That is the man that is complete in Christ Jesus as the dear apostle who has not attained but still seeks after. He is still feeling his insufficiency. He is still saying, “O wretched man that I am!” He is still pressing toward that mark according to the prize or the possession. This is the doctrine, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. O what sacred, precious truths! That is the mark he presses unto, for the prize of the possession. It is not the things of this life, for the Lord “taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man,” but in them that fear Him. No, he is pressing in the heavenly way. Many, many things he had endured; many things we read of, but he pressed toward the mark, and that mark was set before him in God’s Word and he saw in Christ Jesus all a poor, helpless soul can need.

And he presses. How many of us this morning are pressing toward that mark? We have to leave things, not forgetting – certainly not – God’s mercies. But it is pressing toward that mark, perhaps together, pressing “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” This is the doctrine that stands out to me this morning that he speaks of.

And it is a heavenly calling. “The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It is Christ Jesus in all His glory. The Father hath made Him known, revealed Him unto the church, and He left the realms of bliss. We have sung some of those sweet truths, and thus the apostle sweetly views Christ to be his All in all, the prize or the possession, and it is in the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So that we have set before us the very Person of Immanuel, God with us, the sweet doctrine of it, friends. Now this will stand until the end of time. “The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The Lord will have a remnant. He will have a seed and He will have a few poor sinners that are gathered and brought unto Him. How they love Him! What do they want? The possession of Him. They cannot say they have apprehended, they count not themselves to have apprehended, but He has apprehended them. It was so with the apostle. He could speak of it; he knew it. How many of us know that sweet truth, the prize of the possession of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus in fervent desire, longing desire? Perhaps some

cannot reach the high notes of experience, but I believe they will be pressing up to God's house. Perhaps God may give them a token, a help. Perhaps, they say, He will be with the least and those that are feelingly out of the way. Well, this Good Shepherd will find them and bring them upon His shoulders rejoicing.

"The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And that is where it all rests. "God in Christ Jesus." Sweet, sacred truth. I wonder how many of you feel it to be so. And then that seeking hard unto Him, that pressing toward the mark, and we read of it: "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Now this is the point I want to make. This is a high calling. It is a holy calling. That is to lift up the poor sinner from serving under the law, looking there for salvation, dwelling there as he will by nature, looking again and again unto the law for some glimpse of help and forgiveness there. But no, it is all in Christ Jesus. O how sweet that hymn. I have not time to dwell upon it, but the doctrine of it is so precious to me. In hymn 47 we have the law and the gospel, and this is the doctrine of God in Christ:

"But I'll retire beneath the cross;  
Saviour, at Thy dear feet I'll lie!  
And the keen sword that justice draws,  
Flaming and red, shall pass me by."

What a blessed and heavenly calling this is! It is of Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, to save His bride and to bring her unto God.

Many things could be spoken indeed of this beautiful truth. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Now just a few thoughts of vital experience. There is the pressing, and there is the mark that God sets in His Word, in His truth. We read of those who are called to preach the everlasting gospel, and they are ambassadors. The vital truth is this: the marks must be revealed. But firstly it is Christ, and then the marks that belong to His church.

"They all declare, I nothing am,  
My life is bound up in the Lamb,  
My wit and might are His,  
My worth is all in Jesus found,  
He is my Rock, my anchor ground,  
And all my hope of bliss."

But they feel continually to be the least, for they feel at times their wisdom to be swallowed up and they know not what to do, but they must press toward the mark for the prize or the possession of this high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Christ is the Wisdom of His people. So many sacred truths belong to Him. What an attribute, that wisdom which is from above!



And then just one other mark or two. There is the consistent walking of God's people. We have them in our churches. They have summered and wintered. They have been brought into trouble and out of trouble. Still they press toward the mark. They still want the same blessed truths that only can reveal their part and lot in the matter. They still press toward the mark. They are not just pressing toward the mark. O friends, it is the love of God that draws their hearts and their affections. They are found continuing, and they are humbled under God's mighty hand. They view one thing needful and that is the Lord Jesus. So the Lord keeps them. But they are oppressed. But they are tried. They are troubled. But the Lord continually stretches out His hand when they begin to sink with Peter and cry, "Lord, save me." Soon the Lord appears. How many of you know that sweet truth that He is a mighty Saviour and He is sufficient? "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

One last mark and that is this. There is a lasting love to one another and a sweet sense that each feels to be the worst. Where there is that real pressing toward the mark, it is through a sense, a God-sent knowledge of utter unworthiness. They have not got time to look round at this one and that one and say in their hearts how much better they are. We need wisdom, especially those that have pastorates, but it is when the Lord Jesus is everything and there is this pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I must leave the few remarks there. Amen.

Hymns 403, 302 and 476 were sung during the prayer meeting. The following prayed: Mr. T.J. Rosier (Pastor, Maidstone), Mr. Peter Hill (Manchester), Mr. F.A. Ince (Sedgley, Hope), Mr. D.J. Christian (Luton, Bethel), Mr. T. Abbott (Ossett), Mr. J.A. Kingham (Luton, Bethel) and Mr. D.W. Kerley (Swavesey). Mr. Izzard closed with the benediction.

## BUSINESS MEETING

After the singing of hymn 362, Mr. J.R. Ince (Pastor, Nottingham) asked God's blessing on the meeting.

In the absence of Mr. G.D. Buss (Chairman of the Gospel Standard Society), the Vice-Chairman, Mr. J.H. Cottington, commenced by saying, "May we know the Lord's sweet peace amongst our churches, not only in this land, but in America, Canada and Australia, and upon our churches and our denomination." He read Psalms 122, 133 and 134, and then asked Mr. D.J. Christian, the Secretary of the Society, to read his report.

**GOSPEL STANDARD AID AND POOR RELIEF SOCIETY**

Mr. Chairman and dear friends,

As we meet on this annual occasion, we are reminded of the sad state in which we find ourselves, as a group of churches and as a nation. We have thought of the words of the prophet Jeremiah in his Lamentations: "The ways of Zion do mourn because none come to the solemn feasts." When we think of our congregations, while we are not reduced to none, it is certainly to a few. When we think of the numbers that used to gather in this place and in our chapels, we have to say again with Jeremiah, "How is the gold become dim!" We are conscious of the need for the work of the Holy Spirit, but there seems such a withholding at present.

Many of our ministers are advanced in years and in recent weeks some that are younger have been laid aside. We would remember them all and seek that the Lord will grant restoring mercies and raise them up again. May the Lord grant His blessing on the labours of all our ministers and may He raise up others also to proclaim His glorious gospel.

We are pleased that the name of Mr. Richard Wells, pastor at Bexley, has been added to the list of Gospel Standard ministers.

When we look around in our nation, we remember the dreadful scenes of a few weeks ago, some not far from here and also in other cities, the rioting, the looting and the burning of shops and homes.

We think of the times before the flood and how it is recorded, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

We know that the Lord said He would not drown the world again, but His Word solemnly tells us of the last days when "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." How important then the question that follows: "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" We have to confess our many failures, but may the Lord have mercy upon us and may we be among those who look for the coming of the day of God. We know not when that day may come, but we see many of the signs in the earth that the Lord Jesus said would happen before He came again. Amidst all the evil and opposition to the truth, may we still be enabled to see that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

The Aid and Poor Relief Society continues to make quarterly grants and many of these have been increased following a review earlier this year. Some grants have also been made to friends facing unexpected emergencies. The Committee is always pleased to hear from subscribers of those who may be in need.

Interest rates have remained low, but the Committee has made various changes so that this year should see an increase in the total received. The funds have also been increased by the proceeds received from the sale of Dartford Chapel. The Aid and Poor Relief Society received over £93,000 and the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund over £46,000.

It is always sad when our chapels close, especially for those who worshipped there for many years. In the case of Dartford there were many difficulties in trying to sell the chapel as it was a listed building, but in a remarkable way an independent group, who were looking for a building to worship in, called there one Sunday when the widow of the late pastor was inside

and enquired about buying the chapel. They were pleased that it had a baptistry and subsequently bought the chapel.

Mention has been made of the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund and the extra funds should prove useful as grants have exceeded income for the past two years.

Through the mercy of the Lord, our Editors have been enabled to continue, although we would especially remember Mr. J.R. Broome, the Editor of *Perception*, in his recent illness and pray that the Lord will grant him help and strength. We pray for each of them in their continual labour and seek that the Lord will bless their work to the good of many.

We would acknowledge the goodness of the Lord in supplying the needs of the Magazine Fund and especially thank those who have made donations in addition to their subscriptions. It is at this meeting that we announce the prices of the magazines for the following year, and thanks to the donations received, we have been enabled to keep the prices the same as the two previous years, despite the increasing postage costs.

The Committee has arranged for another ministers' prayer meeting to be held at Clifton on November 11th. May the Lord hear the petitions and grant answers of peace.

There are many difficult matters that come before the Committee members and they do seek an interest in your prayers that they may be guided to do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

The Committee expresses its views from time to time to those in authority and has recently written to the Prime Minister opposing the legalisation of euthanasia and supporting independent counselling for those seeking abortions, although making it clear that we are completely opposed to abortion.

Our Chairman, Mr. Buss, travels to America and Canada, if the Lord will, in October and we pray that the Lord will be with him and bless his ministry among the churches there.

In conclusion, we repeat the prayer of the psalmist: "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."

Mr. Cottington thanked Mr. Christian for his informative report, and then asked Mr. Adrian Topping, General Manager of Bethesda, to read his report.

### **GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND**

Mr. Chairman, subscribers and friends,

It has now been a year since I took up the post of General Manager of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund and my first introduction to you in this chapel. Initially I was working alongside my predecessor, the then General Secretary, Mr. Trevor Scott. On April 29th, Mr. Scott laid aside his duties and I assumed my full responsibilities. Since then, at the request of the Committee, Mr. Scott has agreed to become a trustee of the Fund and took up this new responsibility on August 1st this year.

In this time two Home Managers have also retired, Mrs. Susan Verweij of Harpenden and Mrs. Jean Feaver of Brighton. As was reported at the AGM in April, Miss Sarah Parish has been appointed as the new Manager for Harpenden and I am pleased to be able to report that she has taken to her new role very well.

We have not yet been able to appoint a new manager for the Brighton Home, which is currently being run by the Deputy Home Manager, Miss Sarah Williamson; may the Lord be pleased to go before us in this matter.

As many of you will be aware from the annual report and April AGM, the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund incurred a deficit of £226,000 for the year ending December 31st, 2010, following a similar figure for the year before.

Although in previous years the Homes have operated at a deficit, this has been offset by the income accruing to the Fund through interest received on investments and legacies. However, of late these sources of income have declined very significantly and interest rates are expected to remain at their present low levels.

The provision of care for our older friends and the maintenance of the ethos of Bethesda are, and continue to be, the primary objectives of the Fund. There are, however, great responsibilities placed on the Committee as trustees to preserve the heritage we have, and as a consequence of the present financial position the Committee is deeply concerned as to the right course of action to be taken. Bethesda must now take measures to ensure that the Homes operate as efficiently as possible whilst maintaining the standard of care that we provide.

The Committee is working on a strategy to achieve this, by identifying ways of having and maintaining high levels of occupancy whilst reducing overheads and running costs. Of these costs, the most significant is staffing.

It is important to maintain cash flow and to encourage financial responsibility when assessing the necessity of expenditure. Non-urgent capital expenditure will be deferred and other expenses such as staff training will be borne in-house.

It is anticipated that the measures to be taken will significantly reduce the deficit over the coming months and will make a marked difference in the future to Bethesda's financial position.

High occupancy is a key factor in the future viability of all our Bethesda Homes. Occupancy rates at the Harpenden Home are currently high and we would encourage our friends to consider coming into the Homes at Brighton and Studley. If anyone would like to find out more about these Homes, then please feel free to contact myself or the individual Home.

I would particularly commend the Studley Home to our friends in the west because there are a number of friends whom I am sure would welcome the care and attention provided.

The Flatlets at Redhill continue to be under-occupied and the Committee is considering the future use of them.

During the past five months we have been pleased to welcome Mrs. Marjorie Hare to the Harpenden Home, Mrs. Woodhams to the Brighton Home and Mr. Pollington to the Studley Home. We have however lost Mr. Watts at Harpenden, and Miss Russell, who came into Studley on June 1st, but was taken home on August 6th quite suddenly.

Finally, I wish to express, on behalf of the Bethesda Fund Committee, our thanks to all who support our Homes in various ways, especially the pastors and deacons of the churches who have taken collections for the Fund again during 2011, and to all of you who have visited the Homes, the volunteers who so willingly give their time to the Lord's people, and to those who have supported the Homes by prayer and gifts.

Particular thanks are expressed to the Home Committees, which are made up of volunteers giving up their time to assist their local Homes. In recent times we have started to move away from the committee model for these groups, towards “Home Support Groups,” which we feel is in keeping with the spirit of local support which was so much in evidence in the early days of the Fund, as can be seen in the accounts of the early days of the Brighton Bethesda Home which was recently given in the March and April editions of the *Gospel Standard*. An excellent example of the work of the Home Support Groups was seen in the success of the recent Open Day marking the 60th Anniversary of the Brighton Home. The Home Support Group provided a key role in the organisation and running of the event.

Should any subscriber wish to comment or make any suggestions following this report, they are invited to write to me at the Bethesda General Office, and I will pass your thoughts on to the Committee.

“Brethren, pray for us.”

This concludes the written report, but before I hand back to our Chairman, I wish to take this opportunity to offer a personal note of my sincerest thanks to my predecessor in this post, Mr. Trevor Scott, for his unfailing kindness and support during the period of handover of responsibilities.

Mr. Topping concluded by mentioning that in connection with the Brighton Open Day, copies of the sermon and booklet were available in the chapel porch for anyone who would like one.

Mr. Cottington thanked Mr. Topping for his report, and said that both our Secretary and the General Manager of Bethesda would be available during the interval, should any subscribers have any questions they would like to ask them. He also requested that if any subscriber to the Gospel Standard Societies knows of any regular attenders of our chapels who may be in need of assistance, they should make the Secretary aware so that the necessary enquiries can be made. On behalf of the Committee, he thanked the deacons, church and friends at Manchester for the use of the chapel and facilities for the meetings. He said our prayerful desire is that the Lord will bless all of our churches, not only in the north, but wherever His people meet.

The meeting concluded with the singing of hymn 500, and prayer by Mr. Cottington.



A most important and vital distinction must be made between mere intellectual light and the divine illumination of the Holy Spirit; a distinction which, like a powerful scythe, will cut down many a fair herb, many a beautiful flower, in the garden of nature. Natural light, improved by human instruction and study, is confined altogether to the head. Spiritual light, derived from above, enlightens the understanding, while it renews and purifies the heart.

*Thomas Reade*

## BEHAVING WISELY

*A morning reading by James Bourne*

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November 29th, 1840 – Psalm 101. 2: “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.” This is the work of the Spirit in the heart, although we find the effects of a contrary spirit also. But what if we have been overcome and have acted foolishly, so as to bring a reproach on His righteous cause? Why, then we shall tremble exceedingly at the judgments of God, for they are a great deep; and if we are led tenderly, we shall be filled with shame and sorrow on account of them, that we should have offended Him and grieved His Holy Spirit. And this will lead us to many honest confessions and entreaties, and not to rest until we obtain a sense of His mercy. This alone will obviate and break the force of His judgments. But do not pass over these lame things. The Lord knows I do not. They fill me with much fear, and I cannot rest without some token of His mercy to me. David shows also in the Book of Samuel how he walked wisely before Saul (1 Sam. 18. 14, 15); and this is what God expects of us, and works in us by His Holy Spirit. In all our relations with the world we should walk in His tender fear, and if we do not, God will visit for these things, for He takes notice of all our ways, and ponders all our goings, and overlooks nothing.

God declared to Solomon the good of walking in His fear and the evil that would overtake him if he walked otherwise (1 Kings 3. 14; 6. 12). He told him the exact things which would follow (9. 6-9; 11. 11-13). And how can we in the face of these things entertain atheistical notions that the most minute thing is not under His control? And here we find, because Solomon was a child of God, mercy mixed with the judgment – judgment on the sin, mercy on the person. But God did bring the judgments on, and prepared them a long while beforehand, according to His infinite foreknowledge, to spoil the ease of Solomon (1 Kings 11). So that we have need to fear greatly, if we are walking in anything wrong, the judgments which are prepared for us.

There is only one way of escape – to fall before God with an honest acknowledgment of our sin, and this will be sure to bring in some mitigation. We see it in Ahab and Hezekiah. “Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? ... I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son’s days will I bring the evil upon his house” (21. 29). But Solomon was greatly misled and thought foolishly, like Saul, to frustrate the purpose of God by killing Jeroboam (11. 40). But this will not do; we shall never escape His judgments by contention. Whatever they be, our sin procures them, and God is righteous. When I fall into any foolish levity, it fills me with terror when I consider what the consequences may be, and with much awe.

Therefore may the Lord grant that in all the judgments He brings on us, we may find them mingled with mercy, and may He lead us to walk in this perfect way, which surely is only by looking to Jesus Christ, who is the Way. And may He teach us to reverence His day, which He has set apart for His special worship, that we may have sensible communion with Him, and power to cast all our cares upon Him, and seek that He would help His servant in delivering the message of God to us.

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### ISRAEL AT THE RED SEA

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

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At that awful moment when Israel stood at the brink of the Red Sea, perplexed which way to turn; while before them the deep waters roared, behind them the enraged Egyptians were rushing upon them with chariots and horsemen, and on either side of them perpendicular rocks rising up like walls on high, making retreat impossible, the Lord came to Moses and said, "Wherefore criest thou unto Me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (Exod. 14. 15).

There seems something very surprising in this command. But we have a God, my friends, who always knows exactly and much better than we do what is good and necessary for His children, and in truth, He never leads them otherwise than they would wish Him to lead them if they were able to see as clearly into their hearts and necessities as He does. But we very seldom know what is good for us, and therefore the ways by which God leads us are generally mysterious and obscure, just because the *why* and the *wherefore* are concealed from us.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward!" What a commission was this! Lord, behold the sea with its billows at our feet! "Let them go forward!" Lord, are we able to walk upon the waves, and to find a highway upon the mighty waters? "Let them go forward!" Lord, Lord! but where is the passage over the flood, or where are the vessels for our conveyance? Is it Thy will that Thy people perish in the sea, and that the Egyptians triumph? "Speak unto them, that they go forward!" saith the Almighty, but still He does not touch a single wave to quell it, nor does He dry up the sea, but lets its waves roar at their pleasure; and yet He points to its troubled surface and commands that "all the hosts of Israel go forward!" They must venture upon His word, they must believe before they see, and go forward in faith. They venture, and lo! the very moment they prepare to advance in the name of their God and to step upon the boisterous element, the waves, struck with the

rod of Moses, part asunder and become a wall on their right hand and on their left, a highway in the sea is opened before them, and the people pass over joyfully.

This is the way of our gracious God. We must venture upon His word, and verily, however much we seem to hazard in His name, nothing is really hazarded. And when He commands us to go forward, be it into fire, tempest or the sea, let us only advance in the path of duty, and the result will be glorious.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Articles of Faith – Why and Where From?** by K.F.T. Matrunola and T. Abbott; 147 pages; paperback; price £5.50 plus 92p postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and available from the Harpenden bookroom or from agents.

This book has been compiled by Mr. T. Abbott. It is divided into two parts. The first part is headed, *Why Articles of Faith?*, being the first of a series of lectures given by Mr. Kenneth F.T. Matrunola at Bethel Chapel, Guildford in the 1980s, on the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith, which with the Preface contains thirty-one pages. The second part is the Appendix, or *The Early History of the Gospel Standard Articles*, written by Mr. T. Abbott, which contains a history of the development of the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith. Mr. Abbott says of William Gadsby that by his distinguishing doctrines, his writings in defence of the gospel, his faithful hymnbook, his fully preaching the gospel in many parts of England, and his monthly magazine, the *Gospel Standard*, he was an instrument in laying the doctrinal foundations of the Gospel Standard churches (page 44), which were originally called Gadsbyite Churches, and consequently also of the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith.

Mr. Matrunola's lecture contains solid reasons for the use of Articles of Faith among Baptist Churches, starting with the London Confession of 1644 and the Baptist Confession of Faith dated 1689, but after outlining their history and uses, says, "They must always be under the authority of the Word of God.... Scripture is God-given; the articles are man-originated" (page 20). He then gives an exposition of the first of the Gospel Standard Articles.

Mr. Abbott has thoroughly researched this subject and he shows by comparing various Articles of Faith used by Strict Baptist Churches, and also the different editions of the Gospel Standard Articles, how the present G.S. Articles have come into use in their present form.

This is an interesting and informative book, and those readers who wish to know more about the origin, as well as the contents of the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith, will find this book most helpful.

J.A. Hart, Chippenham



**The Select Practical Works of John Knox;** hardback; 302 pages; price £16; published by the Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

We have had a spate of writings by or about John Calvin, and now new books are beginning to appear about John Knox (the 450th anniversary of the Reformation in Scotland and the approaching 500th anniversary of Knox's birth). We welcome this.

John Knox (c.1514-1572) was a great man. Most people seem to have *heard* about him, yet little has been really *known* about him. What is known seems to have been spoiled by secular historians. He *was* a man of granite, before whom rulers trembled, but he was a man of much godliness and grace.

This work is selected from his almost unobtainable complete works. Here he appears as a man of very tender spirit. His letters (like those of Rutherford) clearly reveal the man. Most of them were written to his tried and tempted mother-in-law, and very beautifully he speaks of gospel comfort. It is very clear that he himself had been deeply led in the path of tribulation, both spiritually and outwardly. (He was captured by the French, and for eighteen months knew hard labour on one of their galleys.)

There is a good introduction – not so much John Knox's life, but rather how the various pieces published fit into his life, one of much activity.

Whilst John Knox was, under God, the leader of the Reformation in Scotland, he was also influential in France, in Geneva and in England. He was even offered a bishopric!

Apart from historical interest, Knox's writings are profitable and not difficult to read (as with some of his contemporaries). We think our readers will always find that there is a difference in the writings of the Reformers from those of the Puritans in the next century. The Reformers were laying the foundations, on which the Puritans later built.

*The Select Practical Works of John Knox* was first published by the Free Church of Scotland in 1845. There was a movement for the republication of the old divines, but it was necessary that there should be subscribers first to make the work viable. It seems incredible that within a few months there were 20,000 subscribers! We cannot help feeling sad when we consider the difference today. It was interesting to see the preface was written by Dr. Candlish.

The publishers state: "You are holding in your hands a rare and precious book. It contains the choicest practical writings of a man whom God used to transform his native country and bring it into the light and under the blessing of Jesus Christ, and that in spite of constant opposition and grave personal danger."

**Gospel Basics,** by Andrew A. Bonar; paperback; 162 pages; price £6.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

In his day, Andrew Bonar (1810-1892) was immensely popular in Scotland as a pastor and preacher. He was one of the "founding fathers" of the Free Church of Scotland, following the Disruption of 1843. He will always be remembered as the friend of Robert Murray M'Cheyne, whose well-known life he wrote. He was also responsible for the excellent publication of the Letters of Samuel Rutherford.

There are some things in which we cannot follow Andrew Bonar (e.g. the free offer, premillennialism, his apparent liking for Edward Irving, some of his views on the conversion of children, etc.). Having said that, he does glory in the Person and work of Christ, and there is an exceeding solemnity in his preaching and writing, especially in warning sinners. Sin and salvation are his great themes.

*Gospel Basics* consists of various articles written at different times. Not all the articles, though, are “gospel basics.” There are most interesting and profitable chapters on “The Cloak Left at Troas” and “A Little Wine for thy Stomach’s Sake.”

There is a long introduction concerning Andrew Bonar as a preacher.

*Gospel Basics* was first published in 1878.

**One Lord, One Plan, One People**, by Rodger Crooks; paperback; 466 pages; price £8.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust.

It seems this could be a most interesting and profitable book – a useful survey of each book in the Bible, with the emphasis on how it points to Christ. However, it is spoiled by a foolish dedication and the author being described as loving black coffee and supporting Manchester United! We hope Banner of Truth will not descend to things like this again.

We are pleased to notice that Banner of Truth have reprinted *Select Letters of John Newton* at £6.

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## VICTORY THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

*The last days of William Gadsby*

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“As they draw near their journey’s end,  
How precious is their heavenly Friend!  
And when in death they bow their head,  
He’s precious on a dying bed.”

Samuel Medley (Gadsby’s 174)

The opening day of 1844 must have been an exceedingly happy one for William Gadsby. Little could it have been thought that before the end of the month he would be dead.

Monday, January 1st, was the day for the annual tea meeting in the schoolroom [at Manchester] when members of the congregation and friends gathered together. William Gadsby was like a father, happily sitting amongst his many children. He gave a warm-hearted address, especially on the Lord’s providential dealings ever since he came to Manchester, dwelling especially in detail upon his first visit over forty years before. On rising to speak, it was some time before he was able to proceed, being very much affected, and when he sat down, he was quite overcome.

His address is printed verbatim in John Gadsby's memoir, which appeared later that year. It can only be said that this address was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, so many things in William Gadsby's life would never have been known apart from this address just before the end of his life. On the other hand, much he said consisted in little anecdotes and incidents, related in a completely informal way, which must have been very much enjoyed at the time by his loving audience, but which seem unprofitable years later when appearing in cold print.

The following day he preached from Hebrews 13. 8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." This had constantly been the theme of his ministry, and was the rock foundation on which his salvation rested.

In a letter written on the Thursday to a friend who had sent a gift of flannel for the poor, he said:

"O the blessedness of that text: 'All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's'; and how indescribably blessed it appears to us when God the Spirit reveals its contents to the conscience, and seals it there! Then the soul says, 'It is enough.'"

The last weeks of William Gadsby's life were plagued with ill health. Exactly how his complaint would have been described in present day medical terminology we cannot say, but at the time it was called "an affection of the lungs, increased by inflammation." How it specially troubled him was his difficulty in breathing – which gives pathos to the expression he often used that "in heaven we shall have immortal lungs." For some time he had only been able to walk very short distances. A separation in the church, which had recently taken place, and the deep sorrow it caused, certainly did not help. Yet mercifully he was able to preach, as he had wished, right up till the last Lord's day of his life.

On Lord's day, January 7th, he preached morning and evening from a fitting subject, 2 Corinthians 5. 1: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Tuesday evening, January 9th, he concluded the sermon from the week before on Hebrews 13. 8.

Lord's day, January 14th, both morning and evening, the beautiful text, Isaiah 43. 1: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine."

Then on Tuesday, the 16th, the text was Titus 2. 1: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."

January 21st was the last Lord's day of his life, and he was enabled to preach twice from Isaiah 43. 2: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow

thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Concerning his last Lord’s day, one of his hearers, John Greenhough, wrote in his Bible:

“Mr. Gadsby preached this sermon with very great fervour, but with very great difficulty of breathing, especially in the evening, when it took him four minutes to ascend the pulpit, having to stop upon every step. But the Lord was very gracious to him in supporting his mind, although suffering in body. He was got home with much difficulty, and kept getting worse until January 27th, when he fell asleep in a precious Jesus.”

In the morning, the last head he spoke on was: “The last flood that a child of God has to contend with is death.” In the evening he spoke of Abraham seeking a place to bury his dead, and remarked, “It will soon be said of me, ‘Let me bury my dead out of my sight.’” Before reaching the chapel in the evening he felt so ill that he almost told the cabman to drive him back home. He was unable to follow his usual custom of giving out the hymns – till the last (hymn 70: “Thrice comfortable hope”), when he commented he had once more proved the devil to be a liar. In his concluding prayer he begged the Lord to “have mercy on the young and rising generation, and to raise up many of them to call the Lord blessed, when our old heads are laid in the grave.”

This was his last public appearance and last public utterance. He was confined to bed on the following Tuesday and died on the following Saturday.

William Gadsby’s closing days were very blessed days. John Gadsby, in his *Memoir*, gives a long and full account but, in true Victorian manner, there are so many details given which are neither necessary nor profitable.

There is a special beauty in the death of William Gadsby. As he himself had written many years before:

“By faith in Christ, as God,  
As Prophet, Priest, and King,  
The just shall live, and live to prove  
That death has lost its sting.”

On the Monday, he was much worse, his poor, mentally-afflicted wife adding to his sorrow by insisting he was only pretending. In fact, all along she treated his illness as if it did not matter.

Tuesday, he had to go to bed, and was attended by Mr. Smith, a surgeon, one of his church members, as well as the family doctor. During the night he felt wonderfully blessed in some of the verses in Isaiah 61, especially verses 7 and 10. He was able to quote the chapter and comment on it to John Ashworth, one of his church members who was sitting up with him. We do not know much about this

Mr. Ashworth, but he seems to have been specially liked by William Gadsby, and appears to have been by his side constantly, helping him, during this last week.

On the Wednesday William Gadsby asked Mr. Ashworth to read the chapter, Isaiah 61, and during the day seemed to speak in the same happy strain. He said he did not think he would get better – he did not think even the doctors realised how bad he was – but, he said, “If I do get to glory, O how I shall shout, and nobody shall stop me!”

Wednesday night he could not sleep, and afterwards he never did more than doze. But during that night he spoke of the body of Christ, the mystical church – whatever divisions there were on earth, there would be none above. He spoke of the three Persons in the Godhead, and their distinct offices; of the enemy coming in like a flood; of Christ the Standard, and the Holy Ghost the Standard-Bearer.

Thursday morning he was so weak he could not even wash himself. As he had to lie down he feelingly exclaimed, “What a poor worm I am come to; but I shall soon be shouting, ‘Victory for ever, *for ever!*’” The night before, the family doctor had spoken to him of his need of patience, adding, “But you don’t need my advice; you have philosophy enough for that.” Referring to this William Gadsby (very typically!) next day said to John Ashworth, “Philosophy patience won’t do you much good, John!” Beautifully he then added, “But Christ’s patience that He bestows is sweet, and under all pains it is comforting to the soul, and makes them light when Christ’s presence is enjoyed.”

But now William Gadsby was a dying man. It must have been an affecting occasion when, on the Thursday afternoon, John Kershaw visited him – this last interview between these two doughty champions of the truth, one the son in the faith of the other. John Kershaw was greeted with, “My preaching is over.” On being asked how he felt, he said Christ appeared glorious – a glorious Christ – and attempted with great difficulty to speak of Him. John Kershaw said *he* would speak of Him, and spoke of Christ in His offices, His beauty, His sufferings, His relationships, His glory, to which William Gadsby added a hearty Amen, and confirmed that he felt Christ to be precious. John Kershaw then read Isaiah 12 and Psalm 23, to which again was added a hearty Amen. William Gadsby spoke of the verse:

“‘Tis to credit contradictions;  
Talk with Him one never sees,”

which had been much on his mind.

But he was still in the body, still upon earth, and the question was thrust upon him by his friends, “What shall we do with those who have

caused trouble and ceased attending?" [For some time there had been a few causing him trouble.] "Separate them," he said. "They will only be a trouble to you, and watch one or two others carefully."

Thursday night he was very restless, but, "What are *my* sufferings to *His*?" he said. Early next morning his breathing was worse. John Ashworth asked if he could get anything or do anything to help. "No," was the reply, "I want to feel the blessed power of Christ."

Again on Friday morning he remarked that he did not think the friends knew how ill he was. This time, when the deacons sent for advice, he felt he must reply, "Tell them my days for advice are over. They must look to the Lord. He is the best Adviser."

During the day he was in much pain and very uneasy, his breathing growing worse and worse. Becoming very uneasy he fixed his eyes on John Ashworth and said, "O John, what it is to be in darkness! I want to feel Christ's presence." He then made an amazing statement. He knew the reason for his darkness and not being able to sleep: he had not been kind enough to the poor. John Ashworth was astounded; his pastor had spent his life in liberality and Christian giving! He replied that all week he had been giving money away for him and, amidst other things, he had done what Mr. Gadsby asked and sent half a load of potatoes and a piece of bacon to one needy person. "The poor will miss you more than any other man living. This I am a living witness of." But we see the power of Satan on one hand and a very tender conscience on the other.

But now William Gadsby spoke about "going home," not realising where he was. In typical language he said he felt "moldered and mauled." Later he exclaimed, "O John, what it is to be in darkness of mind! There is no trouble like soul trouble." Satan was having a last fling.

When Saturday dawned, the last day of his life, his speech was almost gone. In fact, though anxious to speak, for the last three days the greatest attention was needed to catch the words he spoke.

About eight o'clock on the Saturday morning the Lord shone into his soul. The family were now sent for, and he specially desired that his poor wife should be with him in the room. He asked for Romans 12 to be read. Then to the amazement of all present, he raised himself in bed and prayed most solemnly and fervently – for the church, and for his family, that they might be kept low at the feet of Jesus, that He would appear for them, that the fear of the Lord might be lively in their hearts, that they might be blessed with a tender conscience, that they might be kept from pride, and that they might know nothing but Christ. He concluded in his usual manner, "AMEN – AND – A-MEN!" He then sank back into bed, shortly afterwards exclaiming, "There is no religion without power."

The following remarkable conversation then took place, as clearly as William Gadsby could be heard:

J.A.: "You are not so uneasy now as you were in the night. You have had a merciful visit from Christ to your soul."

W.G.: "I have, and it *was* merciful."

J.A.: "We have seen the power of religion this morning in your soul."

W.G.: "You have."

J.A.: "It was evident it was the power of the Spirit, for I never thought of you speaking again, and yet you prayed so distinctly. We may say we have heard a dead man pray; for you were as good as dead."

W.G.: "You may. There is nothing too hard for Christ; He is the mighty God – from everlasting to everlasting. He *was* precious, He *is* precious." (Then, raising his left hand, for his right hand was cold and motionless.) "Victory! victory! victory!"

J.A.: "You can sleep now that you have had a sweet visit from your precious Christ."

W.G.: "Yes."

J.A.: "It shows the power the enemy had over you this morning, and the sweet deliverance you have had."

W.G.: "Yes, yes."

These things William Gadsby uttered as distinctly as he was able. After falling asleep, he awoke at about two o'clock. "Now, Mr. Gadsby," asked John Ashworth, "you are a dying man. Do you feel this Rock Christ, that you have so sweetly spoken of, is sufficient to support you through the swellings of Jordan?" "I do," he replied.

It was evident that he was now sinking fast. When his tongue was moistened with a little weak wine and water, "Wine!" he whispered. "It has ruined many a young man. Shun it, John, as you would shun the devil."

J.A.: "Do you feel in that comfortable frame of mind you did when you went to prayer? Do you feel Christ's presence?"

W.G.: "Not with that power that I could wish; but unto them that believe He is precious."

J.A.: "You believe?"

W.G.: "Yes."

J.A.: "Is He precious to you?"

W.G.: (firmly) "Yes, King, Immanuel, Redeemer, all glorious!"

J.A.: "You will soon have done here."

W.G.: "I shall soon be with Him, shouting, 'Victory! victory! victory!'" (raising his hand) "for ever."

Shortly afterwards he said, "Free grace! Free grace! Free grace!" Then about three minutes to six, on the Saturday evening, January 27th, 1844, he smiled, and fell quietly asleep in Jesus. He was 71 years of age.

Thus lived and died William Gadsby – dying as he lived “to the praise of the glory of His grace.”

On his desk was found a slip of paper:

“Let this be put on my stone:

“Here rests the body of a sinner base,  
Who had no hope but in electing grace;  
The love, blood, life, and righteousness of God  
Was his sweet theme; and this he spread abroad.”

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### **IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM GADSBY**

*An acrostic by Edward Mote (1797-1874)*

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Welcome, thrice welcome, to th’eternal shore,  
In Zion’s gates thy voice is heard no more.  
Long didst thou tell of Jesus’ sacred fame,  
Lay low the sinner, and exalt His name.  
In tracing all the Spirit’s work within,  
A skilful workman thousands proved therein,  
Making thy Lord a Saviour from all sin.

God raised thee up, a champion of free grace,  
A star in His right hand, in no mean place;  
Did bless thy labour, clothe thy word with power,  
Sought out His sheep, and cheered in trial’s hour,  
Blest to unfold the sinner’s only Friend,  
Yielding supplies, exhaustless, without end.

Did oft anticipate, amidst heaven’s throng,  
Immortal lungs, and an undying tongue,  
Eternity to sound Immanuel’s praise,  
Divinely high His glories there to raise.

It is interesting to know of the connection with William Gadsby of Edward Mote, author of the well-known hymn, “My hope is built on nothing less,” and also to think that Mr. Mote’s widow attended Galeed Chapel, Brighton, and was buried by J.K. Popham.

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Though sin and grace were never born together, and though they shall not die together, yet while the believer lives, these two must live together; and this keeps him humble.

*Thomas Brooks*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
DECEMBER 2011

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

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**BETHLEHEM**

*By Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacher (1796-1868)*

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“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5. 2).

The prophet Micah prophesied in Judah seven hundred years before Christ. It was indeed a mournful time, for the kingdom of Israel hovered on the brink of destruction, and the godless character of the realm of Judah had increased to such a degree as to fill the peaceful in the land with the most dismal apprehensions for the future. Micah, by his prophecies, brought those fears to a climax, for frightful things they were which he predicted to the two kingdoms. To the kingdom of Israel he announced its near and entire destruction by the hands of the Syrians, and to the kingdom of Judah he uttered the harsh words, “Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.”

But the more awful the threatening of those thunders which he wielded against the rebellious and apostate ones, the more sweetly sounded the music of the promises with which he consoled and cheered the drooping hearts of the faithful. The very message we have heard today may convince us of this. It is a message from God, but at the same time, one which, before it was uttered, must have passed through the heart of the prophet, for it bears witness of a spirit deeply moved and attuned to tones of the advent. Here is another period of the time preceding Christ where we behold Him not merely in the mirror of prophecy, but as received by the faith of believers, and as understood by the human mind. Let us now contemplate this prophecy of Micah more nearly, and direct our attention to the little city of which he speaks; to the expression, “*And thou,*” which he uses in addressing it; and to the coming One whom he announces.

I. The text of today contains the first prophecy of the Messiah in which the name of Bethlehem is mentioned. The birthplace of the expected Saviour had never been known until now, although the deeper and more clear-sighted minds in Israel had perhaps in some degree anticipated whence the great and long-desired Morning Star was to arise.

The nearer the day of His advent approached, the more precise were the prophecies concerning it.

In the infancy of our race, the intelligence of that future Saviour who was to bruise the head of Satan was only revealed in general terms. In the times of the patriarchs this Deliverer was more precisely described as a descendant of that people who, numerous as the stars of heaven, were to proceed from the root of Abraham. In the days of Moses and the law the cry resounds to us from the death-bed of Jacob, “Judah, thou art he!” – thus pointing out to us the tribe from which the Sun of Righteousness should arise. During the government of the kings, the prophecy attaches itself with still more precision to a single house, for out of the family of David the Ruler was to proceed. Two hundred years later, Isaiah predicted that a virgin of this family should bring forth Emmanuel. Micah then steps forward and names the place of His birth, while at a still later period Daniel determines the time when He shall appear. “Seventy weeks,” he says – that is to say, seventy times seven years – are determined “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”

There is no place in the world more important to us than Bethlehem,\* and none which will more repay a few moments’ contemplation. It was situated on a rocky eminence some miles from Jerusalem, where its ruins can be traced even in the present day. “God Almighty established it on the top of the mountains, and exalted it above the hills, that all nations might flow unto it.” Vineyards and olive trees garlanded the eminence on whose summit lay the little city, but the fairest Vine flourished within – a Vine whose fruit quickens our souls even now. Around Bethlehem, rocky cliffs were mingled with fruitful valleys and cultivated fields – even this seems to me to have a spiritual signification, for some groan with fatigue in approaching it, while others bind the sheaves and sing harvest songs. In ancient times there was no want of rich pastures for the young lambs, nor yet is there at the present day, but with this difference, that now they are heavenly plants which grow to nourish the flock of the Good Shepherd.

When the Star of Bethlehem appeared, the little town had already tarried more than two thousand years in expectation of Him. Many remarkable things had, meanwhile, taken place here, which carried their reward to those who could unriddle them; for their hidden kernel was sweet as the gospel of peace.

Bethlehem is first mentioned in the history of the patriarch Jacob, and a lonely grave bore testimony, even in later times, to the melancholy

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\* None knew better than Krummacher the importance of Calvary – but in his thinking he included this. The Lord Jesus was born that He might die.

event which took place here. At a short distance from Bethlehem, Rachel brought forth her youngest son, but the pains of death came upon her, and she knew she was about to die. With her last breath she therefore called her newborn babe Benoni, or "the son of my sorrow," though his father afterwards changed his name into Benjamin, or "the son of my right hand." "And Rachel died," continues the history, "and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day."

The symbolical and spiritual signification of this family scene is evident to every eye. In Rachel we behold a picture of all Israel, and recognise their spiritual history. Like her they were dying on the pilgrimage to Bethlehem, although for a space of two thousand years. They hastened, borne along on the wings of ardent desire, towards the cradle of the promised King. But, alas! they remained long on the journey, and many of their sons were named, with tears, Benoni, when they saw that they were not the long-promised Seed whom they never for a moment ceased to expect. "These all died in faith," says Paul, "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Thus the tomb of Rachel commenced the list of the burial places of many thousand others who in the course of their pilgrimage had been arrested by death ere they had attained the much-desired goal. Alas! many pilgrims in our day, proceeding along the road to Bethlehem, resemble those misty vapours which in the morning hours are seen ascending the mountains, but which, ere they have attained the summit, are dissipated amidst the cliffs and fissures by the noonday heat. Ye know what the apostle says of those people: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." And what our Lord also says: "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in" (at the strait gate) "and shall not be able."

After Rachel had slept nearly a thousand years in her tomb at Ephratah, the little town on the mountain again starts into notice, for owing to a remarkable occurrence, it is placed in a most mysterious and important light. Two women clad in mourning garments come out of a far country to Bethlehem. The elder, Naomi, is by birth a Bethlehemite; she comes from the land of the Moabites, where she has dwelt for many years with her husband Elimelech and her two sons, having taken refuge there on account of the famine in their land. But alas! now that she is able to return to her beloved country and the home of her youth, she sees herself bereft of her dearest ties. She has buried in a distant land those who made life pleasant to her – with the exception of one, her daughter-in-law Ruth, like herself a mourning widow; and who has said

to her, "Intreat me not to leave thee ... where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried." "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

What is it that happens now in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem? The lovely Ruth is industrious and occupies herself in gleaning the ears of corn after the reapers, for the two women are poor and in want. Then comes Boaz, the master of the field, "a mighty man of wealth"; he is pleased with the appearance of the pious and modest Ruth, and takes her to be his wife. All the people in Bethlehem wish them joy, and say, "The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem." Afterwards, when Ruth bore a son, the women said to Naomi, without the least idea of what their words betokened, "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel"! They prophesied without being conscious of it, for who are the people to whom it is addressed? Is it not the family of the Lord Jesus? The son whom Ruth bore was Obed, and Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David, and one of the descendants of David was Mary, the blessed virgin.

How wonderful that in the fields in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, by the blessing of Jehovah, the covenant between Boaz and Ruth was concluded! And how remarkable that the people at that time should say, "The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house, like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel"! How strange that the great Prince of Peace should have a mother from amidst the heathen! and how gladdening and enlivening thus to be able to trace the secret government of the Almighty God in histories at first sight the most unlikely! They show us that for more than a thousand years He was mysteriously employed in preparing with wonderful care for the advent of the future Saviour.

We now leave Bethlehem, but only to return to it after an interval of about a hundred and fifty years. Hark! What sounds so beautifully in the distance as we approach the gates of the little city? It is joyful and heart-enrapturing, like music from another sphere. Yonder, leaning against a rock, stands a youth, ruddy with exercise, and beautiful; around him peaceful flocks are pasturing, and before him rests the harp, whose strings he is touching, and to whose notes he is singing songs of inspiration. As the sun rises out of the sea, he commences his morning hymn: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork.... In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." When the storm-cloud gathers over his head,

he brings out other tones from his lyre and sings: "O Lord my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind." Night falls around, and the stars twinkle in the firmament, when the beautiful youth sings his evening song: "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" These are the words which he sings to the music of his harp. Do you not recognise this shepherd boy on Bethlehem's hills? David the beloved is his name. Deep and mysterious tones proceed in the quiet solitude from his sacred lyre, and the sheep and the lambs play around him joyfully. This harpist was sent to consecrate by his minstrelsy those silent heights, and his Psalms were the prelude to a sweet and immortal song that was to be sung upon those very hills!

David has exchanged the shepherd's crook for the sceptre, and now wears the kingly crown. We must once more return with him to Bethlehem, for in warlike array he enters the field against the Philistines, who have taken possession of his father's city. The king is thirsty from the heat and fatigue of the day, and says to his generals, "O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" Upon this, three heroes rush with drawn swords into the camp of the Philistines, draw some of the water from the well of Bethlehem, and bring it to David. The king, however, will not drink it, but pours it out as a drink-offering to the Lord.

This was another important and most significant occurrence. In Bethlehem there was a precious fountain. My brethren, this water flows to the present day, and has water to satisfy thirsty souls; and whosoever drinks of it, in him it becomes a spring of living water flowing unto everlasting life. This spiritual water, like that poured out by the hands of David, flows to the Lord in prayer and praise, in aspirations and in actions done to His honour, while the three heroes who fetched it from the well of Bethlehem may be compared to a true and living faith which, armed with the sword of the Word, penetrates through all hindrance and opposition, doubt and delay, until it reaches the spring, when it both drinks and procures water for others. May this faith which accompanied David's thirst accompany yours also, ye pilgrims towards Bethlehem, and may your joy over the nativity of our blessed Lord gush forth and flow like the rivers of waters.

II. God had distinguished the town of Bethlehem in various ways, and thus afforded ample food for conjecture to the deeper spirits among

the Israelites. At last, seven hundred years before Christ, the prophet Micah arose, and followed those obscure hints and intimations by a clear and definite prophecy which no one could mistake: out of Bethlehem should come forth the Governor that was to rule the people Israel. All the world now knew this, and the faithful were no longer at a loss on what point in the universe to direct their gaze, an object having been provided for the aspirations of their hearts. "*And thou, Bethlehem!*" Thus begins this wonderful sentence. The words "*And thou!*" are those of the Lord, but Micah utters them, thereby expressing the emotions which are excited in his heart by the divine revelation.

They have a threefold signification. The prophet by using them first particularises the city; secondly, they may be taken as an exclamation of joy and gladness; and thirdly, they express the astonishment and wonder which Micah experiences at the idea that out of Bethlehem the Governor was to come that should rule the people Israel. It appears to him almost incredible that out of the insignificant village which Joshua thought unworthy of being reckoned among the cities of Judah, and which was too small to furnish even a thousand men of war to accompany a leader into the field – that out of this shepherd's hamlet the Saviour of sinners, the God-Man, the King of kings should come forth. Yet, astonishing though it may appear, Micah's faith is not shaken. No! the thought is pleasant to his heart, and is sweet and consoling to him.

Is it not so to you also, my brethren? If there is one among you who takes no pleasure in contemplating the Lord of glory in His mean and lowly form, descending among us in such humility that the poorest worm or the frailest sinner had confidence to approach Him – if there is one among you who loves not to consider Him in this point of view, then he is unfit for the kingdom of heaven. In the pilgrim's dress which Jesus wore, ye must discern those garments that "smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia"; in His deepest humiliation, the eye of faith must behold His brightest glory, and His crown of thorns must bring a consolation to your souls such as could proceed from no kingly crown. If this be not so, ye are still far from His kingdom, and the rejoicing over the birth of Jesus can find no response in your hearts.

"*And thou!*" What joy as well as astonishment and wonder are expressed in those little words! It is the exclamation of rapture and delight. Micah had been threatening his country and his people with terrible things – when suddenly there gleamed through the darkness of the night a star of hope pointing towards Bethlehem. What then was to happen within Bethlehem's walls? and what did the prophet experience on beholding it? The clouds of sorrow which had gathered over his soul were instantly dispelled as though by a whirlwind. Joy transported him beyond himself, and in his delight he uttered the salutation "*And thou!*"

to the little city on the mountains. If rocks could speak, and if solitudes had voices, of how many godly Israelites should we hear who, since the prophecy of Micah, sat upon the elevations surrounding Bethlehem, unable to withdraw their gaze from the favoured city, and feeling as though in its contemplation all earthly cares and sorrows might well be forgotten!

And certainly, my brethren, if we also have not experienced something similar in regarding the birth-place of the Saviour – if we also, in whatever sorrow we may have been plunged, have not at least felt a sensation of joyful hope thrill through our bosoms as often as the name of Bethlehem has been mentioned – then most assuredly we cannot rejoice that the treasures of Bethlehem are ours. No place in the whole world should be more dear to us than Bethlehem; no town we can think of should move our hearts so wonderfully and powerfully as this. We should rejoice with child-like gladness whenever Bethlehem is mentioned, and if we do not do so, we cannot expect to approach the table of our Lord with a blessing at this time.

“*And thou!*” are the words of Micah. Bethlehem was already in existence – but where is the Hero – where is the Prince of Peace within its gates? and whence is He to come? This is asked – this is whispered in the heart of Micah; and the words, “*And thou!*” are but the expression of his ardent longing. After Micah’s prophecy, Bethlehem became the object of the desires and aspirations of thousands of warm and devotional hearts, for it was the point of the whole earth which attracted the eyes of the faithful, and the spot on which were centred the sinner’s only hope. Even during the captivity of the Israelites in Babylon, while Bethlehem lay deserted and in ruins, it is improbable that it was unfrequented. Its ruins would still be the object of anticipation and faith, and amidst its desolate walls gentle voices would still sing the songs of lamentation and of hope. And now, my brethren, are your souls moved with the same feelings as the holy saints of old? Do you feel the same sensations of joy and rapture? Is Bethlehem the object and the goal of your desires? Is the King that shall come forth out of Ephratah dearer to you than all besides? and if you but possess Him, is all else valueless in your eyes? O then, hesitate no longer; but consider yourselves as those for whom the marriage feast of the Lord has been prepared, as those whom Jesus Himself has invited, who will advance to meet you with salutations of joy and gladness.

III. Who then comes out of Bethlehem? “He shall come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”! Thus we have again before us “*the Man Jehovah,*” the Man who is God the Lord in the highest. If the prophecy of Micah appear dark and mysterious, the New Testament throws full

light upon it, and accurately determines its signification. In 1 Timothy 3. 16, the greatest of the apostles, referring to the manger in Bethlehem, writes, "*God was manifest in the flesh,*" thus explaining and making intelligible the words of the prophet. "*God*" is the expression of Paul, and Paul knows well what he utters, for like the angels that stand before the throne of Jehovah, and who only enter the presence of the Almighty with their faces covered, he would not presume to employ the name of God where he had not the divine permission. He uses the word *God* as the name by which he could designate the Man whom he revered as the Creator of all things, the Fountain of life and the Ruler of the universe. This God, this glorious One who dwells in a light to which no one can approach, He has appeared and is manifest in the flesh.

He was manifested when by the word of His power at the creation of the world He said, "Let there be light: and there was light." He was manifested when the commandments were thundered forth from Mount Sinai. He was manifested when in a human form He met Abraham, and when He spoke with Moses as a man speaks with his friend. But what was all this when compared with the manifestation of which Paul speaks, and along with Paul, Micah? It brings into connexion two natures as different from each other as heaven and earth. They join together in *one*, God and Man. Unheard of combination! Most astonishing alliance, scarcely to be believed! A thousand obstacles seem to lie between, but in a moment they are all overcome. God might have revealed Himself in a visible form amidst lightning splendour in the clouds, or by a voice from heaven manifested Himself still more clearly to mortals. He might have instructed men by heavenly messengers, or disclosed Himself by means of wonders and signs to the blind and deaf throughout the world. Had He willed to appear personally, He might have assumed long ago the form of a holy angel. But no! such was not the eternal counsel! Not God and angel but God and our nature were joined together in one! The whole Bible declares to us that it so happened.

O unutterable mystery! The Eternal become a creature of time! The Unapproachable, an object which we have seen with our eyes, looked upon, and handled! The Lord of lords, a brother and a relative of miserable sinners! The All-holy One, a partaker of our misery, and a sojourner in our vale of tears! The Disposer of every creature, tended by a mortal mother! The Consoler of all affliction, weeping with those that weep, and suffering along with them! The Thunderer amidst the clouds, at whose reproof the heavens tremble – a lisping, stammering child on the bosom of the virgin! And He who gives life and breath to all, become for our sakes needy and helpless – an infant requiring the hands of men to guide Him, and the love of a mother to watch over Him! All this is now clear as day; it is the perfection and the crown of the wonders



of God. Here we stand upon a height beyond which neither the spirit of man nor of seraph can soar. And this incarnation of God did not take place merely in appearance; it took place in deed and in truth, and is now an historical fact. In order to believe and comprehend it, one must be God Himself, or else become as a simple child. Yet whether it is believed or not, let us still cry Hallelujah! for we know that it has been done!

This God become Man is not the Eternal Father Himself, but the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person. Therefore Micah says, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"; meaning out of the essence of the Father. He was from eternity with the Father, distinct from the Father, and yet one with Him: the living image of His glory, perfection and beauty, and therefore the eternal object of His love. And, O wonder of wonders! it entered into the Father's heart to send this, His only-begotten Son, into our sinful world! The fact of His incarnation seems almost incomprehensible did not the unutterable compassion of God solve the mystery; for never did the light of the countenance of God shine so benignantly over this dark earth as in the promise and sending of His beloved Son. The doors of His fatherly heart had never before been so opened to receive us as they now were in Bethlehem, and all the past love which had been shown us since the beginning of the world seems, in comparison of this, as the first glimmer of the morning dawn to the full blaze of the noonday sun.

Hitherto a faint and distant prelude had been heard, until at Bethlehem a full burst of harmony proceeded from a thousand voices. And now we may ask the question: What induced the Father to send us His only and well-beloved Son? It was enough that He willed to save us. And wherefore did He will to save us? Because He pitied us. Why did He pity us? Because we were lost. Why did the fact that we were lost touch His heart with compassion? Because He loved us. Why did He love us? Because He saw us already in Christ, whom He purposed to send. Why did He behold us in Christ and not in our sins? Because otherwise He must have destroyed us. And why did He not destroy us? Because He did not will it. We now stand at the boundary of all human knowledge and comprehension.

This love which made Him resolve to give His Son for us had its origin in Himself, and was like the tones of an Aeolian harp which, without being touched by human hand, gives forth sweet melody. But no! this is not a just comparison; there is always a cause for the music of this harp, though it should only be the faintest breath of air playing among its strings. The love of God, on the contrary, was like nothing in this world, for everything here below has its origin in something, while this kindled of its own accord and, if I may so speak, was caused by itself.

This love we now behold surmounting all those impediments which our sins opposed to its progress – illuminating Bethlehem’s night with its sunny splendour – rendering the earth bright with its rays, and transforming the death and darkness in which the world has been plunged into happiness and light. This love resembles a mysterious sea, an unfathomable ocean; you may throw the lead, but here no bottom is to be found. Use telescope after telescope, and still you search for coast and shore in vain; and I think that the view of Adam’s paradise, or the heaven which was opened before Stephen, could scarcely be so enrapturing as a glance into this depth of compassion, into the love of Jehovah’s heart; and I think that to bask in the rays of this love would be far better than to lie in the pool of Bethesda or to dwell in the tabernacles of Tabor.

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### IMMANUEL

*By Thomas Mallery: Puritan Sermons 1659-1689*

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“They shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1. 23).

The clearest manifestation of God to us is revealed in Jesus Christ (John 1. 18). His eternal Godhead is also manifest in the works of creation (Rom. 1. 20). Our knowledge of God in creation, however, is not able to restrain the vain imaginations and idolatrous conceptions of God that lie in men’s hearts. Also, much of the eternal Godhead is manifested in His works of providence (Job 9. 10, 11). Sometimes God was working forward or before Job; sometimes backwards, or behind him; sometimes on his right hand, sometimes at his left hand. Job followed Him up and down that he might understand God, and the reason and design of all His works. But he could not perceive it. We also see the eternal Godhead in His righteous and holy law, but this manifestation of God frightened those who saw it at first (Heb. 12. 21).

The clearest, sweetest and most comfortable manifestation of God to us is made only in Jesus Christ, who is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1. 15). In Christ, God has revealed Himself as no other means can. Christ is the exact copy or character of the Father’s Person and perfections (Heb. 1. 3). When Philip desired for Christ to show him the Father, Jesus said: “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?” (John 14. 9, 11). In the works of creation, God is above us; in His works of providence, He is outside us; in the law, He is against us; in Himself, He is invisible to us. Only in Christ is He Immanuel, God manifested in our flesh. He is God in us, God with us, and God for us. Therefore no man ever did or ever can understand anything of God truly, that is, upon a saving account, except in and by Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 6. 16).

## MATCHLESS CONDESCENSION

*By John Durant (c. 1620 - c. 1660)*

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“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3. 13).

Consider from whence Christ came. He was in the bosom of the Father, where He lay and lived in His Father’s love; hence He came to declare love to believers. John tells us, He came down (John 6. 38). Jesus Christ from all eternity was in heaven. There He had His Father’s company; there He enjoyed His Father’s love; there He was blessed in His Father’s bosom (for so the Scripture says); He was living in the light of the Father’s love (John 1. 18). And being with God, He solaced Himself in God. In that very light and glory in which God was, in that same light and glory did Christ triumph.

And yet from this, from this He came for believers’ sakes. He forgot (as it were) His kindred, and Father’s house, to be born for believers. To undertake a long journey, and from a rare place, for any, declares much love to them. O how long a journey did Christ undertake and from what a paradise of pleasure did He come to believers when He was born? Surely great was His affection, transcendent in His love, who came (at least for a time) from the house of love (His Father’s bosom) to open to believers the fountain of love (His own bosom).

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## A PASTOR’S ADDRESS TO HIS FLOCK

*When first published in the Gospel Standard, simply annotated as  
“Christmas 1884” – probably given by the Editor, James Dennett, at  
Frederick Street Chapel, Birmingham*

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Since we met on the first of January of this year, what a short time it seems to look back upon! How very quickly the year has fled, and our days are so many the fewer. Time keeps hurrying us along the road of life, and amidst the many things which we may have to try and trouble us, there is an assurance of one thing: namely, that each and all of us are fast hastening to a never-ending eternity. That is a solemn fact which we cannot dismiss from our thoughts; and only as the Lord is pleased to raise our minds above the world and everybody in the world to look to the Lord Jesus, and as we have a view of Him in His glory and power exalted at God’s right hand, and exalted there as the glorious Head for poor, guilty, struggling, crying, praying sinners; only as we thus get a view of Christ, can we meet death and eternity with anything like pleasure. But as the Spirit is pleased now and again to enable us to look up to the Lord Jesus Christ and by the eye of faith to see Him seated on His glorious throne, having overcome sin and Satan, death, hell and the

grave, our souls are encouraged and strengthened to hope in Him, and believe that it will be well with us.

Of one thing we are well assured, and that is, that we shall want much grace to endure, much grace to hold on our way, much grace to take us to heaven, but not more grace than God has promised and not more than He can give, and may I not add without presumption, not more than He *will* give? If God has given us a little grace in our souls, and I trust He has, that is eternal life; and that little grace in the soul has brought a sacred sweetness which no man dead in his sins knows anything about; and since that sacred sweetness was first felt, many, many times has it been renewed. Many times has the Lord given us another touch. These are the renewings of life, the renewings of the Lord's mercies and kindness to us. We can find no real pleasure in anything only as the Lord sends His Spirit or comes with His presence into our souls.

Such seasons as these, Christmas with all its feastings and festivities, and all the things we may come into contact with, leave our souls barren, unfruitful and unsatisfied; but when we have some little return of the Lord's gracious presence, then we can say, "Thy lovingkindness is better than life." While the world may be deriving pleasure from and taking a liberty in gratifying the flesh in numberless ways at this season of the year, what is Christmas to us except we find Christ in us the Hope of glory, Christ in us the life of His people? Without Christ in us with His life-giving power, Christmas to us is a blank; but when we feel this, all is well, and whether it be at mid-summer or at mid-winter, whether at the longest day or the shortest day, it is then a happy time with us. But without Him what a blank, what an absence of comfort, what an aching void, what an empty heart, what an uncomfortable soul! What a mercy to feel it, and to know the difference when He comes thus and we feel His quickening breath, and to know the change when He departs. When He is gone, O what a loss it is! When He sends a stream of salvation, what moisture is felt, and when He withdraws, O what drought! We are not strangers to these exercises and changes.

But with us it is not Christ born into the world only that we want to know, but Christ gone into glory, having triumphed over the world, and you and I can never overcome the world but in His strength. He Himself has said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14. 27). We have to do with the Lord Jesus who is now gone into glory, and who said to His disciples before He left them, "But now I go my way to Him that sent Me." Then He told them what they should do after He was gone: "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16. 24).

And what the Lord said to His disciples, He says to all of us: "Ask, and ye shall receive." What then are we to ask for?

First. That the Lord would give us more spiritual life, more of that life which we hope He has implanted in our souls, even spiritual, immortal life. That is one of the pleas of a child of God, and Christ says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10. 10). What has been so sweet to your souls while you have enjoyed it as spiritual life?

Second. We ask that we may have more peace, the peace of God. Sure I am there is a false peace which is not produced by God's Spirit. It is the peace of this world which carries away the minds of many, a peace which the world patches up. But there is the "peace of God which passeth all understanding," and this is the peace our souls want to enjoy, even "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," the peace made by the blood of His cross. O to have the enjoyment of that peace in the principality of our consciences!

Third. Are we not led to ask that we may know more of God's love? We have known but little yet of His love. True, our souls may have been filled and emptied again and again, many, many times over, yet after all, we have had but a little of it. It is as Mr. Hart says,

"The little, too, that's known,  
Which children-like, we boast,  
Will fade, like glow-worms in the sun,  
Or drops in ocean lost."

I think I may safely express the feelings and desires of every one of you that have passed from death unto life and been brought to receive Christ in your hearts – your feeling is this: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine." What a different love is Christ's love to all others! Those who have ever tasted His love know there is something about it, I was going to say *angelic*, but it is far above the love of angels or of mortals. Jonathan's love to David was very great; as David said, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." What is God's love? Something uncreated, something that is of the same nature as Himself; nay, it is God's nature, for *God is love*. Therefore it must be holy and sacred to the soul that has ever felt it. It is love that draws a chosen sinner, love that begets love; for we have no love but that which God's love begets.

Fourth. In our requests at the close of another year may we not venture to ask that in the succeeding year we may know what it is to be made and kept more spiritually-minded? Most of you have proved to your dismay, consternation and grief how easily you have slipped into a state of unfruitfulness and carnality, and how many things have caught your minds, ruffled your tempers, and stirred up the lusts of your flesh,

so that instead of spirituality having the predominance, much evil and sin have ruled! What is it all permitted for? That we may fall down like that godly man Daniel and say, "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face" (Dan. 9. 8). We dare not promise to be any better, but the Lord will not condemn us if we are enabled by His own grace to look up and say, "Lord, make and keep us more spiritually-minded. Let our affections be more raised to things above. Let us bear more of Thy image, and let us live more above the dying things of time and sense." In short, the desire of our souls is to experience the fulfilment of this text: "Set me as a seal upon Thine heart, as a seal upon Thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave." This only can keep us from gliding back into that state of spiritual death in which we have so often been ensnared and kept for a time.

Fifth. We may ask the Lord to keep us from evil. We have but an indistinct view of what we are surrounded with, and have but little idea of how we are surrounded by infernal spirits. The devil is the Prince of the power of the air, and he has thousands of companions. He keeps the wicked satisfied with their so-called pleasures, and if the natural conscience is stirred without grace, without the new birth, there is something whereby Satan will lull and overcome that man or woman, and so these convictions wear off. So long as the soul is destitute of the new birth Satan cares not. You and I hope we fear God, and that the Lord has written His fear in our hearts, but we know not how many devils surround us, for we cannot see them. In this respect they are like God invisible, for they are not seen with our naked eye any more than we can see God.

Look at Peter. He could not see that devils were hatching a plan whereby to overthrow him, but God saw them, and as a kind friend He said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22. 31, 32). Peter did not know that the devils were so near him, but only a short time elapsed before his feet were tripped up, and that was not all, for his mouth was opened, his tongue was used, and it was used even to swear. If he had cursed and sworn against one of his fellow-disciples or one of his enemies it would have been bad enough, yet we might have thought it excusable; but to say "he knew not the Man" who had preached such sweet sermons into his soul, who convicted him, and at whose feet he fell down and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," this was indeed a great sin. Little did he think a short time before that Satan would gain such access to his mind as to throw him into such a state as this.

What need we have to be continually praying that we may be kept from evil! That godly prayer of Jabez in the Book of Chronicles is a

little break in [what seem to us] those dry chapters which we have scarcely patience to read at times; but this prayer, this significant prayer is placed in the midst of it: "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me" (1 Chron. 4. 10). There is a real prayer. How sensible the dear man was of his need of God, and how it agrees in substance with the prayer of David: "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not"; and again: "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." Have we not much need to be crying and begging of God to be kept from evil? Paul says, "I pray God that ye do no evil."

Another thing we need is much of God's presence. What is such a guard, such a safeguard as to have the presence of God? This is the wall that God places round about His people. This was the hedge that was round about Job, and the devil knew it; therefore he prevailed with God to withdraw His presence, or that hedge that was about him. He said, "Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" (Job 1. 10). When the wall was withdrawn Satan gained access to Job, but not before. How much need we have of the presence of God, and can we not say with Moses, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence"? (Exod. 33. 15). Moses had what he requested. It was not a vain prayer, for it was for something God was pleased to give and for something which Moses was pleased to receive. Moses was not more pleased to have what he requested than God was pleased to give it, for I believe the Lord Jesus Himself entered into the spirituality of that text which Paul quotes: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20. 35). If it is blessed for us as creatures to receive God's blessings, His presence and His grace, what pleasure must there be in the heart of God when He gives that blessing that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it? The things I have named constitute some of the desires of our souls; and why are these things to be asked for? That "our joy may be full." It is not full without these things, for it is but half joy without them. We feel just a little moving in our souls, and then we seem to lose it again; but as Christ said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

There is another thing that I think most of us at least can heartily agree in asking of God, and that is, that the Lord would bless His church to which we belong. The Lord makes His own people concerned that His church generally should grow. We know not how large God's church is. You may know the size of the church here and how many members there are, but you know not the extent of the church of God at large. Wherever a soul is quickened into life, there is a member of Christ's church. It may

be an isolated case, but that soul is a member of Christ's body. But where God's people meet together they should be more concerned about the spiritual prosperity of that cause in particular than about other places. If people are meeting together in London and other places, we may hope and desire that they may have God's presence, but we are not so much concerned about them as we are about having God's presence here. We may be glad to hear of a church in London prospering and having additions, but that would not satisfy us as individuals. I may say for a great many of you that you have these gracious desires that God may prosper and increase us as a church, and bring others like ourselves to testify of what He has done for their souls.

You may be very dissatisfied about your own cases, and may fear that you have not felt the guilt of sin enough, nor felt the burden of it heavy enough, nor known a law-work deep enough, that your joys have not been high enough, nor well-grounded, that you have never known Christ in that singular way of preciousness as God's people know Him, yet how glad would you be, how cheered would your hearts be, to hear twenty or thirty sinners speak of their hungerings and thirstings, their prayers, desires, cleavings to God, love to His Word, and love to the minister who preaches the Word? On hearing these things your souls would probably be filled with thanksgiving and praise, and bring forth the old because of the new. Perhaps the Lord may lay these things a little more upon our hearts, and before another year has passed away, we may see the answer to our prayers.

But whether or not we live through the year upon which we shall, if spared, so soon enter, I hope the Lord will fulfil that scripture to us: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num. 6. 24-26). That was the blessing wherewith Aaron was to bless the children of Israel. If the Lord grant us this we shall have all our hearts can desire. May He be with us living or dying, for His name's sake. Amen.

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We may compare strong and weak faith to two advocates, the one more able and the other weaker, pleading the same cause before a just judge. Strong faith pleads more strongly, fully and distinctly; weak faith pleads not so fully and distinctly. But both pleading on the same ground, God the Judge judges not according to the distinctness or indistinctness of the pleading, but according to the defence or reason given in, and absolves both alike, and the weak believer is as fully pardoned as the strong is.

*James Durham*



## THE MYSTERY OF THE LORD'S DEALINGS

*From a sermon by J.K. Popham in 1919 on the death of Lazarus*

**Text:** "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there" (John 11. 15).

Jesus Christ has always the best interest of His people at His heart; His people lie very near to Him. He can neither do, nor permit to be done, anything to their real injury. Pained, grieved, burdened, perpetually killed, "killed all the day long" they may be; but all shall turn to the furtherance of the gospel in them. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8. 28).

On the face of it, His not attending to the implied, urgent call from the sisters of the dying, then dead, Lazarus, would argue against His care, His love, His wisdom; as said the Jews, "Why could not this Man have prevented the death of His friend Lazarus?" He said here, "I am glad for your sakes, for I love you, I intend your good in all that I do. I am glad that I did not go. I let him die for your profit."

You are all acquainted with the pathetic story of this interesting family – the man Lazarus and two attached sisters, all of them loved by Jesus Christ. When Christ's friend Lazarus was sick, then sent the sisters to Him that message, "Lazarus is sick." I said it was a sort of summons. Perhaps they did not doubt that Christ would go instantly to heal their brother; but He abode two days after hearing of this sickness in the place where He was. He let His friend die. He did it wisely. He did it lovingly. He did it for His glory. He did it for the good of those whose sorrow was great at the death of Lazarus. And Jesus was glad to let this circumstance go to an extremity; glad that a death should come where it would have been absolutely easy for Him to have preserved life. He had but to send, as it were, a word without any utterance, a look, a command, and the disease would have left Lazarus. But no, that was not the Lord's way of glorifying Himself in this case, so He lets His friend die.

According to the Scripture it is no uncommon thing for the Lord to let things go to extremes, to permit death to go here and there, to decree a consumption upon things, upon businesses, upon lives, upon experiences, upon hope; to let a death come. Instances are numerous in this in the blessed Word of God, which was "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." We will look at one or two instances of this dealing of God with His people.

Take, first of all, Abraham's case. He receives a promise of a son, and what more natural than for him to expect that son to follow at once? The promise was given, but God lets death come, permits it to be an impossibility on natural grounds that this son should come as promised. Twenty years killing a promise – solemn naturally, killing a promise.

Twenty years of a blight on a promise full of life, full of myriads of people, nations and kings, and above all others, of Christ, who should come in the promised line; and all, all dead, naturally dead.

Take Jacob's case, "Go," said his God to him, "Go back to thy country, and to thy father's house, and I will deal well with thee." What more natural than for Jacob to think that the way would be cast up, not a dog to stand in the way to hinder him from obeying God's commandment? But four hundred men following an injured brother stand in the way, and Jacob's fears stood in the way; his apprehensions, his perturbation stood in the way; death had come, four hundred swords to prevent a promise being fulfilled; a brother's injured spirit, hatred rising up and standing between Jacob and the country to which he was told to return. God allowed it to come.

Take the case of Saul of Tarsus. Who would have thought that he, this enemy, this injurious person, persecutor, consenting to the murder of Stephen, was a vessel of mercy and an ordained minister and an apostle? Why did not the Lord stop him before? Why was he permitted to hale to prison men and women, and to endeavour to cause many to blaspheme the holy name by which they were called? Nay, He lets the murderer go on, He lets him get his hands full of authority, as full of authority as his heart was of enmity, and go boldly and madly toward Damascus, reach its gates, and all but lay his hand on these poor saints; then comes the moment.

And why did not Christ prevent Peter's sad fall? He who prayed that Peter's faith should not fail could have prevented the trial, or permitting the trial, have prevented the fall. We see by these instances, and they could be easily multiplied, that Christ does not always stop evil when it would seem to His interest, and to the interest of His dear people, that He should do so.

Now come to your cases, to my case. Why does not the Lord put the hand of His power on our sins, our lusts, our wicked hearts, to prevent the outburst, never seen perhaps, never heard by men, blessed be God, but heard and felt by ourselves? Why does He let these things occur? Bring us into an acquaintance with that that the apostle sets out for himself in the Romans – a conflict in which he was for a time defeated: "When I would do good, evil is present with me"; and "how to perform that which is good I find not." When I would do good, I cannot do it; evil prevents me. And "the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." And this may go on for such a time as to make the subject of the conflict think that he will die by the hand of his sins; think that his blood will be spilled on the battlefield and the prize he set out to win, the conquest he hoped to gain, the crown he looked forward to wearing, and the harp he hoped to harp to God's praise in

glory, now he may think he shall miss all. And the Lord does not step in powerfully to stop it.

Do you know this conflict – this bitter disappointment? Look back upon ten, thirty and forty years and more – I can go back to fifty years and rather more, of conflict, and yet there it is, a conflict. Shameful defeats are sustained. People cry out and shout to Christ, but He seems to shut out their prayers – as He seemed to shut out Jeremiah's. Why? And why this trouble in providence? Why an affliction that irritates you, delay that wears you as the waters wear the stones, that makes you feel, and say perhaps sometimes to the Lord, that He knows you would honour Him, and how can you with this irritation always present? How can you with this annoyance to your eyes, this thorn in your flesh, this weakness, this crookedness, this difficulty, how can you? You would fain worship Him in quietness, and you are always more or less perturbed, disturbed, distraught. Why this straitness? And why does that mighty Conqueror who led captivity captive and received gifts for men, and who by a look could chain Satan and prevent his assaults and his subtlety, permit him to come, and deal you deadly blows, or work such foul deceitfulness in your mind, and whisper such terrible things concerning that God you would fain love and serve, to your utter distraction and dismay?

What is the reason? We do not well to ask of some things, why? There are things we may not enquire into concerning God, who giveth not any account of His matters. When you would pry into God's reasons, then you need faith and reverence and patience and the fear of God; but when Christ does reveal a reason, then we may seek, we may look into that reason, and seek to have it realised in our own soul. I say, when He does reveal a reason, we may enquire into it. There is a reason here which Himself gives. Peter expresses the same truth when he says to the saints that the trial of their faith, which was much more precious than of gold that perisheth, was to this end – that it "might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

And so here, this trial to Martha and Mary, this that brought the question in the minds of the Jews, "Why could not this Man have prevented the death of His friend?" – this that would be a trial to the disciples – had for it a reason, and one very near to them; a reason expressed to them very soon, namely, "*To the intent that ye may believe.*" But they did believe already, did they not? Had they not said by Peter, "We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"? Yes, but no matter how much we believe, there is yet more in God to be believed; how much soever of Christ we believe, there is infinitely more in Him to be believed; and however much we have received there is infinitely more to be received from Him.

And His dealings strange and cross, contrary to reason, destructive to natural possibilities, we have here in death. "To the intent" – for this

end; this is My reason, My purpose. I purpose this, I intend it always, that when dispensations speak, when they reveal My mind, when the cloud is dispersed, when appearances of unkindness, of neglect, of impotence are passed away, you shall believe more than you believed before. And what are you to believe? To the intent you may believe more fully that I am your Head, your Saviour and Friend. To the intent that ye may know that I who am the Life speak to death, and death is nothing to Me; that I speak to corruption. "Lord," said Martha, when Christ commanded that the stone be rolled away, "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days." In that climate, corruption was soon manifest. O, but what is this to Him who is Purity? What is death to Him who is Life?

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## THE PRIVILEGES AND TRIALS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

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*Notes of sermons preached by Bernard Gilpin on parts of 1 Peter in February and March 1836. He wrote these notes, as was his invariable practice, after preaching.*

*1 Peter 1. 1-5.* Here is in the first place the outward condition of these believers described; they are called "strangers" and "scattered." But the apostle views them in God's light as the elect of the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, justified by Christ's blood. All believers are scattered strangers, and it is a mercy to be made to feel ourselves so. Then we must by grace be brought to the knowledge of the election, sanctification and redemption here spoken of. First, let us consider the election. It must be unconditional, because the Lord sees only iniquity in the carnal nature of all men (Psa. 14). To every one who is made to know his heart, this appears the only hope of salvation. Secondly, let us consider the sanctification. This is the creation of holiness in the new man; not the amelioration of the old man. Hence conviction of sin, humiliation, godly fear and contrition are component parts of it. Thirdly, let us consider the redemption. Our only title to life is Christ's perfect work. His blood must however be applied, or as the expression here is, "sprinkled," in order to cleanse the conscience.

For those who are thus described, the prayer is that grace and peace may be "multiplied." This is most refreshing to the convinced sinner, cutting the sinews of self-righteous, legal fears. His understanding and perception of God's mercy brings forth the words of gratitude. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who "hath begotten us again unto a lively hope," etc. That this lively hope comes in through Christ's resurrection from the dead is most refreshing to the sinner

convinced of his own spiritual death. The inheritance of glory is described as incorruptible, undefiled, unfading; it is kept for the people of God, and they are themselves kept, as in a fortress, by the power of God, through faith, unto that salvation that shall be at last revealed. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." This tower is perceived when grace discovers to us the truths declared to us in verse 2, and our interest in them.

*Verses 6-9.* The great joy and the heaviness are here spoken of as coincident in time. The heaviness is caused by the manifold temptations; the great joy is in the application of the saving doctrines previously mentioned. For the "heaviness" there is a needs-be, namely, the trial of faith, even as by fire. Consider the apostle's metaphor. There is even now, in a spiritual sense, an "appearing" of Christ that brings believers to love Him, though now they "see Him not." This is the cause of a "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Consider the force of this word "unspeakable" as used by an inspired writer. The "salvation" to be thus enjoyed must be, in a measure, a present salvation, as the ninth verse implies. There must be a prevailing with God in prayer, and a finding of Him to be our refuge. The apostle says not one word to imply that the trial of believers should be less, or less the cause of heaviness.

*Verses 10-16.* The spiritual diligence of the prophets, and the desire of the angels to see the depths of the gospel, prove to us the importance of spiritual teaching. Without this teaching we scan the letter, understand the form, and see nothing really great in the whole. But O when the teaching is granted, we wonder neither at prophets nor angels! Wherefore, says the apostle, be diligent; be sober; hope to the end. Consider these separately. Grace quickens us. Grace subdues us to much sobriety, both in word and in deed. The hope it implants is a vigorous and most precious though a tried hope. The apostle further exhorts to holiness, even God's holiness. This is the Spirit's sanctification, His new creation; and therefore perfect. The carnal nature has no part nor lot in this. All self-wrought holiness is vile sin. Free justification, because of that sin, and this essential holiness in spirit, wrought of God, are both needful.

*Verses 17-21.* In the four verses preceding, we are called to vigilance, sobriety, hope, obedience, even to God's holiness in the Spirit. After this it may well be said, "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." And there are two reasons assigned for this fear. First, the inscrutable judgment and equity of the Father. Secondly, the precious redemption by the blood of the Son. Both these are reasons; and not for the fear that gendereth to bondage, but for the fear which flees to the ark, God's covenant blessing of fear. Consider the value of this blood: it redeemed you. It was never shed in vain. He was manifested for you. The apostle calls the former religion of these believers "vain

conversation,” and that “received by tradition.” Though it accorded with the letter of God’s Word, it entered not into the spirit, nor discovered to them Christ sacrificed, the Lamb “without blemish and without spot.” This is discovered by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Also it is “by Him” that we believe in Christ, whom God raised from the dead to glory; and so faith and hope spring up in convinced sinners.

*Verses 22-25.* The purification and obedience spoken of are declared to be “through the Spirit.” The love to which we are exhorted is an unfeigned, a pure and a fervent love. Unfeigned love is opposed to that natural, deceitful love which is only selfish. Pure love is love in accordance with God’s truth. The fervent love results from the spiritual understanding of our regeneration through the application of God’s Word, as appears from verse 23. O what a withering word is this when felt: “All flesh is as grass,” man’s glory the perishing flower! Give God and His eternal Word the glory, for all those flowers shall perish. Therefore the Word effectually preached, that is the Word applied, is very precious.

*Chapter 2. 1-8.* The Word is felt to be very precious to such as have tasted the mercy of God. They are constrained to lay aside the body of sin, and to seek for nourishment there. Another act of their spiritual life is their continual coming to Christ as to “a living stone”; that is, the strong foundation, and with it the life. And He gives life to them and builds them up in Him. Being through and in Him accepted, the Spirit works in them; so their work is approved by God, but they and the Saviour together are disallowed of men. In verse 6, Christ as the foundation is set forth, and the believer shall neither make haste nor be confounded. But this precious Saviour of believing sinners is a dreadful stumbling-block to opposing sinners. This is awful, but it is appointed so to be. Let us fall low and tremble. This truth itself is a stumbling-block to the wicked – that the Lord, who is not the author of sin, deals with His sinful creatures according to the sovereignty of His holy will. We must fall down here and say, “Let it be Thy pleasure to deliver me.”

*Verses 9, 10.* These verses show us the great privileges and honour of God’s people. “Chosen” from everlasting; made kings and priests; sanctified by God; the peculiar inheritance of God through Christ’s redemption. But how do we come to an enlightened hope of an interest in these privileges? Through deep convictions of sin and of our deserved condemnation; of our natural enmity against God, and bondage under Satan’s power. These things felt, bring in the sense of God’s mercy, grace and power in our redemption and salvation. Here is the beginning of the translation out of darkness into light, which the apostle himself calls “marvellous.” And this mercy is manifested to those who were “not a people.” This gives great encouragement to every trembling sinner.

## THOUGHTS ON PSALM 20

*A letter by Bernard Gilpin to a member of his congregation*

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I felt much one word you speak of, David's prayer, "Send Thee help from the sanctuary." O how my heart has hovered over that sweet Psalm in many trials and great desolation of spirit: "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion"! The sweetness of it lies here, that Christ was thus pressed Himself, and the Lord sent Him help in that invisible manner; and it is a pledge to us, that we shall not cry in vain, if not our works but Christ's atonement, not our prayers but Christ's intercession, be our dependence indeed. The Lord increase in you that precious faith

Will you suffer me to give you one word of exhortation, lest the enemy should take advantage of you? You describe, I do verily believe, a true work of faith in your own heart, but you are continually prone to describe it in a manner too flowery. I mean your language is too flowery. Now I am very apt to get into this way myself, and therefore I caution you, because I feel it unawares does me harm. For the Lord is in very serious earnest in the day when He deals with us, and for our sins brings upon us the trouble, though He mingle it with His richest mercies in Christ; also the devil is watching narrowly to overthrow us if he can. If at such a time as this we suffer our fancy to work, we are too apt to begin and think it pretty, and to look more at it than at Christ's beauty, and then we begin to sink amain, and lose our stedfastness.

B.G.

Maney, Sutton Coldfield, December 29th, 1846

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## THE INDIAN SOLDIER

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"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa. 91. 1).

*A remarkable account of Thomas Smith (c. 1812-1889) a soldier in India during one of the rebellions that took place. He was sovereignly dealt with by God. After leaving the army, he was led in God's providence to Brighton where, at the time of his death, he was a member of the church under the pastoral care of J.K. Popham.*

*The account is written by "R. Huggett." Richard Huggett was for many years a member of the church at Galeed, Brighton, and died in 1917, aged 70.*

Thomas Smith, a member of the church at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, died on May 10th, 1889, aged 77.

The following are a few particulars of his call by grace written by himself:

“It was in the year 1841 when I hope God called me by His grace. Previous to this I went on according to the course of this world in outward sin and wickedness, with no desire after God nor a knowledge of His ways.

“I was in the Army and out in the East Indies [the east of India?]. But O! one morning, never to be forgotten by me, as I was walking across the plains of Poonah, such a solemn feeling came into my mind that, living and dying in the state I was then in, everlasting destruction would be my doom. I went into the barrack-room, took my Bible out of my knapsack, and read the 25th chapter of Matthew, and when I came to the last verse, ‘*These shall go away into everlasting punishment,*’ the words made me tremble all over. This caused me to leave off my outward sins, for which I felt thankful; but I did not at that time know my own heart.

“I went on for some time like this, thinking it would be all well if I did not sin outwardly. But one morning when on guard, the men did something wrong and out came an oath from my lips. Then down I sank in guilt and condemnation, and thought it was all over with me. My past sins were laid before me, and I felt that I was a lost and undone sinner, and wished I was anything but a man. I was brought to that place to acknowledge that God would be just in my condemnation. I now began to wander about by myself, begging for mercy. I thought much of death and judgment, and what would become of me I knew not, for I thought I was too great a sinner to be saved.

“About this time there fell into my hands a book called, *Burder’s Sermons*,\* and in reading one of these sermons I felt what I never felt before in my life. Such a soft, sweet feeling came over me that it melted my hard heart and raised me to a hope in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. This encouraged me to seek more earnestly for the pardon of all my sins; but I soon lost this sweet feeling, and sank back again into my wretched and guilty state. I was surrounded with foes within and foes without, and was obliged to live with some of the very worst of company in a barrack-room of forty men.

“We moved from Poonah to a place called Kurrachee, quite a sandy desert, but I found in this place the desert to blossom as the rose.

“One Sunday morning we were marched to a place of worship in a large officers’ mess tent, for there was neither church nor chapel in the place. The minister stood up and read these words from Daniel 9. 9: ‘To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have

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\* George Burder (1742-1832) the hymnwriter, a well-known Independent minister at Coventry and later in London. There were several volumes of his “village sermons.”



rebelled against Him.' O with what divine power and unction they came into my heart and melted me into true repentance, and godly sorrow! Tears flowed down my face, while I felt sorrow in my soul for my past sins and such love to the Lord Jesus Christ as I cannot describe. Just after this, in the barrack-room, the blessed Spirit came into my heart with power and love, and worked faith in my soul in the Lord Jesus Christ. O what joy and peace flowed into my soul! I felt very happy, for my sins were gone, and I felt sure if I died then, I should go to heaven.

"Soon after this we went on seven days' march through a sandy desert; but I found the Lord's presence wherever I went, and felt a spirit of prayer and supplication poured into my soul. It was 'Ask and have' in those days; but I have found to my sorrow in the after stages of my experience that it has often been 'Ask, and not have.'

"After the seven days' march we went on board a steamer up the River Indus, and one day while sitting down in the steamer the Lord was pleased again to bless me in reading one of Burder's Sermons. O what power and love I again felt! It seemed as if I must shout out to tell the men what I felt, but I kept it to myself. This did not last long, for I had many things to disturb my peace.

"Soon after this we landed at a place called Hyderabad, and joined the Brigade. On March 24th, 1843, we marched against the enemy. The enemy took up a position in two trenches, and we struck our tents about 3 o'clock in the morning, marched towards the enemy, and formed line. Then we had orders to lie down, and whilst lying down the enemy's cannon-balls came whizzing over our heads. The General gave orders to rise and march forward, but not to fire until we were within fifteen yards of the enemy. I cannot say much about how I felt, but this portion dropped into my soul, 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.' The words came with some power and strengthened me, and I felt a sweet falling into the hands of God, come life or come death. The battle lasted about four hours, and there were 143 killed and wounded of our own regiment. We had five thousand against an enemy of eighteen thousand. I cannot say how many of the enemy were killed, but I should think several thousands. We drove them from their position, took the place, and pitched our tents, and when we got a little quiet I took my Bible out of my knapsack and read the 91st Psalm, and felt it very suitable to my case, and I hope I felt thankful for the Lord's preserving care over me, for nothing had hurt me.

"The next day we marched twenty-one miles in the burning sun, and all we had to eat was a few biscuits, and a little muddy water to drink. The Lord was pleased to give me strength to endure all these hardships. In a few days we received orders to return back again to Hyderabad where the battle was fought, and from thence to Poonah where we were again quiet in the barracks.

"The Lord now began to hide His face from me, and one night in the barrack-room I was so cast down, dark and miserable that I did not know what to do, and the men were cursing and swearing and making a great noise, when that portion about Lot's righteous soul being vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked was suitable to me, for I felt the same. I went out of the barrack-room under some trees some distance from the barracks, and there poured out my heart to the Lord, and He helped me with a little help, and something said, 'Go in, and read.' I went in and read the 27th chapter of Matthew, and O what love and peace I felt in reading it! It seemed as if the Lord sympathised with me, and I felt lost to everything around me. But I soon lost this sweet feeling, tossed about as I was from one place to another.

"We soon had to leave Poonah and proceed up the country, where there was a disturbance among a lot of rebels in the forts; so we had about ten or twelve days' march. One morning, just before we got into the camp-ground, I was begging for another token of God's love to my soul, when the Lord sweetly favoured me with a sense of His lovingkindness and tender mercies. The sun was rising, and I saw such beauty in the works of creation. Just as I felt this, one of the men that was marching alongside me said, 'There comes that tormentor again' (meaning the sun just rising). O what holy indignation I felt at hearing such a remark! I thought, 'The sun, that is the life of everything, to be called a tormentor!' O how it grieved me!

"A few days after this we were marched near the forts where the enemy was, and two hundred of the Regiment were picked out to go up to the walls of the forts to meet the enemy, and I was one of the two hundred. We went up very early in the morning at the break of day. The enemy came out of the forts to face us, but we soon drove them back again and took the village. We were skirmishing about all day, and the cannon-balls came whizzing through the trees. In the evening we were relieved by another party of our Regiment; but it was after sunset before I got my breakfast. All this time I felt no sweet comfort from the Lord, but a hope that He would preserve me from all danger.

"We were seven days surrounding the forts, and on the seventh day we took possession, and then the war was over. We returned again to Poonah, the place from which we started. Poonah is a very healthy station, and I called it my home in that country, for it was there I was first convinced of my sin, and there the Lord blessed me with much of His sweet presence.

"I used to go on the Treasure-Guard which was surrounded with trees, a beautiful, retired spot, and in this place the Lord used to bless me with His peace and love. I can now look back and remember what

peaceful hours I then enjoyed. But I soon lost this sweet peace, and found I had a vile and wicked heart within when the Lord hid His face.

“We received orders to leave Poonah and go on the march again. We marched up the country more than nine hundred miles to a place called Dugshai, and on this march I used to take my Bible out of my knapsack and sit outside of the walls of the tent away from the rest of the men, and the blessed Spirit used to shine upon the Word and apply it to my soul, for the Word of the Lord was precious in those days.

“On this long march I caught a cold in my chest, and when we got to our journey’s end I went into hospital and was in there some time. One night I felt a fever, as I thought, coming upon me, and Satan suggested to me, ‘You will die, and be lost after all’; but I proved him a liar; for the next morning I was better, and had no fever, and a few days after came out of hospital. One morning in the barrack-room before breakfast I opened my Bible and read somewhere in the gospels, and the Lord was pleased to bless me with such power, love and peace that the barrack-room seemed like a little heaven. With this sweet feeling I had to go and sit down to my breakfast with a lot of worldly sergeants, but I sat and said not a word. This was the last blessing I had in the East Indies [India].

“My time was now expired, and I was discharged on July 27th, 1852. I returned to England, and came to Brighton to live, where I sat under the ministry of that blessed and gracious man of God, the late Mr. Grace.\* The first gospel sermon I ever heard after the Lord called me by grace and brought me out from an ungodly world was from Mr. Grace, whose ministry I found very confirming of what the Lord had taught me abroad. I went backwards and forwards to his chapel for about five years, and never spoke to anyone, and some blessed and sweet times I had in hearing.

“Since then I have had many dark and desolate days; but I desire to praise the Lord for all that is past, and trust Him for all that is to come.”

The account of our dear friend finishes here, and we regret that nothing further of his trials and spiritual conflicts were recorded by him. The hand of God was very conspicuous towards him even in his unregenerate state, and perhaps it would not be out of place to mention one or two special providences.

Some time after he enlisted [before he was called by grace] he was advanced from Private to Lance-Corporal. This incurred more labour and duty than a Private or Full Corporal, and getting tired of this, he determined to alter it, and started off with the full intention of getting drunk, so that he might be arrested, placed under guard, and lose his

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\* John Grace (1800-1865), minister at West Street Chapel, Brighton.

stripe. He completed his purpose so far as getting drunk was concerned; but when he came into barracks the guard allowed him to pass unmolested to his quarters. The next morning an order came from headquarters for Lance-Corporal Smith to be made "Full Corporal," thus raising him instead of reducing him in the ranks. The hand of God overruled all for his good, and eventually he was made a Sergeant, and after having served his time he received a Sergeant's pension, which he enjoyed for nearly thirty-seven years.

The Lord also preserved him on the mighty deep. On one occasion he had to go on duty on a transport ship to Van Dieman's Land [i.e. Tasmania]. The captain, under some miscalculation, steered too near land (at night) and the ship struck on a rock. Thus he became shipwrecked; but the same as in the case of Paul, the prisoners and all escaped safe to land, and there they had to remain on shore in a woody country for seven days and nights before relief came.

But more especially did the Lord manifest His care over him after He called him by His grace. At one time, under an engagement in battle, an Officer gave orders to change positions, by which he had to fall back and another soldier take his post. Scarcely had it been done, when the man who took his place was shot by the enemy in the leg and carried out wounded, whilst our dear friend escaped unhurt. Again, at the time of his having to go forward to storm the forts that the rebels held, his position was immediately under the walls, and the rebels threw over from the top of the forts large, heavy stones which dropped just in front of him and behind him, but not a hair of his head perished, and throughout all his engagements he was upheld by his God, kept from evil, and preserved from the destruction that wasteth at noonday, the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the arrow that flieth by day, for God was his Refuge and Fortress.

After he returned home to England he was not without his trials, conflicts and castings-down, of which the writer was a witness. At the same time his conduct was actuated by the fear of God, and he was mercifully preserved from evil, and I may say was kept very tender. I will give an instance of this. He told me that once in going to the house of God (Galeed) he was in conversation with a dear friend, Mrs. Hammond (since gone home to glory); but just as he entered the chapel door, he said something against another person, when guilt and condemnation seized him, and for three days he carried the burden of it. Morning by morning he walked out alone, and pleaded with the Lord for mercy. On the third day, whilst walking round the Level-enclosure, the Lord favoured him with pardon and peace while pleading with Him for forgiveness for his sin.

He has been favoured to hear, with profit and pleasure, many of the servants of God whose names are too numerous to mention. At the same time he proved the truth of the Lord's words, "The days of darkness shall be many," and in vain did I attempt to recapitulate all that he has told me both of the days of desolation, mornings of sunshine, times of distance, hidings of God's face, and his many fears, together with his hopes of heaven through the blood and righteousness of Christ.

I will now come to his latter days. Previous to September last he had been, according to his feelings, in a very low, wretched, barren and yet I may say deeply tried state; but on the first Sabbath in that month the Lord was graciously pleased to visit him with an over-powering sense of His mercy to his soul whilst reading the 36th Psalm. More than once did he try to read it; but the tears would flow. The fifth and sixth verses especially were so blessed to him that his soul was like a hind let loose. Our pastor, Mr. Popham, called just at the time and witnessed this blessing which, doubtless, was to anoint and prepare him for his last illness and death.

He loved all the Lord's people in truth, and prayed for them and desired their well-being of soul.

At one time, in conversation with Mr. Popham, he said, "When I die I shall not go to meet the Lord as a stranger, for I have known Him whilst here."

Latterly he was subject to decay of nature and softening of the brain; but although very weak, he was not entirely laid aside till his last day, Friday, May 10th, 1889. On the morning of that day he became delirious, and assistance had to be given by a friend to keep him in bed. There were lucid intervals for a minute or two, and then he was quite unconscious again. After one of these fits, which were trying indeed to witness, his dear wife said to him, "This is the enemy, Thomas." He replied, "When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him"; and then again he became unconscious. At another time he broke forth in a loud voice, saying, "Heaven! Heaven! Heaven! Settled! Settled! Amen and Amen!" At one time, when a little quiet, we repeated the words: "O for a sight." He said, "A pleasing sight," and thus followed on in each line of the third verse of hymn 481:

"O for a sight, a pleasing sight,  
Of our almighty Father's throne;  
There sits our Saviour crowned with light,  
Clothed in a body like our own."

Then his reason failed again.

The hard strugglings he was the subject of at length so prostrated him that he finally succumbed the same evening to the last enemy, death, having lain for a long time distressed; but just before his last moments, he turned his face, his eyes glistened and, as though he could behold something unknown to this lower world, he endeavoured to articulate something, but speech had failed, and the writer thought of the words of dear Mr. Grace, who once said, "that at the death-bed of a child of God that he knew in life, he believed the angels of God were in that room to convey the ransomed spirit home." His breathing ceased, and his happy soul took its flight, to be for ever with the Lord. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

He was buried by Mr. Popham in the Extra-Mural Cemetery, Brighton, a large number of friends being present.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**"Enclosed by Grace"**; edited by Dr. Matthew J. Hyde; hardback; 618 pages; special price until January 1st, 2012, £19.95 plus postage and packing; published by The Huntingtonian Press, and obtainable from 72a Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4EB.

Whatever opinion people may have of William Huntington, there is no doubt that after his death the Huntingtonians were a most godly people. They lived close to the Lord, honouring Him in their lives and so often being blessedly honoured by Him in their deaths.

Not least among them was Bernard Gilpin (1803-1871), a minister of much godliness and grace, who seceded from the Church of England in Hertford, and then for many years ministered in Port Vale Chapel, which was built for him.

Much interest has been aroused, especially since the publication of *More Than Notion*, in the godly people in the groups who, as well as Hertford, met in London under Joseph Burrell, and at Pulverbach in Shropshire and at Sutton Coldfield. Apart from the various Gilpins, we think of their relatives, the Bensons, and Sukey Harley and James Bourne.

This big, beautifully-produced book, then, will be very welcome to those who have an interest in these interesting people. Sub-titled "Records of the Church Meeting at Port Vale Chapel, Hertford," it is really a compendium. Edited by Matthew Hyde, there is a chapter by him on "Port Vale after Bernard Gilpin" and one on "Bernard Gilpin and Hitchin Chapel"; also a chapter by Henry Sant on "Port Vale in Context" and a chapter by Mrs. P.A. Bradley on "Bernard Gilpin – One Among a Thousand."

Minutes of the church meetings are reproduced in detail. These were kept by Bernard Gilpin himself. Perhaps some of them are not specially profitable spiritually, but we must say we were fascinated by them. Even from the point of view of social history they are interesting: the addresses and occupations of the members are given. Here we come across some well-known names whose

spiritual experiences have appeared in the five volumes of *Witnesses of the Truth* (which contain ninety-three people altogether).

Port Vale was not an orthodox Independent church. It is not clear on what grounds members were received, though it is clear that Bernard Gilpin where needful excluded members himself, or with the approbation of his elder/deacon Mr. Maydwell – again seemingly self-appointed.

Interesting things were the obvious, loving care for the poor of the flock, and the interest in national calamities – collections for relief of soldiers in the Crimean War, the Cotton Famine in Lancashire, the Irish Famine, the Cattle Plague, etc. What loving, tender concern there was! Very surprising to us was the way in which on occasions Bernard Gilpin visited the sick and administered the Lord's supper privately – a relic of his days in the Church of England? The tune starter received a regular payment for his services!

Over eighty pages are taken up with a copy of the register of those baptized. We were asked the question: "Why were the names of their father and mother recorded?" But these were the baptizings (or sprinklings) of infants. Personally we were not happy to find such a proportion of the book taken up in this way.

We always realised that Bernard Gilpin was a paedobaptist, but it becomes clear how warmly he was attached to infant baptism. It is also clear, though, that he had amiable feelings towards Strict Baptists and apparently read the *Gospel Standard* himself. It comes as a shock, therefore, to find that the dearly-loved James Bourne had an antipathy to Strict Baptists (as shown in his unpublished letters) – J.C. Philpot and Gower Street in particular.

Among the seven appendices appear sermons by Bernard Gilpin, William Maydwell and William Benson; the whole list of the "witnesses of the truth"; the census returns; the trust deeds; and "extracts from manuscript letters." Some of these by James Abbott and James Bourne are specially interesting and edifying.

Bernard Gilpin compiled a lovely little selection of hymns to be used alongside Hart's hymns at Port Vale. All these are included, making a very valuable section of *Enclosed by Grace*. (There are five hymns Bernard Gilpin wrote himself, all on "infant baptism.")

There are a number of photographs and a beautiful painting on the cover, whilst the bibliography is magnificent – touching on everything ever published which has any connection at all with the witness of Bernard Gilpin and that of his friends.

We feel this is essentially a book for those already familiar with the remarkable story of the Gilpins, Joseph Burrell, James Bourne, etc. – not an introduction to them.

Perhaps it is a good thing that books like this paint the picture "warts and all" (to use Cromwell's expression). It will be a welcome book. We must confess that, since we had started to read it, we found it difficult to put down.

**John Colet**, by David H.J. Gay; 20 page booklet; price £3 including postage; obtainable from the author, 2a Banks Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DY.

John Colet (c. 1466-1519), Dean of St. Paul's in early Tudor times, was an eminent preacher who expounded the Epistle to the Romans and denounced the faults of the Roman Catholic Church. This was *before* Reformation days, and he had not the clearer light that God gave Luther. This helpful little booklet draws useful lessons from his life and preaching.

## THE BIRTH OF JESUS

---

Hark the herald angels sing,  
 Glory to the newborn King!  
 Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
 God and sinners reconciled.

Joyful all ye nations rise,  
 Join the triumphs of the skies;  
 Nature rise and worship Him,  
 Who was born at Bethlehem.

Christ by highest heaven adored,  
 Christ the everlasting Lord;  
 Late in time behold Him come,  
 Offspring of the virgin's womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
 Hail the incarnate Deity!  
 Pleased as Man with men to appear,  
 Jesus our Immanuel here.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
 Light and life around He brings,  
 Risen with healing in His wings.

Mild He lays His glory by,  
 Born that men no more may die;  
 Born to raise the sons of earth,  
 Born to give them second birth.

Come, Desire of Nations, come,  
 Fix in us Thy heavenly home;  
 Rise the woman's conquering Seed,  
 Bruise in us the serpent's head.

Adam's likeness now efface,  
 Stamp Thy image in its place;  
 Second Adam from above,  
 Work it in us by Thy love.

From Whitefield's Selection, 1753, originally published in 1739 by Charles Wesley, headed, "Hymn for Christmas Day." Whitefield's Selection omitted two of the original ten verses, and altered the first line from, "Hark, how all the welkin rings!"

It is very noticeable how, at the time of controversy with Wesley, the familiar "to all He brings" is changed to "*around* He brings"!

We have never been able to discover how William Gadsby arrived at his four verses.



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## OUR MAGAZINES

Again we express our gratitude to the faithfulness of God in helping us through another year. May bread cast on the waters be found after many days (Eccl. 11. 1). The prayerful support of our readers is much appreciated. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The Editor