

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JANUARY 2018

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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

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To the readers of the *Gospel Standard*

The rapid motion of time is moving us on toward the milestone of another new year in our short lives here below. There is a common saying among men, that “time and tide wait for no man.” How true that is. Isaac Watts expresses:

“The present moments just appear,  
Then slide away in haste,  
That we can never say, ‘They’re here,’  
But only say, ‘They’re past.’”

Time is a ceaseless motion that will never stop until God shall say, “Time shall be no more.” That will be when the Lord Jesus comes “the second time without sin unto salvation.”

We have humbly to own that it is the good hand of God that has brought us to the closing scenes of 2017. How we need that same good and gracious hand of Almighty God in the unknown future before us, that has brought us safely hitherto. The pathway of a pilgrim is chequered with many ups and downs, and twists and turns. Our mercy is that although we meet with many changes as we are called to enter the kingdom of God, “through much tribulation,” the Lord changes not. “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Mal. 3. 6). It is a tremendous mercy and a glorious truth that the counsel and promises of God in the everlasting covenant are immutable. In Psalm 89, Ethan writes, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.” Therefore in all the changing scenes and tribulations in life’s journey, the tried believer has something solid to plead: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 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” (Heb. 6. 17-20). When we are in tribulation, and our faith is so tried, together with a tempting adversary, and uncertainty around us and agitation

within, it is so good and safe to plead such a word of consolation to the Lord Jesus who has entered into the presence of God for us.

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

As the Lord is pleased to lead us safely into the coming year with all the unknown for us in it, how we need the Holy Spirit to lead us to the sure foundation that God has laid in Zion. “Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded” (1 Pet. 2. 6). Let us consider a few glorious foundation truths that can never be moved or removed.

1. This sure foundation is the lovely and glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and all that pertains unto Him. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3. 11). David saw and felt the blessed truth of this when he propounded the question, to strengthen faith and confirm feeble knees, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psa. 11. 3). David answers, “The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven.” Jesus is at the right hand of God, ever reigning, ever interceding, ever ministering to, and caring for His people upon the earth. So often when they are in sorrow and filled with gloom, they have to bow down before Him, and confess that they are poor. To poor, helpless and lost sinners, the Lord Jesus sends the Holy Spirit from the Father, that they may view and behold by precious faith the real, living and wonderful Man Christ Jesus in heaven who is the eternal Son of God. How the gloomy unbelief scatters in a moment and they are taken up in worship and adoration. The pilgrim then sinks down with joy and gladness onto the sure foundation of Jesus Christ. The dear people of God then sweetly realise their eternal security.

“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.”

2. Then there is the *all-sufficiency* of the atoning sacrifice for sin by the Lord Jesus, who is the Lamb of God. When Jesus died for the ungodly, the whole sum of their sins was completely put away. “I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (Zech. 3. 9). And again, “In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve” (Jer. 50. 20). This is wondrous truth! In spite of all our struggles with indwelling sin, also

death and hell, and with so much defilement felt, there is no spot on the church of humble, confessing believers. As William Gadsby expresses in verse from the Word of God:

“Whatever be your frame of mind,  
You never will perfection find,  
But in the Lord alone.  
No spot nor wrinkle can I see  
In them that unto Jesus flee;  
For they and He are one.”

“I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17. 23). Jude directs the church to “the only wise God our Saviour.” He says, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” The sacrifice of God’s Lamb, the Lord Jesus, being all sufficient, God in faithfulness will present the confessing sinners who trust to Christ alone, “faultless” in that tremendous day. What an unspeakable blessing!

3. Another glorious foundation truth is that God has a people who are righteous in His sight. How can these things be when we are so sinful by nature, and so often painfully feel our woe? The sure foundation that the church is righteous before God is that Jehovah-tsidkenu is our righteousness, for He is called “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” The Holy Ghost in leading poor, sinful men in repentance and faith to the Lord Jesus, makes known to them, that though they are rotten and ruined by sin, yet Jesus who is now in heaven is their righteousness. What a comforting and wondrous truth it is, that God imputes or ascribes the righteousness of the Lord Jesus to the poor men that believe. They are known and loved as righteous in being joined to Christ. Jesus is not only our righteousness, but also our sanctification. The grace of God will truly bring a pilgrim to live in godly fear by faith, and “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith” he is “called.” How needful it is to bring forth fruit meet for the kingdom of heaven. We read, “He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous” (1 John 3. 7). When the Lord comes “the second time without sin unto salvation,” He will look for fruit from the profession of the life of faith. “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7. 20).

4. The bruising of Satan and the destruction of his works is another comfortable foundation truth to the battling pilgrims as they have to “fight the good fight of faith.” “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3. 8). The struggling believer may plead the word of the apostle, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16. 20). The church has a cruel foe who will attempt to destroy at every step, and press the life of God out of her soul. Jesus, the “Captain of their

salvation,” will give them the victory: “Which giveth us the victory.” Satan continually tempts, ensnares, entangles and threatens the dear people of God, who so often feel defenceless, but the victorious Saviour “knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Pet. 2. 9). Paul writes, “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8. 37).

5. The truth that the Lord is with His people is another sure foundation of comfort and hope. Moses was given the promise (and the rebellious travellers with him received the benefit also), “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Exod. 33. 14). In spite of all their waywardness, the Lord brought the children of Israel safely to the promised land. The Lord’s word to His church is that where two or three gather together in His name, “there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18. 20). May the twos and threes that meet together in His name, sweetly realise the strength and comfort of Christ’s words. God’s eye is upon the city day and night. The saints are ever before Him as “the apple of His eye.” The Apostle Paul writes, “For He hath said, I will never leave thee” (“fail thee” in Joshua 1. 5) “nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13. 5). The tried and afflicted people of God have proved this over the years. The parting promise of Immanuel is, “And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

6. Another foundation of gospel truth is the gift of the Holy Ghost. “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2. 33). Jesus promised that He would send the Comforter. A Holy Ghost religion is the only religion that will truly save, and bring a poor man safely home to God. He is the Divine Comforter, and comforts the dear people of God in all their sorrows, temptations and afflictions, and testifies to their heart and conscience that all is well, and that they will see the “King of glory.” It is by the mighty and gracious operation of the Holy Ghost that sinners repent, pray, seek, trust alone to Jesus, and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. By His power they cannot let Immanuel go, except they be blessed. The blessed Holy Ghost is the Remembrancer of God’s Word, and so often reminds the tried believer of the promise in Christ. The Holy Ghost alone brings success to the gospel preaching. All the schemes and contrivances of men will only deceive and set people short of a saving knowledge of Jesus. The true success of the gospel is by the saving work of the Holy Ghost. The power and unction of the Holy One makes all the difference. How we need infallible teaching and solid comfort from the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus taught, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11. 13).

7. Another sure foundation is what is written in the Scripture. Jesus often said, "It is written." What is written will stand for ever and into the eternal world, when all the paper and ink here below is destroyed. It is a most solemn thought that those who lift up their eyes in hell, will know the truth, "He that believeth not shall be damned," and also, "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (Mark 16. 16; John 8. 24). How the dear saints, who shall sing with eternal freshness, will ascribe and render all unto God, as they crown Him "with songs and everlasting joy." How they shall be amazed and wonder with such felicity and joy at that glorious truth, "The election hath obtained it" (Rom. 11. 7). The Scriptures cannot be broken. The written word declares the Word made flesh and dwelling among us (see John 1. 14). It is the Word of God that believers build their hopes upon as they supplicate for the promised grace of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus makes His Word a living word unto them. They believe in, and cling to the preciousness of Christ, for they know that certain truth, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious" (1 Pet. 2. 7). The humble believer finds in the Scriptures much of his own exercises, prayers, peculiar temptations and living desires. We can safely say that the exercises which are by faith among the godly, are found in the Word of God. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24. 35).

8. Another sure and glorious foundation truth is the perseverance of the saints and their final victory. We read in the song of Moses after the Israelites' safe crossing through the Red Sea, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance" (Exod. 15. 17). Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 2, 3). "The gates of hell shall not prevail against" the dear people of God. The death of Jesus has abolished death, and the hosts of hell were defeated by His death and resurrection. Satan is chained and under the control of beloved Immanuel. Satan was allowed to trouble godly Job with a sore and heavy trial, but he could not destroy him. He was forbidden to touch his life. And why? Because his Redeemer lived, and he believed that He would stand "at the latter day upon the earth." "And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22. 4).

There are many other sure and glorious foundation truths written in the Word of God that we could mention, but time and space do not permit. It is a wonderful truth, "Your heart shall live that seek God" (Psa. 69. 32).

In these increasingly evil and chaotic times, when the godly who wish to keep close to the Scripture are under looming threat from the

authorities, there are other glorious truths in the Word of God, which are given to be meat and drink for the saints. They are given for us to plead before the throne of grace. May the Lord comfort the church under persecution (or under increasing threat as in our own land) with the sacred realisation of what David sang in Psalm 29: "The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever" (verse 10).

Jesus the great "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS," when living here below as a "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53. 3), took some needful sleep in the hinder part of the ship (see Mark 4. 37-41). While Jesus was sleeping, a storm and tempest arose upon them. Jesus remained asleep undisturbed. But the poor, frail disciples were all of a panic as they tried to control the ship. It would appear from the sacred narratives that the ship began to take on water which would overwhelm them. The disciples awoke the Lord with a "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" The Lord arose and said, "Peace, be still." They then marvelled in humble adoration, and said to each other, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" Truly it can be said in all the fears and tremblings of pilgrims, Jesus "sitteth upon the flood."

"The city Shushan was perplexed" as the Jews bewailed their dire situation, and spread it before the Lord. In one night and the following day, the wickedness of Haman was overthrown, and Haman was hanged upon the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. This is one of the remarkable accounts in the Scriptures of the Lord's care, love and faithfulness to His dear people. Mordecai was forgotten by King Ahasuerus, as also Joseph was forgotten by Pharaoh's butler. They were not forgotten by their God. We believe the forgetfulness of these two men, Ahasuerus and the butler, were the secret workings of Almighty God in their minds. The two godly men, Joseph and Mordecai, had to be remembered and to appear at the right time to accomplish the Lord's redemption in preserving the promised line unto the coming of the Messiah. As William Cowper truly expresses in verse, the Lord

"Plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm."

It is truly good "by faith" to lay to heart, that in spite of all the present perplexities, convulsions and threatenings of the ungodly in this present day, the Lord does sit upon the flood. The floods of iniquity and the lofty speeches of antichrist are still under the control of the great King in Zion, who sits at the right hand of power. He sits as King to watch over all the affairs of His dear people, with everlasting affection. The Lord loves to hear from His dear people while He sits as "King for ever." Because of His love and affection to them, He is sometimes pleased to try their faith to hear their bleatings of supplications and

confessions unto Him. So this “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” reigns gloriously and rides triumphantly to bring all His dear people home to heaven at last.

The Lord Jesus is “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne” (Rev. 7. 17). Therefore may we truly pour out our hearts’ secrets before Him, who as the “Lamb of God,” has taken away the sin of the world. He sits as a merciful Friend of publicans and sinners, and we read of Him, “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” (Heb. 2. 17). We also read that He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4. 15). While we would like to enlarge on these truths, we feel it better to direct our readers to the excellent writings of J.C. Philpot on this blessed One, the Lord Jesus, “who sitteth King for ever,” which are being serialised month by month in this magazine.

Faithful Nehemiah clearly believed the words of David in the Psalms, that “The LORD reigneth.” When the walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt, with many enemies opposing them and threatening them, Nehemiah directed the builders to trust in their God, as we read, “Be not ye afraid of them: **remember the Lord**, which is great and terrible” (Neh. 4. 14). May such a truth abide with us, as God has cast the lot of our lives in the days which the Scriptures show plainly as “in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3. 1). The apostle then writes of the way and manner of men in the “perilous times.” When we read chapter 3, we realise that it is an accurate description of our days. The Lord Jesus Himself, the prophet Daniel, the Apostle Peter, and also Paul elsewhere in the Word of God plainly teach the signs of the last days. We live in a global and digital age, which means that the filth, wickedness, violence, and anti-christian campaign and lying propaganda is instantaneous around the world. These spewings from the mouth of Satan (see Rev. 12. 13-17), have one end in view, and that is to destroy the Lord’s anointed One and His people from off the face of the earth. This he cannot do, because the Lord will still have a few humble believers who will be waiting for His second coming in the last day. They will be crying at such a time when God will shorten days (see Matt. 24. 22), with a loud cry, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6. 10). As God is pleased to unfold His purposes in the earth in these perilous times, and as “the times of the Gentiles” are “fulfilled,” and again, “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Luke 21. 24 and Rom. 11. 25), may we “**remember the Lord**,” that it is His firm and glorious hand that will perform His own word, and that He will still bless

His people. May the Lord truly bless the young and rising race, and establish them in the faith of God's elect, for much faith and grace will be needed.

We are thankful that due to weakness in parliament, the government has been thwarted in its plans to introduce three key points of its oppressive and intrusive "British values" policies. They are the signing of an "equality oath" by public servants, excesses in its extremist laws, and Ofsted inspections of where the under 19 year olds are attending church activities for more than six hours per week. We feel that the eventual determination of all major parties in politics, together with the Celtic nationalist groups, to make public servants in particular, sign the equality oath, is the unfolding of the warning in Revelation chapter 13: "that no man might buy or sell, save" (except) "he that had the mark, or the name of the beast" (see Rev. 13. 14-18). When this lying spirit extends beyond public servants and into all walks of life, our younger friends will find it increasingly difficult to trade or find suitable employment. Satan is very subtle, but may we remember that "The Lord reigneth." The fearful abominations being found in the nation, and taught in our schools, will not only lead to eventual persecution, but will bring society in general into utter chaos and confusion. It is a solemn word in Jeremiah: "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (chapter 5. 9). Most solemnly, we have trampled the gospel, which at one time so enlightened our nation, under our feet. Nevertheless, it is good and consoling to **"remember the Lord"** as we see the Scriptures being fulfilled.

Jesus said, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18. 8). We are witnessing in our land such a great "falling away" (see 2 Thess. 2. 3), yet the work of God in sinners' hearts is still continuing. The Lord will not leave Himself without a very small remnant, which He calls "His witnesses." We are thankful to record, and are cheered by it, that one and another have been constrained by the love and grace of Christ to put on an open profession in 2017. We were favoured to be able to record the same at the close of 2016. May we record these things to the glory of God. Our American churches have also been visited and favoured by the Lord with gracious additions, and one friend constrained to put on Christ at the great age of 90 years. May each dear friend who has taken up his cross to be a humble follower of the Lord, truly be given much grace to endure unto the end. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised)" (Heb. 10. 23). Compared with the teeming millions, the Lord's people appear as a small remnant. We read in Romans, "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a



remnant shall be saved" (chapter 9. 27). It will be an unspeakable blessing to be among that remnant that is safely gathered in. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isa. 33. 17). John Berridge writes,

"A remnant small of humble souls  
His grace mysteriously controls  
By sweet alluring call;  
They hear it, and His Person view,  
They learn to love and follow too,  
And take Him for their all."

He then turns his verse into petition:

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

Whatever the increasing distress we meet with in this age of antichrist, and the spiritual decline we see in Zion, may we ever **"remember the Lord,"** who has promised to see His people again. "I will see you again" (John 16. 22).

Whilst there has been a replenishing of the church with gracious additions, a number of godly ministers, deacons and godly men and women have passed away, and entered into their eternal rest, to leave a dying world of sin and death behind for ever. They have been favoured to enter into the joy of their Lord. We think of our brethren at Melbourne in Australia who have lost both their pastor and their long-serving deacon. This is also a loss to the brethren at Ryde, Sydney. May the Lord strengthen and bless them. May the Lord's blessing rest upon the pastorates and three month trial that are commencing in 2018 and may He confirm with signs following.

We think of many dear friends who are called to walk the path of affliction. The Lord be gracious unto them. We also think of widows and widowers, and all who walk a lonely pathway. The Lord grant unto them the comfort of His presence. We are thankful that at the time of writing, our dear friend, the retired Editor, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, is maintained in good health for his age. The Lord be very gracious unto him.

We think of the dear family circles, with the children and young folk, growing up into this world of uncertainty and sorrow. May parents, grandparents and praying friends continually bring them unto the Lord, and entreat that He may bless them and save them. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is

the kingdom of God.” “And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them” (Mark 10. 14, 16).

May we each lay to heart that “time is short” for us, whatever our age, and that “one thing is needful.” As we journey into another year, how the dear pilgrims so much need the Lord to be with them in every untrodden step to the day of their death. May we each be helped to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3. 14), that He may be our “everlasting light.” and our refuge for ever.

We must acknowledge the Lord’s gracious help throughout the year, without which we could not have continued. We truly desire that the Lord Jesus may be exalted in the pages of the *Gospel Standard*. We are very conscious of our own weakness and failings, and thank the readers for their forbearance and patience. We sincerely thank a number of readers who have encouraged us, and expressed having received spiritual profit from the magazine over the year. May the Lord be glorified in it all.

We send our sincere greetings and prayerful best wishes to all our readers, both at home and in other lands.

“Brethren, pray for us.”

Yours affectionately in gospel bonds,  
Timothy J. Rosier, Editor

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### CONSIDER!

*Sermon preached by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at Bethel Chapel, Luton,  
on Lord’s day morning, May 1st, 2016*

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**Text:** “Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things” (2 Tim. 2. 7).

The apostle here is speaking of a few important things, and suddenly he stops. These things are too important to be rushed over. Stop, and pause, and “consider what I say.” You may say, Well, what are these important things Paul is saying to his son in the faith, Timothy, here? Well, he gives him that charge to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” and he warns him that he will have to endure hardness, and he gives a threefold comparison, an interesting, threefold comparison: that before a battle is won, there has to be a fight; before a race is won, there has to be the endurance; and before the harvest is gathered in, it is needful for labour in the field.

“Consider what I say.” So he is not leaving Timothy to go on unawares, and he follows by a most beautiful verse, and most of the divines have not been able to think just why, and what the reason is, why that comes in: “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” Well, it does not matter how often that comes in, or where that comes in, or what the context is where it comes in. It is a blessed thing if we can remember the glories of the resurrection – “Vain the stone, the watch, the seal” – and also a risen, exalted Saviour, almighty to save in heaven.

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” As if he says, Remember this, Timothy. Whatever be your state and condition, however hard things are, remember this: you have a God and Saviour in heaven who is almighty to be with you, to help you and deliver you. May some of you this morning in all your concerns and your fears and your trials, may you sweetly remember this: that there is a Man in heaven, and that Man is true almighty God, and He ever lives. He is a great and glorious High Priest and He is almighty to save.

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” These things are too important, they are too precious just to be hurried over. “Consider what I say.” Now then, beloved friends, it is not just these few verses; it is not just Timothy; it is not just the apostle. There is a vital principle here, and that is where so often we go wrong. “Consider what I say” – that need to stand still, and to stop, and to pause, and to think, and to consider, especially concerning the Word of God, and the solemn things we hear and speak, and the glorious things we hear and speak. Now how much time do you spend considering them?

Now you young ones, you children, I hope you all read your Bibles, at least at night before you go to bed. Have you noticed that when you read through the Book of the Psalms, there is a little word comes in here and there, and that little word is **Selah**? It means just what we are talking about: stop; do not go hurrying on. It means a pause. It was really in the music. They were singing the Psalm, and they had to stop here. I think you will find when you come across this little word **Selah**, there is something that has gone before that is important, and we need to stop, and we need to think about it. Pause, stop, consider.

Older ones as well, when we are reading the Word of God, we need at times just to stop, and pause, and consider. I have often told you how J.K. Popham once had a quiet day, and he thought how nice, and he decided what he would do: read through the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That was how he was going to spend the day. After an hour or two, he found he was still on the first word: God.

That is it: “Consider what I say.” There are special times when the Lord calls us to stop, and pause, and consider. One is when we are young. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” Do not leave it till you are older. It is a time to stop and consider. As our young people grow up, there are a lot of things you have to consider: what kind of work you are going to do, what kind of job you are going to have, and applications, and studying. It is all this considering. But this great point: to consider ourselves, and our sins, and our souls, and eternity, and Almighty God, and heaven, and hell, and what the Word of God teaches about it.

“Consider what I say.” Now there is another important time, and that is when the service has ended. You know the little story of some eminent man, who did not go to church or chapel going through the village, and he saw a poor, godly countryman coming out of chapel on his way home. He said, “Well, is it all done?” And the old countryman said, “Sir, it has all been *said*, but it is not all *done*.”

How do you spend the Lord’s day afternoon? The godly Puritans used to spend the Lord’s day afternoon going over the service and the sermon in the morning. But do you leave it behind in chapel? “The Lord give thee understanding in all things.” When you go through the chapel doors, is the sermon forgotten, its solemn warnings? Beloved friends, we are preaching, hearing, in the light of a never-ending eternity. We have to die. We have heaven and hell before us. We have immortal souls.

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” If the Lord begins with you in love and mercy, He will write that little word **Selah** in your heart. It will not just be in the Book of the Psalms. You will be brought to stop and consider, and the Lord *will* give you understanding in all these things.

There is another time especially to stop, and pause, and consider. The wise man says, “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider” (Eccles. 7. 14). The day of adversity – when trouble comes, when there is ill health, when there are difficulties and problems and perplexities – now this is the time to consider, to consider in prayer, to consider when in secret. “And the Lord give thee understanding in all things.”

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” Now this is a vast subject, and there are many exhortations in Scripture from beginning to end of the things we should consider. Let me just mention one or two. The Book of Job, and the Lord speaks, and He speaks to His servant Job in all his sorrows, and He says, “Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God” (Job 37. 14). There the Lord is speaking of creation. Do we ever stand still, and look around us, and consider the wondrous works of God? You young ones – not evolution;

creation. To “consider the wondrous works of God,” to think of that divine, almighty Creator. He created all things out of nothing in six days, and all very good. “Stand still.” O that is that pausing. “Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.”

There is another Scripture on the very same subject, and it is David. David knew what it was to be in the fields on a starry night, to look up, and he says, “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?” (Psa. 8. 3, 4). I wonder if you have ever been out on a beautiful, moonlit, starry night and you have looked up and considered the heavens that He has made, the moon and the stars, the work of His fingers, and you have had some sense of the greatness of God. O how great our God is! And this opposite: our nothingness. “What is man?” Yet the Lord takes notice of him; the Lord visits him.

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” Now another thing the Lord tells us to consider, and this time it was Samuel in his farewell, in that loving speech he gave to Israel, the nation he had served so well, and he concluded it like this: “Consider how great things He hath done for you” (1 Sam. 12. 24). What a consideration that is, and what a subject, and what a theme – the great things the Lord has done for you! For His people? Yes, but if you can come in it personally: “for you.”

And our Lord Jesus Christ spoke on this subject. He spoke of it specially in a way of divine providence. “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (Matt. 6. 28, 29). On that ground He speaks of the mystery of the Lord’s loving providence in the hearts of His people.

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” Well, beloved friends, it is a vast subject. It is a vital subject, and there are so many things in Scripture. I just want to speak of two this morning, two of these vital considerations that the Lord solemnly calls us to, and they are the two things that really matter.

The first is this: the consideration of ourselves, and who we are, and what we are in the sight of a holy God, and our great need, and our lost condition as sinners in His sight. And the word here comes in that interesting little Book, the Book of the prophet Haggai. On two occasions the Lord there very solemnly speaks to His ancient people, and He says, **“Consider your ways.”** He reproves them concerning their ways, because they were not considering their ways. They were considering all kinds of things. They were considering their wealth, and their ambitions, and their prosperity. They were considering the beautiful

homes they were living in. They were not thinking about the neglect of the Lord's house which was lying in ruins. And the Lord opens it up to them. He says, You are doing nothing but making money. It is a most striking expression. He says, You are putting it in a bag which has holes in the bottom; you are putting your wealth in bags that have holes. We do not hear much of that.

But what are we considering by nature? There is a lot of consideration about things we are going to buy, things we are going to have in our houses, in our homes. There is a lot of consideration, tremendous consideration about holidays. So much of our consideration is of worldly things. I know what some of you are going to say to me. Surely a husband has to consider the things in his family. Of course he has, and the Lord rebukes him if he does not.

But the point in the Book of Haggai was this: they were really considering themselves, and their ease, and their comfort, and their prosperity, but they were *not* considering the ways of God; they were not considering the house of God; they were not considering the things that mattered. These things were being forgotten. These things were being despised. I would put it very clearly to you. Do you ever stop and consider your ways, and has the Lord ever given you understanding in all things, and especially how that some of your ways are wrong? Did He ever show you that your ways by nature are leading to endless ruin? John Newton says,

“Stop, poor sinner! stop and think  
Before you farther go!  
Will you sport upon the brink  
Of everlasting woe?”

It is only the Lord in His mercy who brings us to stop and consider. That is why Paul says it even to his beloved Timothy. You need the Lord to give you understanding in all these things.

During the Napoleonic wars, I think it was at Waterloo, there was a British officer hurrying along on horseback, when everything was pitch black in the middle of the night. Suddenly there was a flash of light, and he saw there was an abyss, and he would have gone over to his destruction. It so made him consider that this was where he was spiritually as well as naturally, on the brink of everlasting woe.

But do you consider these things? When you leave chapel this morning, will you be considering these things? And this afternoon, will you spend any time considering these things? And what about tomorrow morning? Will you be considering these things, or will they all be forgotten? “The Lord give thee understanding in all things,” because we do not have this understanding unless the Lord the Holy Spirit gives it.

But one great miracle of the new birth, one great miracle of true conversion, is that you will begin to consider these things.

“Pause, my soul!” – that is the stopping and considering –  
 “Pause, my soul! and ask the question,  
 Art thou ready to meet God?”

And this is the vital question. Do you ever stop, and pause, and consider?

“Am I made a real Christian?” – not an imitation one or a formal one –  
 “Am I made a real Christian,  
 Washed in the Redeemer’s blood?”

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” So you cannot separate these two parts of the verse. God has joined them together. If the Lord does give us understanding of our ways – wrong ways, sinful ways, lost ways, ways going to a lost eternity – if the Lord does give us an understanding of these things, then we will pause, and we will stop, and we will consider our ways.

Do you know what it will make you do? It will make you pray. It will make you pray to the Lord that you might be right. It will make you pray to the Lord that He might forgive you, and that He might save you by His grace with an everlasting salvation, and that He will wash you in the Saviour’s precious blood. That is what consideration will lead you to, because there will be a gracious effect of it. Why? Because it is the Holy Spirit’s work in your heart, and when He begins a good work in you, He “will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” I can say to you this morning with all my heart in love and affection to your souls, “Consider what I say,” but it is only Almighty God by His Spirit who can work in your hearts and give you understanding of these things. That is a good prayer for young and old: Lord, in Thy love and mercy give me an understanding of these things.

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” That is the first thing. Under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, consider your ways. Now the second thing, and let me open it up in this way. Of course, I am going to speak to you about the dear Saviour of sinners, but in the beautiful Epistle to the Hebrews which is so full of Christ, you have it three times; three times this call to consider. “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, **consider** the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (chapter 3. 1). And then again, speaking of Christ, “made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (chapter 6. 20): “**Consider** how great this Man.” And then thirdly, “**Consider** Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds”

(chapter 12. 3). Now, “consider what I say,” concerning the glorious Person and finished work of the incarnate Son of God.

“Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” If He has given you an understanding of your sinful ways, if He has given you an understanding of your need of salvation, if He has given you an understanding that you need to be right, then the one is the remedy to the other. “Consider your ways” – that is the malady. “Consider Him” – that is the remedy. This is a blessed contemplation for young and old, and whether you are beginning, or whether you are just seeking the Lord, or whether you have been in the way many years, to be blessed with a sweet, sacred consideration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who He is, the Son of God from all eternity. Even then, His “delights were with the sons of men,” “rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth” (Prov. 8. 31). Consider that wonderful love which He had to His chosen from all eternity, when He loved them with an everlasting love.

“Consider Him.” And O how He veiled His glory and in the fulness of time He came to this earth, born at Bethlehem, born of a virgin, “made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4. 4). Consider that He came with a covenant purpose to save His people with an everlasting salvation, and consider Him in His real, proper, sacred humanity, a real Man, that He might sympathise and that He might understand, and that He might suffer, bleed and die.

“Consider Him.” But especially consider Him in His dying love and atoning blood, Gethsemane and the judgment hall and Calvary. And consider Him in that great sacrifice when He for ever “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9. 26), and “perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10. 14). Consider Him in His glorious resurrection and ascension to heaven, and consider Him there almighty to save.

The one is the answer to the other. O the Lord give you understanding in these things. But if you have been brought to consider your ways, and if in any measure you have a little understanding – and the Lord is so sovereign in the way He leads and teaches – but as you consider the glorious Person and finished work of our Lord Jesus, you will be brought to consider just how much you need Him. That is a good beginning when you feel your need of a Saviour. You will begin to consider you cannot do without Him, and the Lord will give you understanding in all things, and you will see a sweet attraction in Him, and as you are brought to consider Him, you will want to know Him, whom to know is eternal life.

As you consider Him, you will pray to Him, and you will consider the things you need as you pray to Him. You will not dictate to Him, but it is an urgent, pressing case. It is “Give me Christ, or else I die.” You



will be praying that He will forgive you, that He will wash you in His precious blood, that He will save you, that He will prepare you for heaven. “Consider what I say,” concerning your lost condition, but concerning the glorious Person and finished work of the Saviour. But to consider this: that He is as willing to save the needy soul as He is able.

You will be brought to consider that He has made some precious promises. As you consider Him, you will consider the words He speaks. You will consider a word like this, a precious promise like this: “Him” – and Bunyan says there have been some strange, wicked *hims* that have ventured on Christ, but they have been received – “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37). And you will consider some encouraging words like this: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11. 28).

But do not forget that threefold word in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is this; it is considering His complete suitability to meet your need: “Consider the Apostle” – that is the One that the Father has sent – “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” It is a lovely theme, to consider Him as a great High Priest, laying down His life as a sacrifice, and then rising, ascending, for ever to intercede, the sinner’s Advocate with God, the one Mediator whose advocacy never fails.

“Consider Him.” “Consider how great this Man” – the greatness of His mercy, and His love, and His faithfulness, and His power to save. “Consider Him that endured” – O what a word this is; the Lord give you understanding – **“such contradiction.”** You can see the persecution of Herod there; you can see Satan in the wilderness; you can go to the judgment hall; and O the wonders of the cross. **“Such contradiction** of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

“Consider your ways,” and “Consider Him,” and “Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” Beloved friends, as you leave chapel, as you go home, this afternoon and during this week, and perhaps when you are awake in the night, may the Lord bless you with this consideration of these things that really matter, and “the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” And as you consider the Saviour, you will learn the answer to that question: “What think ye of Christ?” And He will endear Himself to you, and you will consider Him in love and in affection, as the one thing needful. The Lord give you understanding in all these things.

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Christ maintains a little grace in His children amidst many strong lusts and corruptions; grace is but a little grain, and yet it lives and thrives; ’tis an abiding seed, under continual influences from Christ.

Thomas Cole

## THE SPIRIT'S HELP IN PRAYER

*Extract from James Buchanan of Edinburgh (1804-1870)*

If anyone doubt the necessity of the Spirit's aid in the exercise of prayer, there is enough in the words of the apostle to convince him of his error; for even an inspired man, classing himself along with other believers, says, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8. 26). This humbling confession of our own infirmity and ignorance, and of our simple dependence on the grace and strength of the Spirit, is, indeed, much at variance with the natural feelings of the human heart, which is prone to self-sufficiency and presumptuous confidence in its own unaided powers; but there is reason to fear that those who have never felt their need of the Spirit's grace in the exercise of prayer have either never prayed at all, or if they have observed the outward form, are still strangers to its spiritual nature, as the greatest work, the highest and holiest service of the soul, by which it holds communion with God, in the exercise of those graces of faith, and love, and hope, which are all inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

The careless and presumptuous sinner, or the cold and formal professor, may be conscious of no difficulty in prayer which cannot be overcome by the power of his own natural faculties. He may content himself with a repetition of a form of words, such as his memory can easily retain and recall. But not such are the feelings of any true believer, for never is he more sensible of his own infirmity, and of his absolute dependence on the Spirit's grace, than when he seeks, in the hour of prayer, to spread his case before the Lord, and to hold communion and fellowship with Him as his Father in heaven. Having some idea, however limited, of the greatness and majesty of God, and some sense, however feeble, of the spirituality of his service; knowing that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4. 24), but conscious at the same time of much remaining darkness, of the corruptions which still cleave to him, and of the manifold distractions to which his mind is subject, even in the most solemn exercises, he knows what those "infirmities" are of which the apostle speaks, and will be ready to join with him in the humbling confession, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought."

His own experience teaches him that the spirit of prayer is not the natural and spontaneous product of his own heart; that it was implanted there, and that it must be continually sustained by grace from on high; and long after he has been enabled to come with comfort to the throne of grace, and to pour out his heart with much of the peace which a spirit of adoption imparts, he may be reminded, by the variations of his own

experience, that he must be dependent, from first to last, on the Spirit's grace for all his earnestness and all his enjoyment in prayer. O what believer has not felt his own utter emptiness, and the barrenness even of this precious privilege, when, left to himself, he attempted to pray, while the spirit of prayer was withheld! You may have retired at your usual hour to your closets, and fallen upon your knees, and used even your accustomed words, but you felt that your affections were cold, your desires languid, and your whole heart straitened and oppressed. You strove once more to renew your request, and with greater urgency than before, but in spite of all your efforts your thoughts began to wander even in God's immediate presence, and as you rose from your knees, you were ready to exclaim, "Oh that I were as in months past" (Job 29. 2). "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments" (Job 23. 3, 4). On such occasions you complain of unbelief, of a wandering mind, of a hard and insensible heart; and these complaints are frequently heard amongst God's people, for I believe that He often visits them with such experiences for the very purpose of impressing them with a humbling sense of their own *infirmity*, and reminding them of their dependence on the Spirit for the right use and enjoyment of all the means of grace.

The grace of the Holy Ghost, then, is indispensable, if we would maintain the spirit and enjoy the exercise of prayer. Every part of His work as the Spirit of grace has a tendency to prepare us for this exercise; for whether He act as a reprover, convincing us of sin, or as a sanctifier, subduing our corruptions, or as a comforter, giving us peace and joy in believing, or as a teacher, enlarging our views of divine truth, and confirming our faith in it, all the operations of His grace are subservient more or less directly to the exercise of prayer. But that we may have a clear and distinct idea of the Spirit's operation as "the Spirit of grace and supplications," it may be observed more particularly, that –

1. He enables us for prayer, by disclosing to us our *necessities and wants, our sins and shortcomings*, so as to impress us with a deep sense of our absolute dependence on God. This is intimated when it is said, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." Self-ignorance is a great hindrance to fervent prayer. We are not duly sensible of our wants, and hence we have no earnest desire for those supplies of grace which we really need. We are apt to say with the Laodiceans, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," not knowing that we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3. 17).

Our prayers have respect either to our temporal or our spiritual wants, and with reference to both we need the enlightening and directing

grace of the Spirit. In respect to our temporal wants, it might seem that we could have little difficulty in understanding them, and in praying for what things we need; but I apprehend every experienced believer will be ready to acknowledge his ignorance on this subject, and to confess that he often knows not what is really good for him. Every condition of life has its peculiar snares, and temptations, and trials; and one of the most precious fruits of the Spirit is a disposition to resign ourselves to the will of God, and to pray for temporal blessings only in so far as they may be consistent with, or conducive to, our spiritual welfare. This resigned and spiritual frame of mind is beautifully expressed in the prayer of Agur: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov. 30. 8, 9). This is so far from being the natural disposition of our hearts, that the apostle represents the very opposite spirit as prevailing among professing Christians, and breathing in their very prayers: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. 4. 3).

In reference, again, to our spiritual wants, we are often lamentably ignorant of their nature and extent; and they who have paid most attention to the state of their hearts will be the first to feel how much they need the grace of the Spirit to direct them to a discovery of their sins. Thus David exclaims, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults" (Psa. 19. 12); "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139. 23, 24). Nothing is more necessary to prayer than to know "every man the plague of his own heart" (1 Kings 8. 38).

2. The Holy Spirit, besides disclosing to us our wants, our weaknesses, and our sins, makes known *the rich provision of all needful grace* which is treasured up in Christ; and this is as useful for our direction and encouragement as the discovery of our necessities is for awakening our desires, since it is, in a great measure, owing to our ignorance or unbelief in regard to the rich provision of the gospel, that we "know not what we should pray for as we ought." The Holy Spirit makes known to the believer, in all their fulness and variety, the inestimable blessings of redemption; for He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us (see John 16. 15), and He is sent that we may "know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2. 12).

A clear discovery of the rich and glorious privileges which Christ has purchased for His people, is at once a means of direction and a source of encouragement in prayer. When they are placed before us in all their variety and extent, we feel how much we need them, how suitable they are to our real wants, and how infinitely precious and desirable in themselves. Pardon, repentance, holiness, peace of conscience, eternal life – when

these and similar blessings are vividly conceived of as having been purchased by the Saviour for His people, and promised to all without exception in the gospel, we see what we should pray for, and we feel also that we have a free grace warrant to pray for them, infinitely great and precious though they be. Ignorance of the gracious provisions of the gospel, or a dim and indistinct apprehension, either of the nature of these blessings, or of the method by which they were provided, or of their freeness, is a great hindrance to prayer; but prayer becomes free and lively in proportion as we are taught by the Spirit to know the things which are “**freely** given to us of God.” These are great blessings, and when we pray for them we may well feel that we make a great request of God; but when we know that they are all treasured up for us in the fulness that is in Christ, and that they are freely covenanted to us in the gospel, we “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4. 16).

3. The Holy Spirit assists us in prayer, by working in us such *dispositions and desires* as make us to seek for those supplies of grace which we need, with earnest, importunate and persevering supplication: “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psa. 42. 1, 2).

Naturally we have no such disposition or desire. The carnal mind, which is enmity against God, is naturally averse from those spiritual blessings of which it stands in need. True, it is desirous of exemption from pain and punishment and danger, but whatever is spiritual is obnoxious to its taste.

The awakening of spiritual desire in the heart is the work of God's Spirit, and that desire must be kept alive by His continued operation. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5. 6). This new disposition or desire makes prayer natural, sacred and delightful to the people of God. Just as a natural man hungers and thirsts for food and drink, so the renewed man hungers and thirsts after righteousness. He has a new, spiritual appetite, which naturally and spontaneously seeks its proper spiritual aliment [food or support]. And hence those commands and observances which are a burden and bondage to mere formalists are an easy yoke to every living Christian.

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Let all seen enjoyments lead you to the unseen fountain whence they flow. Never rest upon anything you have without you seeing God in it, and then be sure you rest not upon the enjoyment, but upon that God who manifests Himself by it. For the enjoyment will quickly be gone, but the fountain will remain.

Thomas Halyburton

### GREAT NEED TO BE KEPT BY GRACE

*Extract from a letter written by Henry Venn (1724-1797), vicar of Huddersfield (1759-1770), and rector of Yelling, Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire) (1771-1797). This letter was written to his daughter, Miss Jane Venn.*

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Halifax  
October 11th, 1780

Last Sunday, I preached at Huddersfield twice. Fifty minutes was the length of the first sermon, fifty-three of the second. No vociferation at all in the first; in the second, *very little*. The church was more than filled in the morning; in the afternoon, several hundreds were in the churchyard, and hundreds went away. The gallery was so loaded, as to crack and give way during the prayers, but was, by bringing a strong prop immediately, kept from falling. This vast congregation was silent, and still as possible. After sermon in the afternoon, I was less fatigued than I could have supposed possible, considering how very hot the church was.

You can hardly conceive the care they all express for me, and desire I may not preach more than will agree with me. When, from the pulpit, I beheld so vast a multitude in and out of the church, I was very awfully struck with this idea – what dreadful consequences must follow, should the man they make so much of, fall into wickedness! How would the ungodly triumph, the weak be stumbled, and the Christians mourn in secret! Pray for your father, my dear child! that God, for His own truth's sake, may give me to persevere in His good ways. Terrible is the falling away of any who make profession, and act quite contrary to convictions!

A lady here, Mrs.—, thus relates her own sad case to another lady: “Madam, once Mr.— and I were both in the right path. I drew him into the world again. I am now the most miserable of beings! When I lie down, I fear I shall awake in hell. When I go out, full-dressed, and seem to have all the world can give me, I am ready to sink under the terrors of my own mind. What greatly increases my misery, is the remembrance of the dying speech of my own sister, who told me she had stifled convictions, and obstinately fought against light, to enjoy the company of the world. ‘Sister,’ said she, ‘I die without hope. Beware this be not your own case!’ But indeed,” said Mrs. — to the lady, “I fear it will!” Pray, my dear children, for singleness of heart, and for such a revelation of the excellency of Christ Jesus as will leave no place for halting or dividing your affections. May they all centre in Him!

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God draweth straight lines, but we think and call them crooked.

*Samuel Rutherford*

## THE LORD ABLE TO KEEP US FROM FALLING

*An extract from a sermon by Frank Luther Gosden (1890-1980)*

Jude here concludes with this gracious doxology: “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.” Do you feel your need to be kept? None are safe but those who are kept by God’s power. Let us look for a moment at the need of keeping. I feel to need keeping, in the first place, because of *myself*. O the capability of sin in my nature! I have been brought to realise that there is no sin committed, but what I am by nature capable of. We should destroy ourselves if left to our own powers. We are full of combustible material; it only needs a spark from hell to set us on fire. I *know* it. And where is the seat of all this? It is in the heart, that fountain of evil, from which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, thefts, murders. My heart is by nature no better than the most depraved wretch lying in gaol. I am capable of those things recorded in this chapter, but I pray to be kept.

As is our nature, so are our desires. Apart from grace, everything, every motion of our life, every thought, is utterly depraved; we cannot look without sin, we cannot entertain a desire without sin, we cannot eat or drink without sin. “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.” This is a good word, a kind word, to people who have everything in them that is calculated for their overthrow and destruction. And another thing – it is the aim of the devil ever since he was cast out of heaven, to undo and ruin man. He does not mind a bit about cats or dogs, and there is a reason for it. What the devil aims at is the Person of the Son of God. Man alone was made in God’s image; therefore he is the object of the devil’s attacks, and a mighty kingdom is his! O look at the power of Satan’s kingdom, look at what he has done in the world, look at what he has done in our own nature, in our own hearts and lives! Look at the kingdom of the devil today! O what a world it is! Unless divinely kept, we should be utterly consumed and ruined by the world and the power of the devil, the god of this world.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.” This ability is very blessed. I dare not say you will be glad that you cannot keep yourself, but, seeing that you *cannot*, you will be glad of Him who has a particular ability to keep you from falling. His ability is in this – He is God, and God is greater than the devil, grace is greater than sin, and Christ is greater than Moses. Blessed ability! The *nature* of it! It will help you to come to Him, poor, falling creature. O the falls that I have had!

“If ever it could come to pass,  
That sheep of Christ might fall away,  
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!  
Would fall a thousand times a day.”

I *know* it. Peter fell sadly, basely, but he did not fall out of the hands of Christ, he did not fall from grace, he did not fall into perdition. It is as impossible as it is unwarrantable to try and determine how near to hell a child of God may be permitted to sink, or how near to heaven a child of hell may be permitted to rise; but some of the children of God have in their experience been very near to the gates of hell, and some of the children of the devil have been allowed to get very near to the gates of heaven.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.” Do you feel this response in your heart: “Lord, do keep *me*. ‘Hold me fast and keep me near Thee, For Thou knowest I’m but a worm’”? Well, we need that divine teaching before we come to Him thus. There appears more and more a necessity to have a discovery of what we are. Now again – this ability. God alone is omnipotent. Have you ever been thankful that the devil is not; though his power is mighty, it is limited? God’s power is unlimited; therefore He is able to keep you from falling. Not only so, He is also omniscient, so that He has kindly promised that, with the temptation, He is able to make a way of escape. This ability of omniscience is a great comfort. You cannot be where God cannot see you. It is very blessed, my friends, to experience a sense by faith of the comfort of the divine perfections of Jehovah. They *are* a comfort. Those very perfections that are a terror to the wicked, rendering God a consuming fire to them, are a comfort to His dear people who are taught to revere His holy name. His wisdom, His knowledge, His power, His grace, His omniscience, His omnipresence – all are in this ability to save and to keep. It is definitely declared in the last verse: “Now unto Him ... to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power.” Why, my friends, this will enable you at times to look at the storm undismayed, it will give you to believe what the Lord has said: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16. 33).

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### ONLY CHRIST’S BLOOD ATONES

*An extract from Hugh Latimer (1490-1555),  
Bishop of Worcester, and a martyr*

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O how happy are we, that it hath pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe that His Son should sweat blood for the redeeming of our sins! And, again, how unhappy are we, if we will not take it thankfully, that were redeemed so painfully! Alas, what hard hearts have we! Our Saviour Christ never sinned, and yet sweat He blood for our sins. We will not once water our eyes with a few tears. What an horrible thing is sin, that no other thing would remedy and pay the ransom for it, but only the blood



of our Saviour Christ! There was nothing to pacify the Father's wrath against man, but such an agony as He suffered. All the passion of all the martyrs that ever were, all the sacrifices of patriarchs that ever were, all the good works that ever were done, were not able to remedy our sin, to make satisfaction for our sins, nor anything besides, but this extreme passion and bloodshedding of our most merciful Saviour Christ.

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## **THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER**

### **CHAPTER 13**

#### **A GREAT HIGH PRIEST**

#### **His Sympathy and Compassion**

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

*(Continued from page 387, December 2017)*

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Having attempted, then, to show the nature and prevalency of the intercession of Jesus at the right hand of the Father, and how mercifully and graciously it meets our case as burdened with countless sins and pressed down with innumerable infirmities, we come now to the consideration of the blessed Lord as our most compassionate and sympathising High Priest in the courts of heaven. Sympathy and compassion are necessary qualifications of a high priest, as sustaining the office of a mediator. A priest implies a sacrifice; a sacrifice implies a sinner; a sinner implies a guilty, burdened wretch, justly amenable to the wrath of God, and therefore in a most pitiable condition. For such a one the high priest offers a sacrifice, that he may obtain thereby the pardon of his sins. He must, therefore, compassionate the case of this guilty sinner, that, as feeling sympathy with him, he may present prayer and supplication on his behalf, that the sacrifice offered for his sins may be accepted.

The apostle, therefore, says, "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" (Heb. 5. 1-3). The high priest under the law differed in this point from the blessed Lord in that he was himself a sinner, and as such had to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people. By this offering for his own sins two things were intimated: that as a sinner he himself needed a propitiating sacrifice, and he was reminded thereby that, though a high priest, he was really no better than the sinner for whose sins he offered sacrifice. By this sense, then, of his own sinfulness, thus vividly and

distinctly brought before his eyes, he was taught to have compassion on his fellow-sinners, and especially on those who had sinned ignorantly, and were “out of the way” through backsliding or infirmity, for there was no sacrifice provided for presumptuous sinners (see Num. 15. 27-31).

Our blessed Lord, then, as the great High Priest over the house of God, would not have been suitable to us, as encompassed with infirmities, unless He could compassionate our case, and sympathise with us in our troubles and sorrows. It is true that as perfectly free from sin, both in body and soul, He had no necessity to offer sacrifice for Himself; but, as a most loving and tender High Priest, He could compassionate the sinner without partaking of his sins. But this was not all, for even in eternity, before He gave Himself for His people, He had pity on them, and we read that, apart from electing love or saving grace, in the days of His flesh He had compassion on the hungry multitude. But that He might become a merciful and compassionate High Priest, He had to learn sympathy with His people in a very different way. In the wondrous depths of the wisdom and grace of God, He learnt to sympathise with us in our afflictions by a personal experience of them. This is the apostle’s declaration: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4. 15). And what a most encouraging conclusion does he draw from this most blessed view of the compassion of our once-suffering Head: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4. 16).

We showed in the last chapter the close and intimate connection that subsists between the two main branches of our Lord’s priestly office: the sacrifice which He offered in the days of His flesh on earth and His present intercession in heaven. So there is a similar connection between the personal experience of suffering and temptation which the Lord endured here below and His present sympathy above with His tempted and suffering people still in the wilderness. We must not, however, suppose the personal experience of suffering was essential to His knowledge of it. As omniscient in His divine nature, the Lord perfectly knows what His people suffer, “For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust” (Psa. 103. 14). In this sense He searcheth and knoweth us, for He understandeth our thought afar off; He compasseth our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways (see Psa. 139. 1-3). As the all-seeing, heart-searching God, He sees and knows all our afflictions and sorrows as He knows everything in heaven and earth. But He could only have the personal experience of suffering by becoming Himself a sufferer. This is a deep mystery, but as it is revealed to our faith in the Word of truth and is full of blessed

consolation to the afflicted family of God, we will approach it with all reverence as a part of our Meditations.

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It was the eternal will of God that His dear Son should take the flesh and blood of the children, and that He should take it without sin, but not without suffering. Suffering was a part of the atonement: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3. 18). Our blessed Lord was "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," not only that by these sorrows and griefs He might redeem us from the depths of the Fall, but that He might experimentally learn to feel for, and sympathise with us in our troubles and afflictions.

None can really sympathise with the afflicted but those who have passed or are passing through similar afflictions. We might as well expect a newly-married bride to sympathise with a bereaved widow, or a merchant worth a million with a ruined bankrupt, as for the unafflicted to sympathise with the afflicted. The very word "sympathy" means a suffering with; but how can there be a suffering with another if the suffering itself be personally unknown? The primary element of the whole feeling is wanting, if suffering be absent on the part of the sympathiser. Thus, in order that our blessed Lord might personally, feelingly, and experimentally sympathise with His suffering people, there was a necessity that He must Himself suffer. O mystery of mysteries! O wondrous heights and depths of redeeming love! that the Son of God should suffer, not only that He might redeem, but that He might personally feel for, and experimentally sympathise with, His suffering people!

But though we feel our inability and inadequacy to open up this sacred subject, yet, as we have proposed it as a part of our Meditations, let us now examine this point a little more closely, and see what sufferings the blessed Lord endured that He might learn thereby to sympathise with His afflicted ones, who drink of His cup and are baptized with His baptism.

In viewing these, we cannot well distinguish between the Lord's sufferings as meritorious and His sufferings as intended to teach Him compassion and sympathy, for all His sufferings were a part of His atoning sacrifice: "By whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2. 24). He that was "wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities" hath also surely "borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53. 4, 5). In fact, by the sorrows and sufferings of the blessed Lord several purposes, according to the sovereign will and wisdom of God, were at once accomplished, and principally these following:

1. God was glorified, as the Lord Himself said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (John 13. 31). "I have

glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John 17. 4). By His meek endurance of the sufferings laid upon Him, and by His voluntary and patient obedience to the will of His heavenly Father, through the whole course of His suffering life, from the manger to the cross, God was supremely glorified.

2. The work of redemption was fully accomplished.
3. He learned "obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5. 8).
4. He left us an example, that we "should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2. 21).
5. He was "made perfect" (Heb. 5. 9). That is, He became by suffering perfectly qualified to sustain His high office as "a merciful and faithful High Priest," who, "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2. 17, 18).

It is the last point which chiefly demands our present consideration, as contemplating Him now in our nature at the right hand of the Father. The sympathy and compassion of the blessed Lord, as now exercised in the courts of heaven, are chiefly shown under the following circumstances:

1. To His people under affliction;
  2. To His people under temptation.
- i. The Lord's people are all, without exception, an afflicted people. This was their promised character from the days of old: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD" (Zeph 3. 12). Their afflictions, indeed, widely vary as regards nature, number, length, degree, but all find the truth of that solemn declaration "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14. 22).
  - i. Thus, some are afflicted in *body*, racked with continual pain, or suffering perhaps for years from some complaint which may not much shorten life, yet render life often a burden. If health be the greatest, as all must admit, of temporal blessings, the want of it must be the greatest of all temporal miseries. The blessed Lord, indeed, had no personal experience of sickness, for in His holy, immortal body there were the seeds neither of sickness nor death; but He experienced bodily pain, as when scourged by Pilate's command, when He wore the crown of thorns, when struck and buffeted by the rude Roman soldiery, and more especially when nailed to the cross. Thus, even in the matter of bodily suffering, our gracious Lord can sympathise from personal experience with His poor afflicted family still in the flesh who are racked with pain on their bed of languishing.
  - ii. Many again of the Lord's people are deeply tried in *providence*. Poverty, if not absolute want, is the daily cross of many of the excellent

of the earth. But what a personal experience their gracious Lord had of this sharp trial, who had neither purse nor scrip, but was maintained by the contributions of the women who ministered to Him of their substance (see Matt. 27. 55 and Luke 8. 3). Did He not hunger in the wilderness, and before the barren fig tree? Did He not thirst at Samaria's well and on the cross? And did He not say of Himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head"? (Matt. 8. 20). He who for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be rich, not only spiritually made Himself poor by laying aside His divine glory, but actually and literally made Himself poor by voluntarily submitting to the pain and pressure of bodily poverty.

iii. Others of the Lord's people are subject to cruel *persecutions*. This, indeed, has been the lot of all the saints from the days of righteous Abel, and will be to the end of time, for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3. 12). Fire, indeed, and faggot are now unknown, and the spirit of the times, at least in this country, will not suffer fine and imprisonment, and the other acts of violence which our godly forefathers endured for conscience' sake; but the scourge of the tongue is still wielded, heads cut off instead of ears, and reputations branded instead of foreheads. But what a deep and personal experience had the blessed Lord of persecution from the day that Herod sought His life till He was nailed to the cross! How every word was watched which fell from His lips, every action misinterpreted, His character calumniated as a glutton and a wine-bibber, and shame and contempt poured upon Him until, as the consummation of hatred, and to cover Him, as they thought, with everlasting ignominy, they crucified Him between two thieves.

iv. Others of the Lord's people suffer from the *treachery* of false friends. Had not our blessed Lord an experience of this in the treachery of Judas, so that He could say, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me"? (John 13. 18).

But it is not necessary for us to dwell longer on those *temporal* afflictions which press down so many of the Lord's people, but in which their gracious Head still sympathises with them. He who wept at the grave of Lazarus (John 11. 35); He who had compassion on the widow of Nain (Luke 7. 13), on the beseeching leper (Mark 1. 41), on the man possessed with a devil (Mark 5. 19), on the blind (Matt. 20. 34), and on the fainting, scattered multitudes (Matt. 9. 36), surely pities and sympathises with His people in all their temporal sorrows, however diversified. These, though heavy, are not the severest afflictions which befall the saints of the Most High.

(To be continued)

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**David Smith of Siddal: Strict Baptist Pastor, Industrialist and Local Politician**, by Dr. Gerard Charmley; wire-stitched booklet; 70 pages; price £3.45 plus £1.78 postage; published by and obtainable from the James Bourne Society, Gable Hook Farm, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3BQ, or online from [www.theparsonspages.co.uk](http://www.theparsonspages.co.uk).

David Smith (1819-1892) was a very remarkable man. Brought up near Halifax, Yorkshire, in poverty and ignorance both naturally and spiritually, the Lord met with him without the use of any means after returning late from the public house on a Lord's day when he was about seventeen. For five years he wandered about with a wounded conscience, but was graciously delivered by the application of the words in Hosea 2. 15: "I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope." Not long after his marriage, he resolved to learn the trade of a pattern dyer, and the Lord so blessed his efforts that within a few years he became an acknowledged expert in his field and an author of standard works on the subject of dyeing.

He went into business on his own account and was well known as an honourable employer. In 1862 he began to preach, and there were many occasions when the Lord abundantly blessed his labours. He was pastor of the church at Siddal, Halifax, for many years. In 1865 he was elected to Halifax Borough Council and with a couple of breaks, remained a councillor, and later an alderman, till his death.

This book is the substance of a lecture on the life of David Siddal by Dr. Gerard Charmley for the James Bourne Society, but has obviously been considerably extended. It gives a well-researched account of David Smith's life, not only from a providential viewpoint, but it is very clear that the author can empathise with the spiritual conflicts and difficulties which David Smith met with and treat them sympathetically. As a book, a table of contents and more illustrations would have been appreciated, but the account of David Smith's life is comprehensive and well ordered.

David Smith was called upon to stand firm for the truth – there is a sermon in the booklet on the atonement of the Lord Jesus preached as a result of error being promulgated from a local pulpit where the truth had once been declared – yet there was no compromise between his positions as a pastor, as a politician and an employer. At his death he was honoured as faithful in all three. He lived in a day when, though there was much outward profession of the truth, the opposition to vital godliness was all the more evident, yet we might be almost envious at the spiritual prosperity – when preaching in Wiltshire in 1867 he baptized twenty people in the River Thames, and thirteen more two years later.

We highly recommend this booklet.

John A. Kingham, Luton

**The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**, by George Smeaton, 400 pages, price £16, and **The Doctrine of Justification**, by James Buchanan, 520 pages, price £17; quality cloth bindings with dust jackets; published by The Banner of Truth Trust, and available from Christian bookshops.

Where there is life in the souls of the Lord's people, there will be a thirst to know more of Christ. Contentedness with ignorance in spiritual things does

not spring from grace. The apostle's injunction was: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3. 18). These two books open vital doctrinal truths. It has been said that a church falls or stands with relation to how it views these doctrines. For sinners convinced of their unrighteousness, hell staring them in the face, with that vital question burning within them: "How should man be just with God?" (Job 9. 2), free justification in Christ, by the double imputation of our transgression of the law to Him, and His perfect, law-keeping righteousness to us, is true gospel. Without the Holy Spirit, whose pouring out upon the church was a fruit of Christ's death, there would be no revelation of this gospel to sinners, for it is He who indwells the believer in order to reveal Christ (see John 16. 13) and form Christ in our hearts, the hope of glory. Therefore, in these books there is food for living souls.

In his treatise on justification, Buchanan traces the origin of the doctrine in the Old Testament in the types and shadows, and then in the New through the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Given the significance of 2017, as the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Buchanan gives an interesting review of the Reformation understanding of the doctrine. There is a systematic treatment of the doctrine in relation to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the imputation of Christ's righteousness and the relation of the doctrine to faith, grace and good works. One has said concerning this work: "It is not only a dense theological work for a professor or pastor, it is available for the church member who struggles in his faith week to week." With the Lord's blessing, this will be made profitable reading.

In *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Smeaton gives a clear, scriptural exposition of the Person and work of the Spirit. He proves the Spirit's divinity, and His procession from Father and Son (a doctrine recently called into question among us), before going on to deal with the work of the Spirit within believers. One of the useful sections of the book for our generation is his thorough treatment of the gifts of the Spirit, particularly the charismatic phenomena and also the inspiration of Holy Scripture. Perhaps the outstanding emphasis is on the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ. We tend to forget that Christ was endued with the Spirit (see Isa. 61. 1) without measure (see Psa. 45. 7).

The contents of both books are lectures, originally delivered in memory of the authors' colleague, William Cunningham. Buchanan (1804-1870), Smeaton (1814-1889) and Cunningham (along with James Bannerman and John "Rabbi" Duncan) were all godly professors in the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh, during the mid 1800s. They were men experimentally well-grounded in the truth, and consequently their writings have stood the test of time. (Other works by these men in print include *The Holy Spirit* by Buchanan [a more experimental or practical companion volume to Smeaton's treatise reviewed here], *Christ's Doctrine of the Atonement* and *The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement* by Smeaton, *Historical Theology* and *Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* by Cunningham, and *The Church of Christ* by Bannerman).

As with all good men, there will be differences of interpretation in places, and we may not agree with all conclusions drawn. That said, the writings of these men were once valued by the ministers of our denomination. When a young minister, the late John Harwood, wrote to Rev. Donald Beaton of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland asking his advice on books for a minister's library. Mr. Beaton replied, recommending the titles by these Free Church

stalwarts. Mr. Harwood collected all these titles in their, then rare, original printings, carefully reading and annotating them. While we venture to say that no minister should be without copies, we encourage all to take them up and prayerfully read them.

Matthew J. Hyde, Maidstone

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### ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY

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This day begins another year,  
And we appear before the Lord;  
With reverent awe and holy fear,  
His mercies now would we record.

Alas! for us, how oft we've sinned,  
We own our guilt with childlike shame;  
And fix our hope on that dear Friend,  
Who died to save from wrath and blame.

The years already past, declare  
Thou art a God supremely kind;  
In deep distress Thou hast been near,  
To succour and support the mind.

When friends have failed and foes increased,  
And hell and sin have loudly roared;  
Still Thou hast been our resting-place,  
A faithful, kind, protecting God.

We cannot our own works commend;  
We've too much cause to blush for shame:  
But O! the kindness of our Friend,  
The love of Christ is still the same.

May we begin the present year,  
In faith, and love, and prayer and praise;  
And may it be our future care,  
To honour God in all His ways.

We bless Thy name, Thou Three-One God,  
For all the openings of Thy love;  
And hope, through Jesus' precious blood,  
To live and reign with Thee above.

In Christ Thy children are secure,  
In Him they stand for ever blest;  
And when each boisterous storm is o'er,  
With Him they shall for ever rest.

William Gadsby (1773-1844)



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**FEBRUARY 2018**

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

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**WAS THERE HOPE FOR KING SAUL?**  
**Question and Answer**

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We have received a letter from a mother expressing anxiety that on a group holiday, a scripture teaching leader implied that there was some hope for King Saul. We do not know who the teacher was, neither where nor when this took place.

We can only assume that this confusion has arisen from the account of the battle in which King Saul died, as given by the Amalekite in 2 Samuel chapter 1, which differs in some of the detail from 1 Samuel chapter 31. The majority of the divines believe that the Amalekite lied to curry favour with David. How strange it was that Saul did not want an uncircumcised Philistine to despatch him (see 1 Sam. 31), and yet asked an uncircumcised Amalekite to kill him (see 2 Sam. 1). If the Amalekite was truthful in his account to David, this act of Saul would be equivalent to the increasingly popular sin of euthanasia, which is bringing about death to escape suffering, and it is still the same final act of unbelief as given by the Holy Ghost in the preceding chapter. Because of his wickedness in departing from the living God, Saul was in dark despair.

Let us briefly look at the scripture record of the apostasy of King Saul. We read in 1 Samuel 10. 9 that "God gave him another heart." It does not say "a new heart." In chapter 13 we read that in an act of impatient unbelief, he forced himself to offer a burnt offering, because Samuel had not yet come, as expected. Samuel arrived just as the offering was ended, and reproved him with, "Thou hast done foolishly." We read that he did not keep "the commandment of the LORD thy God," and was told by Samuel that his kingdom would not continue, for "the LORD hath sought him a man after His own heart ... to be captain over His people." In chapter 15 we read of Saul's disobedience in not completely destroying the Amalekites. The Lord said to Samuel, "It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments" (verse 11). In the same chapter we read, Samuel said to him, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king" (verse 23). Samuel was then sent to anoint David

to be king over God's people. We then read in chapter 16. 14, "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him." David was sought out to come and play upon his harp, to refresh the mind of Saul.

After the slaying of Goliath, the women, when dancing and playing, sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (chapter 18. 7). Saul eyed David from that day and developed a murderous hatred to him, and was determined to kill him. "And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul" (verse 12). When David was called to play on his harp to soothe Saul's troubled mind, Saul threw a javelin at him to kill him. This happened more than once. Eventually David had to flee from Saul for his own safety. But the Lord was with him. In the holy account we read that David spared Saul's life twice; and although Saul was humbled, he was not sanctified. In all these things we can see that David was indeed a man after God's own heart.

We must now come to the final acts of unbelief and apostasy of Saul. When sore afraid at the gathering of the Philistines, "Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not" (chapter 28. 6). He then turned to the witch at En-dor. When contact was made with the world of the darkness of lost spirits, a Samuel-like apparition spoke to him of his doom through disobedience, and also of the death of his sons. He had turned away from God, and was now rejected. We read of his solemn end in chapter 31. After being "sore wounded" on the battlefield, he requested his armourbearer to kill him. But the armourbearer would not slay him. We therefore read that "Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer" (verses 4-6).

We have solemnly to conclude from the plain teaching of the Word of God that there was no hope for Saul. We do not read in the sacred records of any repentance, contrition of spirit, tender fear of God, or living faith in King Saul. We rather read of turning away from God, disobedience, murderous hatred, and the final apostasy of enquiring of a witch, and self-murder. We feel that this is a very solemn account. May the solemn narratives in the Scriptures be sanctified to us, that we may take heed, and also search our own hearts.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139. 23, 24), and again, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13. 5).

## A GOSPEL QUESTION

*Sermon preached by Jiri George Pavlik at Salem Chapel, Carshalton,  
on Thursday, April 2nd, 1981*

**Text:** “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” (John 9. 35).

Solemn question! “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” You know, this question was most needful, and it will be a favour indeed if the Lord will ask that question tonight, of some of us at least. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” Well, there was something that the blind man had known, and there was that which he did not know, but none could bring him away from the fact that his sight was restored. He said to those who questioned him, “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (verse 25).

Perhaps you cannot say with such assurance that such a change has taken place in your heart, in your life, and yet you can trace a little of what the Lord has done for you. If He has stopped you, made the things of eternity, pertaining to the salvation of your soul, a solemn, weighty matter, lying upon your heart in such a way that there is an exercise, a looking upward to God, then He has done something for you though you may not be able to say, I know that I am one of the children of God. If the Lord has unstopped your deaf ears, so that whereas before, you have heard the gospel preached with one ear and it went out at the other, but now you are laying it up in your heart and meditating upon it in the night watches; so that though you may not be able to say, “What I have heard is mine”; yet you long for it, that you might claim it, that you might say, “What I have heard came with such power, I cannot doubt that the Lord has sealed it upon my soul, that I am one of the children of God, one of the heirs, and this is my portion from Him.” Yet there has been a change; the Lord has done something for you.

Again, the Lord may have opened your eyes to behold a few things in His Word respecting your path, for which you had no eyes before, and yet now you look and you see the dangers in the way you go, and you have to cry out to the Lord, which you have not done before: “Lord, keep me by Thy power, deliver me from these snares, deliver me from the lying vanities of this world and make me to walk in Thy ways.” Then the Lord has done something for you, though perhaps you dare not say anything about it to the nearest and dearest in your family.

Now you see, there is something wonderful here for those in whom the Lord has begun His work. I would say there is encouragement in the way, because if He has begun His good work, He will finish it in His own good time and in His good way. He will come to you and ask you the same question as He asked this man whose sight He restored. That

blind man freely admitted his ignorance. O he did not know much, and you freely admit that you are ignorant of many things. That is a good thing, my friends, because if you know your ignorance, then the blessed Teacher, the Holy Spirit, will teach you what you know not. He often comes to those who ask of Him guidance and light; He comes to their aid; He instructs them in the way and out of His sacred Word. The heart is prepared by Himself to receive instruction.

Something else happened to this man: he was cast out of the synagogue. Be not surprised, my dear friends, if those who have a dead religion, a form of religion without the power of it, if they cast you out; they will not understand you, they will think that you are altogether out of the way, and they will not have anything to do with you. But the Lord Jesus will take you up. He takes up the outcasts of Israel; He draws them to Himself; He seeks them out; He seeks out His sheep and brings them into His fold, and He teaches them and instructs them in the way.

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” That was a strange question which this man heard, and he openly says, “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” He confesses his ignorance thereby. “Who is He?” It is a wonderful thing if you have your eyes turned to Christ in a right and proper way. I have mentioned at the beginning something that the Lord may have done for you, and in your own way you might have ascribed it to some circumstances that have happened in your life, that they have been the means of causing such a change. Now look from those means; look to Him who is dealing with you.

“Look to Jesus, kind as strong,  
Mercy joined with power,”

for He asks you just the same question as He asked this man. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” It is a needful question, an important question, because therein and upon it, that is upon the answer of it, depends salvation, eternity, heaven itself for you. Salvation is of God; there is no salvation that a man can procure, there is no salvation in creature doings, in creature work; no, no. Salvation is of God; salvation is of grace; and it is through Him, God’s dear Son, who hung upon the accursed, rugged wood of Golgotha, who hung betwixt heaven and earth, exposed to the wrath of offended justice. He there atoned with His own blood for the sins of the elect, and there is no salvation without Him, without the work of His redeeming love and blood. There is no salvation without the Son of God, without His finished work, blood and righteousness. I want to make this very clear, because the apostles dwell so much on it. The Apostle Peter, he declares it so plainly to those who questioned him. He said to those Pharisees that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.

“None but Jesus,  
None but Jesus,  
“Can do helpless sinners good.”

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” Salvation and all that is involved in it comes through Him to poor, needy sinners. Why, it is salvation from sin, salvation from corruption, from death, from hell, salvation unto perfect liberty, salvation unto joy and peace in believing, salvation unto eternity, unto heaven and everlasting bliss. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” There is no peace but through the peace-speaking blood of Jesus, the Son of God. O apart from that precious blood being sprinkled upon your heart and conscience, apart from feeling the power of that precious blood, how can you have assured peace with God? Well, it must come with application; it must come from Him who alone can speak peace, who alone can bring you into the haven of His peace, and comfort your troubled breast with some token of His favour and love. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” There is no forgiveness apart from that peace which Christ has made betwixt His Father, betwixt an offended God and sinners. O what a precious peace it is, and it comes through Him. All these blessings and favours of salvation come through the Son of God to the children of God; so you can see what a vitally important question it is.

But you may feel like that poor man. What you express, though not in the same way, would be to the same purpose. This man, whose sight was restored, enquires, “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” What he says is, That I may know Him. Tell me, for I want to see Him; I want to behold Him; I want to know Him for myself. The Lord Jesus gave him the answer: “Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.” O the sweetness when the Lord reveals Himself to His people as He is! He does not reveal Himself in His saving power, mercy and love to the world; no, He does not reveal Himself thus to any other but to His chosen, blood-bought people.

Poor sinner, art thou after Him? Is the desire of thine heart what the apostle has expressed: “That I may know Him”? (Phil. 3. 10). That I might come to His feet, that I might behold Him for myself by the eye of faith, that I might feel the power of His love, the power of His blood, that I might feel the power of His resurrection and have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Here is something of the experience of salvation which goes deep down into the heart of a child of God. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” It is not a letter knowledge; it is not a knowledge which puffs up; it is a knowledge which humbles as it brings you into communion and fellowship with Christ, as He becomes “the Chiefest among ten thousand” and the “altogether lovely” One (see Song 5).

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” There is faith, faith which enters into the secret. Faith is an eye to behold the invisible things, for nature has never seen any beauty or comeliness in Him. The prophet Isaiah tells us that when we shall see Him we shall see no beauty in Him that we should desire Him (see Isa. 53. 2). But the eye of faith, O what beauty it does see in the Son of God; what beauty it does see in Him as He condescends to dwell with man on the earth; what beauty, what glory, in His incarnation; what beauty and glory in His humble condition in life as He willingly submits Himself as a young Child to Mary and Joseph! What a beauty in His deportment, in His life, and what a beauty and glory in His teaching! His teaching was not and is not the teaching of man. Were it the teaching of man, it would have come to nothing a long, long time ago. But the teaching of the Lord Jesus not only has been preserved in the Holy Scriptures; the blessed Spirit opens it up to the humble followers of the Lamb. He opens it in such a way that they see the glory of the Son of God in it. They believe on Him who came to save to the uttermost. They believe on His miracles, His sacred work, teaching and humiliation.

Here is that which so solemnly separates betwixt the sheep of Christ and the goats. As the sheep of Christ see and behold the beauty, the glory of the Son of God in His humiliation, in His sufferings, both in the garden and on the cross, they would follow Him by precious faith. They know nothing of the things man has invented, such as pilgrimages, the veneration of images and demonstrating the various places where the Lord Jesus performed His miracles and where He did suffer. No, there is nothing for the eyes to see, nothing for the flesh to dwell upon. By the eye of faith the sinner goes out of self and beholds Christ in the garden, sweating great drops of blood as He goes forward and backward and pleads with His Father: “If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless...” (Matt. 26. 39). O the submission, O the willingness to walk in that path, the readiness to drink that cup which the Father had put into His hand. As faith receives it, there is a blessed effect of it; there is something that the child of God walks in, in his own path and in his own way. The children of God sometimes have hard things to go through, and it is a divine appointment for them, but in the midst of it how they are strengthened and helped to see the hand which has prepared the cup for them. They have something wrought in their hearts which none can take away. See what the hymnwriter says of it, and I am persuaded he spoke out of experience:

“Thrice comfortable hope  
That calms my stormy breast;  
My Father’s hand prepares the cup,  
And what He wills is best.”

O if you are brought into Gethsemane and get a glimpse of the Son of God in His agony, then you will walk in this path of tribulation, this path of trial. What comfort and strength is drawn from a glimpse of Christ; it will bring in that thrice comfortable hope, such a calm. Did my Lord suffer these things, and shall I repine? It is my Father's hand that prepares the cup.

“My fearful heart He reads;  
Secures my soul from harms;  
While underneath His mercy spreads  
Its everlasting arms.”

You know, here is something far beyond natural religion; a natural religion cannot enter here. But a knowledge of the Son of God suffering for you, drinking that bitter cup for you, that you should never drink it, that is salvation. What you walk in, in your measure, is only to prove His everlasting love, to prove that He is with you, that He is near, that He abideth faithful.

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” O “He was crucified through weakness” (2 Cor. 13. 4). What weakness do you walk in? Perhaps some of you know much of bodily weakness. If I know anything of it, my friends, it is to prove the support, the help, the sustaining strength of God in the path of your weakness. “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” O your poor, weak, helpless body must drop into the grave one day. What a mercy if you have seen by precious faith Him who conquered when He fell, who conquered sin, Satan, death and hell on Calvary's cross, that you might be delivered for ever from your judge, delivered from the power of darkness too, delivered to be “with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1. 23).

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” There are far-reaching implications to it; faith active in the worthy Lamb. What beauty, what power, what glory there is in Him! You will not see it by the natural eyes, but you will see it if the Lord comes to you. He does come to His people; He seeks them out; He works in their hearts and He reveals Himself as He is. O may we know something of that which was known by Thomas after the resurrection. Poor fellow, how could he believe? But the Lord came to him. Not only did He reveal Himself to the other apostles, but He came specially, as it were, to deal with Thomas, who was so much beset with unbelief. You may have much to do with unbelief, but the Lord knoweth all that. He came when the doors were shut. How could He come, how could anyone come when the doors were shut? But He did. He stood in their midst and spoke particularly to Thomas. “Reach hither thy finger.” He beheld and was satisfied. He confessed: “My Lord and my God.”

The Lord does come to His people, those that wait for Him, who expect Him and seek a visit from Him; He will not disappoint them. They shall have their petitions granted. They shall hear what the Lord said to Thomas: "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20. 27). He giveth faith, that faith that embraces Him, that knows Him, that beholds Him and rejoices in His name, rejoices in His glorious Person, love and blood.

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" My soul, that is a personal question; what wilt thou answer to it? What is that which thou dost say? Canst thou say, "My Lord and my God! I know Him, I am His and He is mine?" Or dost thou say, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Well, He knows the case; He knows your case. May He come and speak with power and authority to your heart, like He did to Thomas, so that you may know Him. May He come and speak to you like He did to that other man: "I am He." Amen.

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### HEART SEARCHING AND PETITION BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER

*A meditation by John Willison (1680-1750) of Brechin (1703-1718)  
and Dundee (1718-1750)*

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Blessed are they that hear and know the joyful sound! But what will the news of Christ avail me without an interest in Christ? What will it profit me to have the Son revealed to me if He be not revealed in me?

O for the practical and experimental knowledge of Christ! Lord, hide not Thyself from me. Stand not behind the wall, but show Thyself to me through the lattice of ordinances. O draw by the veil of my guilt and make a display of Thy glorious and attractive excellences, so that mine eyes may see the King in His beauty and my soul may be engaged to flee to Him upon the wings of faith and love.

I am this day called to go to the table of this great King. But I am in a strait betwixt two. If I decline to come to this table, then I disobey my dying Saviour who commands me to show forth His death in this manner. If I come unworthily, then I fear lest I contract the guilt of His blood, and eat and drink my own damnation. Alas! My unworthiness makes me tremble to come. And yet my need pinches me so that I cannot stay away. Lord, to whom shall I go but to Thee? For "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Thou art my Sun from whose beams I must receive the light of grace. Thou art the Fountain from which I must draw living water. Thou art the Root from which I must receive sap of increase. Thou art my



Head from whom I must get life and influence, so that without Thee I am nothing, I have nothing, and I can do nothing. Let all my wants be upon Thee and let all my supplies come from Thee.

Surely, O Lord, the sea is not so full of water, nor the sun so full of light as Thou art full of grace and mercy. O fill my narrow vessel out of Thine inexhaustible fountain! Cast open the doors of Thy treasures and let me have access to Christ's unsearchable riches. Are not these freely bestowed upon the needy without money and without price? O scatter Thy bounty among poor beggars and let me be admitted to gather it! Let not such a miserable object go from Thy door without an alms, for Thou wilt not fail to give a crumb to me. O let not the needy be forgotten; let not the expectation of the poor perish for ever! (see Psa. 9. 18). Let none return ashamed from the fountain, who come expecting water.

Hast Thou not said, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground"? (Isa. 44. 3). And is there anyone more dry than I am? Or more poor and needy than I am? Lord, make me as thirsty as I am dry, as humble as I am poor, and as sensible as I am needy. Open my mouth wide, and then fill it. Alas! The voice of my prayer is weak, but O the cry of my wants is strong! Lord, hear that loud cry. Deal not with me according to my feeling and sense of need, which are small. But O deal with me according to my real necessity and Thy royal bounty which is great beyond expression!

Lord, grace Thine own ordinance and beautify the assembly of Thy people with Thy presence. Put the wedding garment upon the guests. Let Thy Spirit rest upon them. Let Thy power be present to heal them, and cause Thy glory to fill the temple.

O that God would bow the heavens and come down! O that He would touch the mountains (namely, my hard heart, unbelief, pride, worldliness, etc.), and cause them all to flow down at His presence! Let the Jordan of my lusts be driven back. Let the mountains skip like rams and the little hills like lambs. Let the earthly heart tremble at the presence of the God of Jacob. Let the rock be turned into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of water (see Psa. 114).

O "come down like rain upon the mown grass" and "as showers that water the earth" (Psa. 72. 6), and revive all the withered roots of Thy people! O for a shower from heaven, even a shower of the Holy Ghost, to make all their souls as a watered garden, that they might spring up as the grass, revive as the corn, grow as the lily, cast forth their roots, spread out their branches, and their beauty might be as the olive tree and their smell as Lebanon! (see Hos. 14).

O that our Lord Jesus Christ's love and glory would come flowing like a full sea or the rushing of a mighty wind, and fill all the corners of His house and of His table, so that great grace might be on all His

people! O to hear “the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees” (2 Sam. 5. 24), a sign that God is gone forth before us to smite the hosts of our lusts and to triumph over our enemies! O that the kindly breathings and prosperous gales of God’s Spirit would enliven all the drooping hearts and fill all the empty sails of windbound communicants [i.e., like ships unable to sail because of a contrary wind]! O that the heavenly wind would blow from the right airt [quarter], that poor, leaky vessels might come speed in their voyage and sail straight forward to the shores of Immanuel’s land!

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### A BLESSING IN HOSPITAL

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23 Moyne Court,  
St. Johns, Woking,  
Surrey. GU21 1AT  
February 28th, 1986

*To Mr. Ramsbottom*

Dear Friend,

After reading of the love of Christ by John Fawcett in this month’s *Gospel Standard*, I cannot refrain from writing. You may know that I had to spend ten days in hospital again. I came back home last Saturday, thankful to be free from much pain and distress, and to have the comfort of home once again, but O mostly for the goodness of the Lord in showing again His love towards such an unworthy sinner as I, to excite my ardent affections toward the gracious Redeemer, as Fawcett so truly expresses it.

It was in this way: I lay in the hospital groaning and sighing in not having yet any attention, and I cried, “Lord, help me; have mercy upon me.” “Why am I here like this?” And it came to my heart, “’Tis all for the lifting of Jesus on high.” As I said, “Help me to feel, ‘Not my will, but Thine, be done,’” I was taken to behold Jesus in Gethsemane. What sorrows He endured, Jesus at Gethsemane, the olive press. How He was bowed down to the ground, pressed into fearful agony, and His sweat as it were was great drops of blood falling down to the ground. I said, “O my dear Redeemer, what love to sinners is Thine!”

“He wept, He bled, He died for you;  
What more, ye saints, could Jesus do?”

And here was I complaining about a little pain. I cannot write half of the sweetness of the meditation I had. It was nothing but Jesus being the chiefest good who has bought me with His blood.

The nurses in due time came and gave me an injection to reduce the pain as I could scarcely keep on my bed, but O the balm of His healing blood was greater! Can we contemplate the agonies He endured for us and thus place ourselves under the beams of unparalleled love and not feel in our melting hearts some returns of affection and regard for Him? How truly Mr. Fawcett writes, and how I have enjoyed this piece; wonderful, precious truths here written of this dear Man which were known and tasted, handled and felt of the good Word of God, and we hope will still be in these dark and perilous times. Our prayer is earnestly, “Feed Thy people, bless Thine inheritance and lift them up for ever” (see Psa. 28. 9).

I have not been able to attend Ripley service for a month, as the cold is so intense and my circulation is so poor that the cold gives me faintness. How we long for the warmer weather.

May the Lord graciously help you in your good work, and show you tokens of His unparalleled love.

Yours sincerely in gospel bonds,

B.F. Wilkins

Benjamin Frank Wilkins was an itinerant minister of the gospel among our churches for many years. Ed.

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### LOOK UNTO ME

*Prayer Meeting Address given by Mr. Gerald D. Buss at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, on Wednesday, October 28th, 2015*

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**Text:** “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. 45. 22).

This is a most extensive and precious word of gospel truth before us this evening. In the first place, it has to do with the salvation of sinners with an everlasting salvation. It also has to do with those “end of the earth” situations that God’s dear children come into in their pilgrim way. And they may prove this word to be just as true in their providential path, as well as in grace. So, whatever your end of the earth condition may be this evening, it is a mercy that such a word as this is left on record to encourage our faith to look away from all that discourages us at the end of the earth, and to look to this unique, great God who fills time and eternity. He holds all nature in His hand, and, with this blessed word of gospel invitation invites, yea, even commands, these end of the earth characters to look unto Him.

The word is addressed to those at “the ends of the earth.” That is an expression used by the Word of God to those who feel to be beyond the reach of all human help; those who have come to that place where every arm of flesh has failed and where no one can understand their case, or reach it. This is a condition of which God’s dear people know something. When they are brought under the solemn commands and curse of God’s holy law, and realise the extent of what the law demands and their solemn, sinful inability to do what the law bids them do, when they realise that the curse that belongs to the sinner belongs to them: while they are kept in this “end of the earth” condition without a remedy; they are indeed suitable characters for our text to be addressed to.

We do not hear much about a law-work in our day. In days of reviving, there was much more said about it and known of it. But, if the Lord is to revive His work among us, more will be said about it and more will be known of it, because it is a vital preparation for the gospel. It empties the sinner of all self-help, all self-righteousness and all reliance on anything other than what the gospel has provided for the sinner. It sweeps away “the refuge of lies” that we are apt to hide ourselves in. For a little while, it exposes us to a sense of God’s wrath, that we might seek God’s mercy.

Again, the “ends of the earth” refers (as it says in Psalm 107 again and again), to those varying paths into which God’s dear people come, where they seem beyond the reach of all but the arm of God. You have several cases: those wanderers in the wilderness, hungry and thirsty, their soul fainting in them. There are those in prison, bound in chains of iron. You have those on a bed of affliction, drawing near to the very gates of death. There are those staggering to and fro “like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end” – their wisdom swallowed up. These are end of the earth cases. David knew something of it at Ziklag, when the town in which he lived was left a smouldering ruin. His loved ones were taken hostage, his own friends were ready to stone him, and he himself had a guilty conscience for going down for the second time to Achish, king of Gath. If ever a man was at the “end of the earth,” David was then.

The dying thief was another case: on the brink of endless misery, on the very borders of the pit. But, blessed be God, he looked from the borders of the pit to God’s recovering grace. What faith that dear man had! But he was an “ends of the earth” case. So, we may say, was Mary Magdalene, who was possessed by seven devils. What a character she must have been! The word “seven” stands for completeness. It seems she was completely taken over by the powers of darkness that controlled all her faculties. What a character she must have been until the Saviour met with her! But He could reach even her case.

Peter was in such a place, when, in Satan's sieve, he had denied his Lord with oaths and curses. Three times over he said that he knew Him not. What a place that man came into! So we could go on. Perhaps one more case: Jacob meeting Esau. Esau was coming with four hundred men, seemingly with evil intent. And there was Jacob, with a guilty conscience, because of what had taken place years before. "The ends of the earth."

Well, this is the character to whom the text is applied. These are the ones who are bidden by the God of our text to *look*; to look away from all that discourages them in their end of the earth condition, and to do what Jonah did. Jonah was at the end of the earth, when, in the belly of the great fish he said, "Out of the belly of hell cried I." That was, *in his feelings*. He was not in the literal hell, but in his own feelings he was in a very dark, dark place, certainly. He said, "I am cast out of Thy sight; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple" (Jonah 2. 4). He looked from the belly of the fish, from the very belly of hell in his experience, and he found our text to be true. "Look unto Me," says this God, "and be ye saved" – guilty sinners, tempted sinners, devil-dragged sinners, cast-down sinners, backsliding sinners, wandering sinners, wayward sinners and rebellious sinners, so we could go on. All these cases are addressed in our text.

But we are bidden to look unto this great God who says, "Look unto Me." He reminds us that there is no one else to look to. It is a painful but necessary path for us to come into, when the Lord removes all those props that we might naturally lean upon for our deliverance. In the previous verse to our text, He is given two names: "A just God and a Saviour." There we may see, both in providence and in grace, a most blessed truth. In grace, of course, it is that wonderful truth that He is "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3. 26). God's justice must be upheld. God's throne would fall if His justice were compromised. Nothing in the terms of the gospel compromises, in any way, the demands of God's holy law concerning justice. Justice must be satisfied. Our God is a just God in that respect. He will not allow His justice to be impugned in any way; it must be satisfied. But how wonderful it is that He has provided One, who though a just God, is also a Saviour! We are speaking now of the dear Redeemer, the dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are speaking of the holy and the just One, who, whilst here below, lived a pure, perfect and holy life in thought, word and deed. He magnified divine justice and the holy law of God in every part of its demands. What a wonderful life He lived! Thus He gave to the law the honour that sinners, such as we, have taken from it. He restored the glory that belonged to it. And, blessed be God's holy name, this life of the dear Saviour is received, in this respect, in heaven's highest court as a blessed vindication of God's justice.

Secondly, not only did He live that pure, holy life to vindicate divine justice in its demands and commands, but He also paid the price that justice demanded from these end of the earth characters. To His account, as the Surety of these end of the earth characters, was laid all the sin, all the guilt and all that the law had against the sinner. The Holy and the Just, the “holy, harmless, undefiled” Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. He bears, in His own body, His own Person and His own soul, the punishment due to the sins of this end of the earth character. Bless God for it. Here is One who stood in the sinner’s place. Here is One who has said to divine justice, “Demand of Me what Thou dost demand of this ‘end of the earth’ sinner. Put to My account his guilt, his sins and his debt, and put to his account My perfect obedience and My robe of righteousness.” And the Lord was well-pleased to do so. We have it in Romans 8: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” For who? For these “end of the earth” characters. He is a just God. He hates sin. He cannot compromise with it. Nothing that the dear Saviour did condoned sin in any degree. But, on the other hand, He has made a way of escape.

“A door of hope is opened wide,  
In Jesus’ bleeding hands and side.”

“O!” says the Lord to this guilty sinner tonight, this tempted, devil-dragged sinner, this sinner who is devoid of all hope in self: “Look unto Me. Look unto My obedience, look unto My blood, look unto My name, look unto My finished work.”

“Cease from your own works, bad or good,  
And wash your garments in My blood.”

God has joined salvation to the “look.” Where there is that look of faith, where there is that looking in prayer and where there is that coming to this great God, God has promised these blessed words will follow: “Be ye saved.” The Lord loves the “looking” (see Heb. 12. 2) sinner. It was so in the wilderness, when the children of Israel had been bitten by the fiery serpents. There was only one remedy: the brazen serpent lifted up among them. And God promised that those who would look would live.

“Vain was bandage, oil, or plaster;  
Rankling venom killed the faster.”

What was the remedy? It was the “lifted up serpent.” As our Lord Himself says (and it is the New Testament complement to our text this evening): “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him” – we

might say, whosoever looketh unto Him – “should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3. 14, 15). Come then, poor, guilty, perishing sinner this night. May the Holy Ghost enable you to look on this word and receive it in a saving way. May He apply it to your “end of the earth” heart, and you will prove God to be as faithful to His Word, as He declares.

Thirdly, dear friends, God is a just God and a Saviour in providence. He is just in everything He does. He makes no mistakes and He makes no errors. All those things that come into our paths – joys or sorrows, health or affliction, encouragement or disappointment – all these things are sent by this just God. Friends, we must not complain against God’s dealings.

“It is the Lord; should I distrust  
Or contradict His will –  
Who cannot do but what is just,  
And must be righteous still?”

“O,” you say, “but His just ways are bringing heavy burdens to my soul! His just ways are bringing me very low! His just ways are bringing me to the very ends of the earth!” Dear friends, perhaps that is the very reason they have come, that from the “end of the earth” you might prove the other side of the truth: that He is a Saviour, too. So, while with one hand He may humble you under His rod, on the other hand He will uplift you with the hand of salvation. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5. 6, 7). It is a great mercy when we can submit ourselves under God’s righteous dealings, and be delivered from that complaining, murmuring, grumbling spirit that is so natural to us, that would, according to our flesh, order things so differently. What a mercy when we can admire God’s dealings! And, although we cannot understand them (there are many things we cannot understand), yet to believe He

“...cannot do but what is just,  
And must be righteous still.”

Do you believe that tonight? All that comes into your path from this just God’s hand – He is a Saviour to His dear people in it. He gives Paul the thorn in the flesh – that came from a just God. What came with it? “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12. 9). He sends Abraham up Mount Moriah with Isaac, to lay him on the altar as a burnt offering – a just God. But what did He send him with? “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (Gen. 22. 8). Do you see the connection? What this just God does is to make provision for His people in their path. Whether it be an

affliction, a bereavement, a sorrow, temptation or trial, He cannot err. He is not an unkind, unfeeling God. There is a purpose in His dealings.

“His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.”

So, from your “end of the earth” condition this evening hour, whatever it may be in providence, here is also a word of encouragement. First of all, may you be given the humility to acknowledge the justice of God in it. He has not dealt with you after your sins. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (Psa. 103. 10). You are out of a deserved hell. You are still on praying ground. And, what is more, He has promised to these “end of the earth” characters a word and a way of deliverance. “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10. 13).

And, dear friends, sooner or later we must come to a dying bed. What a mercy then to be able to look! “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” When no family or loved one can help, when doctors, physicians and surgeons have given up, when our natural life is failing, never to be restored again, when eternity is before us – this is a word for a dying saint. “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” Will He let that “looking” sinner perish? No! No! He will not.

“Nor shall e’er a sinner perish,  
Who in His dear name believes.”

What a mercy to look, as it were, in the very last moment of our life! “Look unto Me” – this kind and gracious God, this able God, this willing Saviour who “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7. 25). That one last, lingering look, the dying thief had in his dying moments, is rewarded beyond the grave by sight: not by faith any longer, but face to face. “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off” (Isa. 33. 17). What a prospect for God’s dear people! Those who have been given this grace, by the Spirit, to look unto Him here below, and have proved Him to be a faithful God in this world, will one day see Him face to face, and have an eternity to bless His holy name for making such a provision for such unworthy sinners; that a just God and Saviour should be provided for all those who come to this “end of the earth” place. “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”

May God add His blessing. Amen.



## THE PREVAILING NAME OF JESUS

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

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“If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it” (John 14. 14).

Is it so, blessed Jesus, that if I go to the Father in Thy precious name, my petition shall be certainly heard and answered? Lo, then, I come. I feel my faith and confidence emboldened in this gracious assurance. And as Thou knowest, Lord, this day, what is most suited for me, let Thy wisdom choose, and let Thy love bestow, that very grace and mercy, be it what it may. And let a throne of grace witness for me, that I seek it wholly on Christ’s account. I consider it as good as given, from the high love my God and Father bears towards His dear Son, as my Surety and Saviour. And although in the moment that I ask with this boldness of faith, I see and know in myself that I have nothing to recommend me to Thy favour, as in the least meriting that favour, but much, very much, to make me an object in meriting Thy displeasure; yet looking up to Jesus, depending upon His blood and righteousness, and wholly asking in His name, and for His righteousness’ sake only, I am encouraged to hope that I shall not ask in vain. O then, my Lord, hear for Jesus’ sake, and let my petition and prayer be answered, that the Father may be glorified in His Son.

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## ENCOURAGEMENT TO A FRIEND

The Vicarage,  
Wymeswold, Loughborough  
November 19th, 1878

My dear Friend,

I can quite sympathise with all you say, even about your increasing physical weakness, for, although I am not much beyond fifty, I can feel the effects of age, and am often very weary and knocked up on Monday, and even Tuesday. But I feel the deepest sympathy of all with your lamentation over the lack of assurance. I never try to prove to any afflicted soul that he is not afflicted, nor that he is any better than he thinks himself to be; but I think I may justifiably remind you of the promise, “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11. 13). All your present down-castings would be removed at once if only you could feel yourself “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1. 13). For this pray and wait. Satan’s object is to discourage us in this work, and misrepresent

God, and His Word, and His Son, and His character, and everything, to us.

But what does God say? “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage.” Mark the entire difference of this counsel. And, as if to show that He knows our low spirits and weak desires, He adds, “And He shall strengthen thine heart” (Psa. 27. 14). But, since all the enemy’s spite is against Christ, he will try to persuade us that this waiting will be in vain at last, whereas Christ says, “They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me” (Isa. 49. 23). Let God be true, and Satan, as well as every man who would dissuade us from believing and expecting, a liar. Urge him with the promise, and pray for a few drops of the “oil” for the lamp, and you will find He will give you the “oil of joy for mourning” (Isa. 61. 3). May He give it to me also.

My very kind regards to your son and his family.

May God help us to watch and to pray for one another.

Yours most truly,

Robert Walker

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## THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER

### CHAPTER 13

#### A GREAT HIGH PRIEST

#### His Sympathy and Compassion

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

*(Continued from page 29)*

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We will now, therefore, divert our thoughts to those *spiritual* sorrows and troubles which all the family of God experience, though these, too, vary widely in number and degree, yet are allotted to each living member of the mystical body of Christ, according to the appointed measure. In these, as peculiar to the Lord’s people, Jesus has a special sympathy with His afflicted people, for of this cup He drank to the very dregs, and with this baptism He was baptized with all its billows and waves rolling over Him. Whatever spiritual troubles and sorrows the Lord’s people may be called upon to endure, their gracious Lord and Master suffered much more deeply than their heart, however deeply lacerated, can feel, or their tongue, however eloquent, can express. But we will look at some of these spiritual afflictions, and endeavour to show how the blessed Lord had a personal experience of them, and thus learnt to sympathise with His people under them.

i. The chief burden of the Lord’s living family is *sin*. This is the main cause of all their sighs and groans, from the first quickening breath of the Spirit of God in their hearts till they lay down their bodies in dust.

But it may be asked, what experience could the blessed Lord have had of sin, seeing He was perfectly free from it both in body and soul? It is indeed a most certain and a most blessed truth that our gracious Redeemer “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5. 21); was “a Lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1. 19); and was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7. 26). Still, sin was so imputed to Him, and the Lord so “laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53. 6) that He felt them just as if they had been His own. He was made sin for us; its guilt and burden were laid on His sacred head, and so became by imputation His, that it was as if He had committed the sins charged upon Him.

Take the following illustration. View sin as a debt to the justice of God. Now, if you are a surety for another, and he cannot pay the debt, it becomes yours just as much as if you had yourself personally contracted it. The law makes no distinction between his debt and yours, and the creditor may sell the very bed from under you to pay the debt, just as if you were the original debtor. So the blessed Lord, by becoming Surety for His people, took upon Him their sins, and thus made them His own. How else can we explain those expressions in the Psalms, which are evidently the language of His heart and lips, such as the following? “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” (Psa. 40. 12). Does not the Lord here speak of *His* iniquities taking hold upon Him, so that under their weight and burden He could not look up, and that they were more in number than the hairs of His head?

ii. With the burden and weight of sin comes the *wrath of God* into the sinner’s conscience; and this is the most distressing feeling that can be well experienced out of hell.

So the blessed Lord, when He took the burden and weight of sin, came under this wrath. This was “the horrible pit” into which He sank, (Psa. 40. 2), the deep mire in which there was no standing, the deep waters where the floods overflowed Him (see Psa. 69. 2). This made Him say, “For My days are consumed like smoke, and My bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat My bread. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled My drink with weeping. Because of Thine indignation and Thy wrath: for Thou hast lifted Me up, and cast Me down” (Psa. 102. 3, 4, 9, 10). None who read the Word of truth with an enlightened eye can doubt that these Psalms refer to the blessed Lord, and that it is He who speaks in them.

iii. Then there is the *curse of the law*, which peals such loud thunders, and sinks so deeply into the heart and conscience of the

awakened sinner. But did not Jesus endure this too? Surely He did, both in body and soul, as the apostle declares, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3. 13).

iv. Then there are the *hidings of God’s countenance*, the withdrawals of His presence, and His forsakings of the soul that still hangs upon Him and cleaves to Him. But cannot our gracious Lord here deeply sympathise with His people who are mourning and sighing under the hidings of God’s countenance, for was not this the last bitter drop of the cup of suffering which He drank to the very dregs? Did heaven or earth ever hear so mournful a cry as when the darling Son of God, in the agony of His tortured soul, cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Psa. 22. 1 and Matt. 27. 46).

Thus, whatever in number or degree be the spiritual griefs and sorrows of the Lord’s people; whatever convictions, burdens, sorrows, distresses, pangs of conscience, doubts, fears and dismay under the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the hidings of His face, and the withdrawals of the light of His countenance they may grieve and groan under, Jesus, their blessed Forerunner, experienced them all in the days of His flesh, and to a degree and extent infinitely beyond all human conception. Can any heart conceive, or any tongue express what the dear Redeemer experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane, when His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; when He thrice prayed that the cup might pass from Him, “and being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground”? (Luke 22. 44). Might He not truly say, “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger” (Lam. 1. 12).

An awakened sinner, under divine quickening, has to bear but the weight of his own sins, but Jesus had to bear the sins of millions. It is at best but a few drops of the wrath of God, and that wrath as already appeased, that fall into a trembling sinner’s conscience, but Jesus had to endure all the wrath of God due to millions of ransomed transgressors. It is but the distant peals of the law which sound in a convinced sinner’s soul, but the whole storm burst upon the head of the Surety. In a little wrath God hides His face from His Zion for a moment; but in great wrath He hid His face from His dear Son. Thus, whatever be the spiritual sorrows and troubles of afflicted Zion, even though she be “tossed with tempest, and not comforted” (Isa. 54. 11), in all she has a Head who suffered infinitely more than all the collective members. They do but “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ” (Col. 1. 24), but O how small is that measure of affliction compared with His!

It was, then, His personal experience of these spiritual afflictions which makes the blessed Lord so sympathising a High Priest at the right hand of God. Though now exalted to the heights of glory, He can still feel for His suffering saints here below. The Garden of Gethsemane, the cross of Calvary, are still in His heart's remembrance, and all the tender pity and rich compassion of His soul melt towards His afflicted saints; for,

“His heart is made of tenderness;  
His bowels melt with love.”

2. But the gracious Lord can also sympathise with His saints under all their *temptations*. This is a deep mystery, but not more deep than blessed; and as it is pregnant with consolation to the tried and tempted children of God, we will attempt to unfold it to the best of our ability. The Holy Ghost expressly declares that our blessed Lord “was in **all points** tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4. 15).

This, then, we must accept as a most solemn and, as viewed by faith, a most blessed truth. Nor must we limit the language of the Holy Ghost, but as He has said “**in all points**,” so must we receive it on the testimony of Him who cannot lie.

But as the word “temptations” has in the original two significations, including in its meaning “trials” as well as temptations, properly so called, we will extend the sense of the term, and view our Lord’s *trials*, and our Lord’s *temptations*. The distinction between them is sufficiently evident. *Trials* may have God for their Author, but not *temptations*, for we are expressly told that God tempteth no man (see Jas. 1. 13). Indeed, as temptation implies the presentation of sin to the mind, it would make God the Author of sin to make Him the Author of temptation. But do we not read, it may be asked, that God “tempted Abraham”? (Gen. 22. 1). The word “tempted” there should be rendered “tried,” for in Hebrew as well as Greek the same word means to tempt and to try. God did not tempt Abraham to sin, as Satan tempted Eve, or as he tempted David, but “tried” him, as the apostle speaks (Heb. 11. 17), whether his faith was genuine.

Thus our blessed Lord was tried, and tried by God Himself; for He is “a stone, a tried stone,” of God’s own laying (Isa. 28. 16). When the Father provided Him with a body in which to do His will, He became God’s servant, as He speaks, “Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth” (Isa. 42. 1). As a servant He yielded obedience, for He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2. 8). His obedience was a tried obedience. God tried it; men tried it; devils tried it; enemies tried it; friends tried it. The weakness and ignorance of His disciples; the treachery of Judas; the

desertion and denial of Peter; the craft and malice of the scribes and Pharisees; the unbelief and infidelity of the people; the sins by which He was surrounded; the sinless infirmities of the flesh and blood which He had assumed, as hunger, thirst and weariness, the long journeyings, the nightly watchings, the daily spectacle of sickness and misery – all these, and a thousand other circumstances beyond our conception, tried the blessed Lord during His sojourn here below. But He bore all that was laid upon Him. The purity of His human nature, in which were no seeds of sin actual or original, the strength of His divine nature with which it was in union, and the power of the Holy Ghost, which rested on Him without measure, all concurred to bring Him through every trial, and give Him victory over every foe.

But by these trials He learnt to sympathise with His tried people. He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4. 15). We may then freely go to Him with our trials, may spread them before His face, as Hezekiah did the letter of Sennacherib in the temple, may feel a sweet persuasion that He sympathises with us under our heavy burdens, and will alleviate them, or support us under them, or if they be not removed will sanctify them, and make them work for our spiritual and eternal good. Thus faith in the sympathy of our blessed Lord is wonderfully calculated to subdue fretfulness, murmuring and self-pity, to teach us submission and resignation under afflictions, and to reconcile us to a path of sorrow and tribulation. It brings before our eyes the sufferings of the blessed Lord here below, the trials which He endured, and His holy meekness and submission under them when He was led “as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isa. 53. 7). If we compare our sorrows and troubles with His, how light they seem! This works submission to them, and when we can look up in faith and love, and see the once suffering Lord now sympathising with us under our afflictions, it makes even sorrow sweet.

A conformity to the dying image of Jesus is hereby wrought into the soul, a fellowship given of His sufferings, a crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts, a deadness to the world, a mortification of the whole body of sin, a separation of heart and spirit from everything ungodly and evil, and a communion produced with the blessed Lord at the right hand of the Father. Thus we may bless God for our afflictions and trials, our sicknesses, our bereavements, our losses and crosses, our vexations and disappointments, our persecutions, our being despised by the world and graceless professors, our doubts, fears and exercises, our sighs and groans under a body of sin and death, and, in a word, for every footstep in the way of tribulation which brings us nearer to Jesus, and opens to us more and more of His love and blood, grace and glory, sympathy and compassion, and all that He is as a merciful and faithful

High Priest, whom God has raised from the dead, and seated “at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1. 20-23).

*(To be continued)*

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## OBITUARY

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**Olive Mary Daniels**, a member of the church at Bethel, Luton (and previously at Gower Street, London), died on October 2nd, 2016, aged 84.

The following is taken from an account sent by her family, interspersed with remarks made by Mr. Timothy Parish at her funeral on October 14th, 2016. Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, her beloved pastor, was unwell at the time.

Our mother lived through many difficulties but, as one of the Good Shepherd’s sheep, she could say through it all, “Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.”

She was born in London in 1932 and lived in various areas in the northern half of the city for the first fifty-three years of her life. Her father was the bookkeeper in the family-run baking business; they had a chain of shops in which she worked from the age of fourteen. She later went on to become a trained nursery nurse based in Euston. For part of the war she was evacuated to Kent, where she stayed with kind chapel friends in the village of Headcorn. Before her evacuation, she was in a house which was bombed, and remembers being pushed under a strong table which protected her from rubble which would have otherwise crushed her.

From some early letters, it is clear she was exercised about finding a godly partner in life and prayed that the Lord would lead her in this matter. In June 1958, she married John Rayner. For their first few years of married life they lived in the Gower Street Memorial Chapel flat in Shaftesbury Avenue in the West End. Their first two children were born there, but they were thankful to move to their own house, in north London, which had a useful garden. Two further children were born there. They moved away in 1988 to Harpenden and transferred their church membership to Bethel, Luton.

It was a great shock to all the family when our father, John Rayner, was unexpectedly taken to be with his Lord and Saviour at the age of 58

in 1993 after a short illness. Our dear mother was a widow until 2008 when she married Alan Daniels, who had lost his wife Myrtle in 2006.

Our dear mother traced her spiritual beginnings back to the age of fourteen.

*Mr. Parish commenced his address by saying:*

“It is an honour and privilege to take this sacred and solemn service this morning, and speaking to the family, and reading those things that I have been given, O what a savour has been left behind from our dear, departed friend! You all knew her – how loving she was, how caring, how willing to go the extra mile for others, particularly the Lord’s dear children, her love to the people of God, her love and loyalty to her pastor here, her love and prayers and counsel to her family, those things that she did in her life. We think of that work at Bethesda. We have the craft group which she set up and organised for over thirty years; always busy; always seeking to do things for others.

“But friends, we are here this morning, and we are here to speak of that true savour. Yes, she had that grace, and she had that love, and she had that concern for her loved ones and her family and the people of God, but what was underpinning it? What is that savour this morning that is left behind, that memory of the just which is so blessed this morning? Is it not what the Lord did for her, for her soul, in her heart? Those things I have mentioned, were they not the fruits of that grace found in her, that gift of God and that faith? Yes, there were over her life the trials, the troubles, the difficulties. Twenty-three years ago she lost her dear first husband, and what a trial, what a sorrow, what a grief. Ah, but sustained and upheld and supported through fourteen years of widowhood, ‘leaning upon her Beloved.’ And then in the providence of God, meeting her second husband, and to enjoy with him union and communion and love. We do remember our dear friend this morning in his further deep sorrow.

“So she proved her life a testimony to the grace and the power of her almighty God. O may you and I this morning be found seeking to be followers of them: ‘That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises’ (Heb. 6. 12).

“The Lord began with her, and I will read a few little extracts from her testimony that she gave at Gower Street when she was baptized. The Lord began an exercise in her soul when she was around fourteen years of age. Having been disobedient to her father and being corrected for it, she said the Lord brought those words:

‘How vile and black must I appear,  
Most holy God, to Thee!’



It came over her, and really that was the beginning, the Lord stirring up her heart, convincing her that she was a sinner and of the need of salvation, that she was not right, that she was not ready. And at the funeral of her own grandmother, the Lord saw fit to exercise her further, and may it prove so here this morning: one of her own dear grandchildren, or children, that the Lord sees fit to exercise.

"She says this: 'When my Grandmother Hicks was dying, I heard of the blessing that she had received from:

"Thou shalt see My glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done;  
Partner of My throne shalt be;  
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?"

"She says, 'I felt how wonderful this was for her and how wonderful it would be for me. Dear Mr. Oxlade said to me after her funeral that he hoped that her God would be my God one day. I secretly said, "Amen" to that.' That passing away of her grandmother, that funeral, exercised her more deeply, and she was led in her little life to pray. She says, 'I prayed to be helped through my exams,' and the Lord had mercy and heard her. She prayed that the Lord would grant her a loving, God-fearing partner in life, and the Lord heard her in that. O but she says, 'When John joined the church, I felt very left out. But I couldn't just join simply because he had.' Her prayer was this: 'Draw me, we will run after Thee' (Song 1. 4), and that was her continual prayer, and it was her prayer right through her life. She felt that continual need to be drawn, drawn to Him. How she felt she could not move. Her willing heart, her longings, the exercises were not that she would run, but, 'Lord, draw me. I am helpless. I need that power to draw me, and then I will run after Thee.' She felt a real love to the pastor at Gower Street, Mr. Green, and profited much under his preaching in the solemn and searching ministry, and as she went on in her life, the Lord deepened that work. There was the conviction of sin and there was the looking away from self. Her prayer was,

'Convince me of my sin,  
Then lead to Jesus' blood.'

That was a real prayer with her. She came to this sweet place. She says, 'The Lord I feel has taught me this: that He alone is the only Way, Truth and Life, and that the only way to salvation is through the shedding of His precious blood. I have felt that many hymns in our hymnbook have been the very language of my heart:

"Spirit of truth, come down,  
Reveal the things of God;

O make to us salvation known,  
And witness with the blood.”

It is the application I feel to need of these precious truths.

“Sins against a holy God;  
Sins against His righteous laws;  
Sins against His love, His blood;  
Sins against His name, and cause;  
Sins immense as is the sea –  
Hide me, O Gethsemane!”

“Under the preaching of a sermon by Mr. F.L. Gosden, ‘That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death’ (Phil. 3. 10) – that was her real prayer: ‘That I may know Him.’ A number of the Lord’s dear servants came and she felt encouraged – a little confirmation here, a seeking, a longing in her heart, and a little help along the way. We have a gracious account of a number of the Lord’s servants who were used sweetly to encourage her and help her along in this seeking time. She says this: ‘Yet I still felt after all these things, how can I go forward?’ The Lord had brought to her this sense of seeking to follow Him. ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments.’”

At the prayer meetings not long before she came forward for church membership, she felt a special union to the friends as she felt she was laid upon their hearts.

Following the preaching of various ministers including Mr. J.S. Green, Mr. G.J. Collier, Mr. Robert Field, and the newly-commenced pastor, Mr. David Crowter, she was led to go forward to make an open profession of her faith.

*Mr. Parish continued from her own account:*

“Then our dear pastor (Mr. David Crowter) spoke from those solemn words: ‘Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip’ (Heb. 2. 1); also the same day from, ‘How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?’ (verse 3). He spoke about neglecting the ordinances of the Lord’s house, and this went right home to me. I prayed that night I would not be left to be ashamed of Jesus. I tried to pray that night that if it was the Lord’s will that I should go forward, that He would bless me as He had never blessed me before, and that He would awake me with a word in the night. That same night, I awoke about 2 a.m. with these words: ‘Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee’ (Jer. 31. 3). O what sweetness this was to me! This was repeated twice more in the night, and I could not sleep for joy. I could not believe this was for me, and I say this to my

shame: I prayed that our dear pastor would confirm this by taking this word for his text the next Sunday. This was not the Lord's will, but he did quote the very word in his prayer in the evening.' She was then enabled to take up the cross and follow Him, being baptized toward the end of 1982.

"And beloved friends, when she joined the church here at Bethel in 1986, she gave a very clear account exactly as the Lord had enabled her at Gower Street, but she added this: that when she joined at Bethel, she felt it was like coming into a garden to pick pleasant fruit; that the Lord had brought her to Bethel, and there she felt such a unity, such a love to the people, to the pastor, but such a drawing to the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and here her soul was fed over those many years."

Our dear mother's health and strength declined in the last three years of her life. In the autumn of 2014 it was clear that she was suffering with a blockage which was found to be a tumour in her bowel. In March 2015, this was removed by surgery, but she was so slow to recover from the operation that the family wondered if she would ever regain her strength. Although she did eventually pick up, she never regained her full strength and the last eighteen months of her life were difficult as she sought to continue, always battling with weakness. In March 2016 the cancer was found to have spread to her liver and she lost more and more strength. She was given grace and courage to refuse further treatment – she feared surgery and chemotherapy far more than she feared death. She was graciously prepared during this period to leave all the things of this world and to look to Christ alone. Of course, this was a painful process; it was accompanied with discomfort and a degree of agitation. She still lived partly at her own home until the last two weeks of her life. Her cousin Muriel Stonelake was a great help to her as she provided loving care at her house for several weeks. There was much answer to prayer in the last two weeks of her life, which were spent in the Harpenden Bethesda Home, where the staff took a special caring and loving interest in her. Concern, agitation and discomfort left her for the whole period. She suffered no pain; she had no need of painkillers. She gradually became more and more sleepy.

A week before she passed away, her pastor broke off in the middle of his Sunday morning sermon and said how he had visited her the day before. He mentioned her weak and frail condition and how this hymn was so applicable:

"When pining sickness wastes the frame,  
Acute disease, or tiring pain;  
When life fast spends her feeble flame,  
And all the help of man proves vain;

“Then, then to have recourse to God,  
To pour a prayer in time of need,  
And feel the balm of Jesus’ blood,  
This is to find a Friend indeed.

“And this, O Christian, is thy lot,  
Who cleavest to the Lord by faith;  
He’ll never leave thee (doubt it not)  
In pain, in sickness, or in death.”

She greatly appreciated his visit.

For that final two week period there was a peace in her spirit and round about her in her room. Although she often lacked the energy to say anything to her visitors, she always smiled at them, even on her last day. She enjoyed that peace which “passeth all understanding.” Truly, this was the gift of God and its value is priceless. She passed from this life in the early hours of Sunday, October 2nd, 2016.

*Mr. Parish concluded the funeral address by saying:*

“My own personal, abiding memory of dear Mrs. Daniels was when I took the reading at Bethesda in the August of this year, and it was that week that she had given up her home and come into the Bethesda Home. I read to the residents the first Epistle of Peter chapter 1. At the end of the reading, I went and sat with her, and she was feeling a little cast down. She wanted to feel the Lord’s gracious presence. The Lord had wonderfully helped her in the beginning of the year to refuse any further medical treatment. The Lord honoured her in that. The Lord granted her those remaining months of her life free from pain, and even in those last two weeks of her life, she was kept free from pain and the need of pain killers. What a loving, gracious God, maintaining His dear child even through the passing from this life to the next!

“But as I spoke to her, I said, ‘Well, Mrs. Daniels, did you notice those two last verses in our reading? “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”’ I said to her, ‘Dear Mrs. Daniels, your flower is falling away, isn’t it? Your grass is withered and withering, and you have had to give your home up, and you know it will not be long, you feel it will not be long. The grass is withering; your flower is fading; it is falling away.’ I said, ‘But listen. O hear the whole matter: “But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.”’ I said, ‘O what word did He say to you in that night? “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”’ I said, ‘That will endure for ever, and He is drawing you to Himself. You will be drawn through the valley of the shadow of death,

drawn through the waters of death. It is everlasting love drawing you.' O the smile, the long, lingering handshake, and that abiding memory!

"I say in love to you this morning, 'The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.' 'And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment' (Heb. 9. 27). That word too will abide for ever. You and I, we all certainly must pass through the article of death, and if not, because we are here at the last great trump, we all will be brought to the judgment seat of Christ to give that account of the things we have done in the body, both good and bad. O there is a certainty to it, friends. It is unavoidable. We will not escape it. May the Lord open our eyes to these things. May the preaching of the gospel be made that tremendous sound in our ears. May eternity be made a tremendous sound in our ears. May the death of our dear, departed friend be used by the Holy Spirit – the death of one, the life of another. But O more than this – the death of One, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the eternal Son of God, to be the life – O may it be the life of every one of us gathered here this morning. May our end be like hers. May we be found where she is in heaven, now singing the praises of Him who loved her and bore all her sins upon Himself, her only plea.

"She concludes that testimony that she gave at Gower Street with these words. She says, 'I can only conclude this little account with, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory" (Psa. 115. 1). May the Lord prosper us.' Well, it is this morning, 'Not unto us.' We look at her life, the testimony of it, the witness of it, but we look to see the God who gave her life, eternal life, and strength, and help through this life as a pilgrim in her pilgrimage, wonderfully here and there, leaning on her Beloved, and bringing her safely into heaven at last."

One of the hymns sung at the funeral included this verse:

"In all my Lord's appointed ways  
My journey I'll pursue;  
Hinder me not! ye much loved saints,  
For I must go with you."

This hymn was special to our dear mother; she had written it out in full on a paper in her Bible. It summed up the quiet resolve of her faith. [This reminds us of the word in 1 John 5. 4: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Ed.]

Her burial was at Harpenden where she was interred with her first husband and where her remains are surrounded by those of various relatives and friends.

Many have sweet memories of our mother. She was loved by her family, but she was loved with an everlasting love by her heavenly Father. The Lord Jesus gave Himself for her and would have her be with Him for ever. "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

*Note by her pastor*

Our friend was a faithful, loyal church member, seeking to walk in the old paths wherein is the good way. Her first husband's death (at a comparatively early age) was a great shock and a deep sorrow. For many years she was helped to walk quietly and submissively before the Lord. Her last days of deep affliction were marked by a patient waiting and resting on the Lord. She is sadly missed by her family and friends at Bethel.

B.A. Ramsbottom

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**An Exposition of the Fifty-First Psalm**, by Martin Luther; hardback; 199 pages; price £13 plus postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Harpenden bookroom and agents, and from Christian bookshops.

Martin Luther was a giant figure in the church of God, used by Almighty God, to further the gospel among the Gentiles, in the sixteenth century. By the grace of God, he was used to bring many Christians back to the scriptural and glorious doctrine of justification by faith alone, and not by the works of the law. The Christian world was directed back to the doctrine of Christ and His apostles, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name," with divine direction to believe in, and trust alone to Christ. The preaching and teaching of Luther was not the work of man, but of God, by a sacred effusion of the Holy Ghost.

Luther's writings have a certain warmth in them. The spiritual reader will realise that here is a man who has tasted of the good Word of life. His style is always homely and strikes an inward chord in an exercised believer. This was so beneficial to the struggling and troubled believers in his day and generation. He always directs to Christ, however bad the case. By contrast, godly Calvin's writings tend to be somewhat cold and clinical, although correct.

There is an informative foreword by Henry Sant, followed by fifteen pages of spiritual introduction by Luther. The exposition runs in the common pattern of comment verse by verse on Psalm 51. The reader must not expect the Scripture texts to be exactly as the Authorised Version. It is a translation by Henry Cole from the German Bible as used by Luther, although there is no substantial difference between them. In his expounding, Luther skilfully differentiates between legal exercises and exercises which are by faith in Jesus Christ. This is a vital point, necessary in the times of Luther, who was used of

God to turn men's hearts away from the superstitions and bondage of the papacy. We just quote a passage from comment on verse 10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." "Nor is it in our own power to procure to ourselves such a heart as this; for it is of divine creation, and therefore it is that the Spirit here uses the term 'create.' And even as such, a 'clean heart' is not of our own powers, but of divine creation, so also we cannot defend this creation against the devil. Hence it is that we find that we are so often polluted by sudden tremblings, distresses, etc. Wherefore this prayer concerning the creation and preservation of the new heart should never cease."

We can warmly recommend this book, and hope that it will sell well, for there is much plain scripture teaching in it that finds an echo in the hearts of seeking and needy sinners.

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### THE LITTLE FOXES

*"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes" (Song 2. 15).*

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Take us the little foxes, Lord,  
That spoil the tender vine,  
O rid us of those evil things  
Which tend to undermine —

To undermine Thy work of grace,  
And cause our sad decay,  
Those "secret faults" and bitter roots  
Which sin our peace away.

Our grapes are tender, Lord, Thou knowest  
They easily are spoiled,  
They oft seem nipped before they're ripe,  
By sin and Satan foiled.

A heedless word of anger born,  
Of pride, or foolish thought,  
An envious heart, a spiteful deed  
For evil purpose wrought.

A foolish jest, a worldly aim,  
Self-righteous finding fault,  
Impatient words, self-seeking plans  
While others' good is naught.

O let our conversation be  
Becoming souls renewed;  
Becoming Jesus' gospel blest  
By Holy Ghost endued.

Our comfort is that Thine own work  
Begun, Thou wilt perform,

Thou canst our Saviour in our hearts  
The hope of glory form.

His image fair, upon our hearts  
Thou canst by grace impress ;  
His likeness blest Thou canst impart  
That we all good possess.

By grace Thou canst our sins subdue  
And wash from every stain,  
Our spirits and our minds renew  
And purge from sin's dire bane.

O do it then, for Jesus' sake,  
We'd humbly Thee implore,  
That we salvation may partake,  
And praise Thee evermore.

Elizabeth Jempson

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The Christians to whom Peter wrote were called out of darkness into marvellous light. Have I been thus called by sovereign grace, by almighty love, into a light which may be denominated "marvellous"? The mere reception of divine truth into the mind does not deserve this appellation. But when the light of truth discovers to myself the hidden evils of my heart, when it shows me the deformity of sin, the vileness of my nature, and thus fills me with shame and self-abhorrence, it is, indeed, a "marvellous light."

When the light of truth reveals to my soul the blessed Jesus in the essential dignity of His Person; the suitableness of His glorious offices in the covenant of redemption; the greatness, freeness and extent of His love in becoming Man and expiring on the cross, that He might save rebellious sinners; and, when this view of a loving Saviour fills my soul with love, admiration, delight and joy, it may well be called a "marvellous light."

When the light of truth takes away the false glare of the world, and shows me its real worth; that all is vanity and vexation of spirit; when everything is placed in its true light, and seen through a clear medium; and when this view sobers my expectations, and weans my affections from the world; then it is truly a "marvellous light."

When the light of truth unveils the world of spirits, and opens to my wondering sight the unutterable glories of eternity; when I behold the blissful seats, the happy mansions and the peaceful abodes of the redeemed; when I contemplate the fulness of their joy in being forever with their Lord, and like their Lord; and when this prospect of the saints' felicity makes holiness more lovely, and my breathings for the Spirit of grace more ardent; when it makes me long and labour after an admittance, through faith in Jesus, into those bright abodes: then it is a "marvellous light."

*Thomas Reade*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
MARCH 2017

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

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**ALL OUR INIQUITIES LAID ON IMMANUEL**

“And the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53. 6).

The Lord Jesus laying down His life for sinners, whom He calls “My sheep,” is God’s greatest work. The putting away of sin for ever and the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness is truly the most blessed act of all the acts of the Almighty. The prophet, in this prophecy of Christ’s suffering and death, sets forth these sacred truths in these few words in verse 6.

1. “And the LORD hath.” This is God’s own work, which is a finished work. The Lord slew the Lamb of His own providing, the perfect Lamb without blemish and without spot. There is such a blessed finality in this great and glorious act of God. It cannot be repeated, for there is no spot or blemish now on the sheep of the Good Shepherd. The sins of God’s people are put away for ever and cannot be called back. They are put behind God’s back into the land of forgetfulness, the wilderness place to which the scapegoat was led away on the great day of atonement, and from which it could not find its way back. God has blotted out the sins of the people once and for all. “For in that He died, He died unto sin once” (Rom. 6. 10).

2. “Laid on Him the iniquity.” Laid on His own well-beloved Son *all* the iniquity in this one great sacrifice for sin. Justice must be done if a people are to be found worthy to enter into the presence of God for ever. The whole of the sinnership must be laid on the Lamb; not one sin must remain. It was all gathered up by God and laid on Immanuel. Every evil thought and imagination, every ill motive, every deliberate act of evil as well as unintentional sins, sins of omission as well as sins of commission, murders, adulteries, foolishness, covetousness, enmity and rebellion against God: all must be laid on Christ and atoned for. Not only those sins that conscience might record, but many more not even realised by the transgressor. The hidden evil of pride, also the great sin of unbelief. Yes, even the very nature of fallen humanity must be atoned for, for it is a nature of active rebellion against God. Joseph Hart sums it up,

“Sins against a holy God;  
Sins against His righteous laws;

Sins against His love, His blood;  
 Sins against His name, and cause;  
 Sins immense as is the sea –  
 Hide me, O Gethsemane!”

Jesus bore the punishment for our iniquities. He “poured out His soul unto death” (verse 12). “He was wounded” – margin, tormented – “for our transgressions” (verse 5). “And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly” (Luke 22. 44). Jesus was truly and justly punished for our sins with an exquisite suffering, that only He could bear. “His righteousness, it sustained Him” (Isa. 59. 16). We read that Jesus said, “It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19. 30). Salvation is now completed and finished, for Jesus died for our sins, rose for our justification, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. “I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (Zech. 3. 9). “In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve” (Jer. 50. 20).

3. “The iniquity of us all.” This means the whole election of grace, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2. 39). We read more than once in Revelation, of that great multitude being called out “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” They are not called for any good foreseen by God in them, or that they were not as bad as some other men. Their call by grace is a most wonderful and sacred act of the free and sovereign grace of God. The Lord Jesus taught by parable of “two men in one bed,” “two women shall be grinding at the mill,” “two men shall be in the field,” and in each of these cases, “the one shall be taken, and the other left” (see Matt. 24. 40, 41; Luke 17. 34-36). Both crucified thieves “cast the same in His teeth,” but one repented and immediately received covenant blessing with promise: “To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23. 43). What an inestimable favour it is if we can join with the poet Cowper:

“The dying thief rejoiced to see  
 That fountain in his day;  
 And there have I, as vile as He,  
 Washed all my sins away.”

The Lord Jesus taught, as we read in John chapter 6, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Mr. Frank L. Gosden would sometimes add, “And that means any poor, sinful him.” So many of God’s dear people, when anxious and troubled, are thankful for the “whosoever” found in the Scriptures. Such expression suits those who feel “out of the way,” or at “the ends of the earth,” or such great sinners. We read, “Whosoever

shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered" (Joel 2. 32); and again. "Whosoever shall call on/upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2. 21, Rom. 10. 13); "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3. 15); "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17).

Because the Lord is preparing His people for such a glory, they will be much exercised to get to heaven. There is therefore bound to be a companionship with the saints in the Scriptures, and with all those today who are within the compass of "us all." They can truly accord with the expressed desires of the Apostle Paul, for they must "know Him"; also they must "win Christ," and "be found in Him" (see Phil. 3. 8-10). They "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and with David they thirst "for the living God," and express themselves in desire, "When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psa. 42. 2). When they hear of Jesus, they say with the woman, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole." They often cry out with the afflicted in the Scriptures, "Jesus, have mercy upon me," and often rehearse out of a full heart the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." They are truly thankful for the children's bread, as they prove that His "flesh is meat indeed," and His "blood is drink indeed" in all the exercises and troubles of soul and circumstance. Being among the "poor in spirit," they are made glad and often refreshed when they hear the gospel, for they are among "the poor" that "have the gospel preached to them." They have to commit their way continually, and cast their care upon the Lord. Their great concern is to be found bringing forth fruit unto eternal life, and to be well prepared for their dying day, that they may be ready to enter in at last. How they confess their sins, and long for God, and long to know the blessed Lord Jesus in whom they verily believe. These pilgrims and strangers in the earth are under sure covenant promises, and will receive these sweet tokens of love and mercy from time to time. These are the very people whom the Lord addresses through His servant Isaiah: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (chapter 1. 18).

May we each be found among that exercised and waiting people who find a heart echo with Isaac Watts:

"O may I live to reach the place  
Where He unveils His lovely face,  
Where all His beauties you behold,  
And sing His name to harps of gold!"

It is indeed a wondrous truth that "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6). "And the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

## DISTINGUISHING GRACE

*Sermon preached by Jesse Delves at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham, on  
Lord's day morning, February 9th, 1936*

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**Text:** "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4. 7).

In the chapter that I read (1 Corinthians 12), the apostle is treating of the diversities of gifts: how that some have given to them very great gifts for one thing in particular, and others for another thing in particular. At the conclusion of the chapter he puts a series of questions with respect to various things, and declares that God has set some in the church for one thing, for one position, and others for another. And he infers that though greater gifts may be bestowed upon some than others, yet those gifts come from the same Spirit, and the possessors of them are equally dependent upon the same Spirit for the proper exercise of them. Moreover, those who are endowed with special gifts, have the greater cause to be humbled before God. "For who maketh thee," he says to these Corinthians, "to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

In the opening of this chapter he speaks of the ministers, and in what regard they are to be held. They are to be esteemed as the ministers of Christ, and as the stewards of the kingdom of God, but they are to be regarded in their right place, and there is not to be that idolising of any. They were not to put undue honour on one, and contempt on another, knowing that whatever honour one may have above another, he has received that gift from God. Moreover, one may be for particular use in one direction, and another in another direction, and with respect to himself, Paul affirms that he counts but little upon the opinion of man; before God he stands or falls, and he is not much moved by what others think of him; with respect to his ministry he stands in the sight of God. And though, as we know with these Corinthians, there was considerable dissension, some were of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas, and others of Christ (see 1 Cor. 1. 12), as he says, yet at the same time the apostle points out that there is but one Object of worship.

Here, therefore, he infers that whatever distinctions or differences there may be in external gifts, among men or among ministers, they have nothing of themselves. I know nothing by myself, but whatever is received is given by God; therefore there is no ground for self or vain glory. Some of us who painfully lack some of these things, have need to be humbled before God, because He is right and just in His disposing of some gifts to one and withholding them from another, but after all, the grace of God is the one great thing. Whatever endowments men have in

a natural way, all will come short when they come to die: nothing but the effectual saving grace of a covenant God will stand in the hour and article of death.

Let me pursue this enquiry. “Who maketh thee to differ?” We may include all those in whom there is some difference, or some distinction, whether they are ministers, whether they hold a position in the church, or whether they are private members, or even non-members, but believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. To all such this enquiry is addressed: “Who maketh thee to differ?” Or, as in the margin, “Who distinguisheth thee from another?” The point to observe then, is this, that there is a grand point of difference, or distinction, between those that are called by God’s effectual grace, and those that are not so called, and the difference is just the difference of life or death. The one is appointed to inherit eternal life; the others are left to perish in their sin and guilt. O what a difference, what a distinction! Now I should like to examine it a little.

“Who maketh thee to differ?” Who has made us to differ from the world that lieth in wickedness? We are in the world, but by God’s grace we trust we can say, if not deceived, we are not of the world. We are not in our element there; we are not at rest there; we can have no true peace of mind there; the company of the world is not our company; but those who have to associate in business, and vocation, have to mingle with the world and worldly men. They have not real union with them; there is a separation in heart, and there is no real communion. What communion can believers have with unbelievers? “What concord hath Christ with Belial?” (2 Cor. 6. 15). Now can that be said of us, that we are not of the world that lieth in wickedness? Who then has made us to differ? We might have been there.

Who has made us to differ from those who walk “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”? (Eph. 2. 2). We might have been following that course and perhaps racing away somewhere today, trying to fill up our measure of happiness, and to get satisfaction as far as we could out of the empty pleasures and vanities of this poor, sin-stricken, world. Who has made us to differ? Look at the thousands who can be seen, alas! desecrating the Lord’s holy day, filling up the measure of their iniquities, without any concern for their immortal souls, hurrying on towards death and destruction. Who has made us to differ from those? Who has made the distinction?

Some of you can look back to days when you lived in the world – that is the profane world – and knew nothing different, and had no desire for anything different, with no more thought of God than an atheist. Is there any difference now? Say you, “I bless God, I believe there is.” Who has made you to differ? Is it a change in your own mind, not just

of events, as we speak? No, it is the work of the sovereign, omnipotent Being, the work of God, a covenant-keeping God.

But who has made us to differ from those who, though they have a profession of religion, are erroneous in their opinions and belief? Are there not many thousands standing in a profession of religion, believing they are right, and possibly so far sincere? O how terrible to be deceived! No matter can be equal to this in importance. Many profess Christianity who are, alas! in an empty, vain, dead, profession. Who has made us to differ from them, and who has made us to differ from those who are satisfied with themselves? We trust we can say we are not satisfied with any attainments, with anything that we can produce ourselves. We trust we can say that we are not satisfied with a round of service. We want God, we need God, we can never know satisfaction, peace, comfort and joy, without Him.

“Who maketh thee to differ?” Then again, we have some solemn instances of those who have fallen away, who “concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Tim. 1. 19), who promised very well in the beginning, and who ran well at first, but did not continue. Through God’s mercy we hope we can say that, “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day” (Acts 26. 22). But who hath made us differ from these who have taken up a profession of religion, and have dropped it again, and gone back into the world? The grand point of the apostle here is this, that if there is any real, vital difference, any distinction, we are to look up to God in humility and acknowledge His having made that distinction.

But where lies this difference between the righteous and the wicked, the saved and the lost, the false professor and the true possessor, those who really have received the grace of God in truth, and those who, alas! are outside of that mercy? Where does the cause lie? It is not in man, not in his will to be religious. It does not consist in his taking up a profession of religion of himself, or in thinking that he will live a reformed life, or change his course. It is not in any resolve in a person, something that is produced in his own mind. It does not lie in any change in his own life consequent upon remorse because of his past misdeeds. No! it does not lie in any creature, neither does the cause lie with the angels, but it is in God.

The cause of this distinction or difference, between the possessor and the professor, is in God; the cause is in His free and sovereign will and in the exercise of that will, having in His eternal purpose of covenant love, chosen and separated a certain number to salvation, and given them to Christ. Hence the Lord Jesus says with respect to such, “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). O it is good to look up, and to see the

cause of any true change in us, or difference from the world and those dead in a profession of religion, and to see that difference in God Himself! It lies in the free exercise of His will. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9. 13). And why is this? Because He willed to save some, by the exercise of His sovereign power, and to leave others to die in their sins.

Where does the cause of the difference lie? It lies in the free, distinguishing love of God. We love Him. Why? Because we think He is worthy of our love? He is, infinitely worthy, but there is a cause that preceded anything in the creature, and has no connection with the creature, meritorious or otherwise. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19). Humiliating thought and yet soul-melting consideration, when we rightly consider it, and believe that God really loved us before the world was formed and we were called into being. There was that grand separation in His eternal mind, which separation is being made more and more manifest by the gathering out from the world of His elect vessels of mercy, and which separation will be clearly manifest at that great day when the dead shall rise, and when the righteous will be found on the right side, and the wicked on the left side. That is where the cause of the distinction lies, in His sovereign love. "We love Him, because He first loved us."

The cause lies too, in the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost in regeneration. You remember the time, perhaps the year, the part of your life, or some, it may be, the very day, when God brought the solemn realities of eternity, vividly and solemnly before your eyes, and gave you a new concern, new desires, and wrought in your soul an ardent longing to be found right, when your sins were set before you in the light of His countenance. This is where the distinction lies. It is in the gracious, sanctifying, separating, life-giving work of the Holy Ghost. We must never leave the Spirit of God out in experimental religion. If we do, it will be all as a shadow and myth, because all true exercise in the heart of a believer is wrought there by the Spirit of God Himself. "He will reprove the world of sin" (margin: convince), "and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16. 8). Therefore the cause of the grand distinction lies here. Have you not proved it, some of you? Have we not in our measure had to give testimony to this? Can we not remember, we hope, the time, when the Lord met with us, and when we were constrained and compelled to pray for mercy for our souls, for Christ, and His salvation? O what a difference!

Who maketh thee to differ in these great and eternal things? And the cause of the difference is also in the power of divine truth in the conscience. In truth, there is a power which is invincible; it is destined to conquer; it cannot be overcome by the mightiest foe. No! it cannot be

defeated by all the powers of hell. No! Christ must triumph. It is in the application of divine truth in the conscience, and it has an effect, to strip, to bring down, to wound and also to heal and lift up, and comfort, strengthen and edify. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4. 20), therefore the cause lies outside the creature altogether.

We have been preserved till now, held on, some here for many years, in the ways of God and His truth, and you have seen many changes. Who could hold you up but He? He is all-sufficient to preserve and keep His people at all times and in all places. Who hath *made* thee to differ? Then you see the difference is one of compulsion. It is not one of choice; it is not in the choice of the creature; but when the Holy Spirit graciously operates in the heart, and when one, being regenerated, is enlightened and instructed in the things of God, there is a gracious choice then. Yes, and you can respond to a word like this: "My son, give Me thine heart" (Prov. 23. 26), and having been loved of Him from all eternity, you can say that you choose Him in return. Yes! He becomes "the Desire of all nations" (Hag. 2. 7), and "the Chiefest among ten thousand" (Song 5. 10), but the difference is a difference that is occasioned by the invincible power of Jehovah. He made the difference. That distinction between the saved and the lost was made in eternity, and is being manifested in time, and will be everlastingly manifest.

"Who maketh thee to differ?" Now consider what this difference means. It is not a difference that affects us merely while we are here in this time state. No, but it does affect us here, it affects us very greatly, and very effectively, but that is not the end in view entirely. There is to be an everlasting distinction, and the difference in itself is a difference of life and death – eternal life or eternal destruction. It affects our state, our state in this life, but more principally our eternal state. God has called His people out of the world of iniquity, and separated them from it. They are separated in this time state by His grace; their desires are changed, their faces set after God and a knowledge of Him and His ways. But it is an eternal change – that is the principal consideration – an everlasting change, when those whom He has chosen and separated will be found on the right side, and will hear that word from His own lips: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25. 34). And those on the left side will hear that awful word, according to the revelation of holy Scripture, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (verse 41). O may it be God's sovereign purpose of grace to us, to make the distinction here, because as the tree falls so it lies, and the difference is to be an eternal one.

Now let me consider it another way, and put the enquiry again. Is there any difference in us? Is there any real ground to conclude that



there is a saving difference? Have we, as in the sight of God, any real ground to hope and believe that He has separated us? Some of you perhaps may say, Well, I don't know whether there is any real difference between me and the rest of people generally. I do not know. I have not any clear, positive, concrete grounds upon which I can say so. Well, where is your desire? What is the exercise of your mind concerning this? Is it a callous indifference, or is there in your heart, as in the sight of God (though you cannot trace as you would any difference), a real desire to be found among those who are redeemed by His grace? Is there a real concern to be a possessor of that which is essential to your everlasting wellbeing? Then there *is* some difference.

But some of you say, I don't know that there is any *real* difference in me; I have sometimes had some solemn impressions about religion, and certain things in this life in a way of trial, and loss, and trouble, and some things wherein I might believe I have been a witness to the working of a supreme power, yet my mind is confused with respect to those things that are, for the most part, beyond the veil. I do not know. You hear the Lord's people speak of what He has done for their souls, and you say, I have not had those things, I do not know whether there is any real difference in me; although I attend upon the means of grace, I have no real ground to conclude there is any difference. Well, if that is really so, the best counsel I can give to you is this: fall down before God and entreat of Him not to leave you to come short, and while you can do nothing of yourself to merit eternal life, or to attain it, ask Him, for Christ's sake, graciously to make His mind and will known to you, perceiving as you do that a vital change is essential for your everlasting well-being, and He will do it. I believe that He will answer prayer that is really pressed out of a burdened heart, because if that prayer is the prayer of faith, though you cannot see any faith in it, the Lord will honour it.

But is there any difference? Another may say, Well, there is a difference in me now from what there used to be, because at one time I did not mind a scrap about these things; in fact, in my spirit I hated them. But what about it now? Some power has come to you and subdued that enmity, and you say now, as in the sight of God, Lord forgive the sins that I feel upon my conscience. Now you say, I have had some discoveries to me of the character of God, of His requirements, of His justice, and I need, in my own case, that precious blood, which I believe is sufficient to atone for all my sins. You press on! One day the Lord will come and you will be able to say, "He has blotted out my transgressions."

Another may say, Well, there is a difference in me now from what there used to be, because at one time I was very earnest in seeking; I was very lively, and, as I hope and believe, I pressed my case before God; I

waited upon Him in private prayer, and I had some hope that He spoke to me, but now it all seems to have sunk down again; in fact, it is a hard battle to keep going, and sometimes I am disposed to go back into the world again, because under a temptation I question whether there is anything in what I felt after all. There is a difference in that way. And what can I say to such? I would say this: Urge your case, continue, as the Lord may help you, to press on.

“Sue it out, spurning doubt;  
The Holy Ghost’s thy witness.”

But you are tired of waiting. You may perhaps feel to be weary and your hands hang down. Ask the Lord to lift them up again. “Who maketh thee to differ?”

Another may say, A few years ago, I walked in the light of His countenance, and many times since then I believe He has blessed me, but now the whole scene seems changed; there is little spiritual comfort now, and when I look back upon those times, it is little comfort to my present state. What can I say to such? Press on yet! “Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?” (Psa. 85. 6).

“Who maketh thee to differ ... and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Just for a moment, I would say, what have you got? One may say, Well, I believe I have a hope in the mercy of God, He gave me that hope, and though I am not satisfied, I would not part with it for all this world. Though it gets severely damped sometimes, it lives through floods and storms, and you are enabled sometimes to rejoice and believe that He will come again and give you all that you want. Well, you received that; what a mercy! You did not manufacture it.

“What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Another may say, I received that promise of election. The Lord gave me something. I was greatly tried in providence, and the Lord came to me and spoke a word. That came from Him then. O but it seems to be all dying out now! But if the Lord gave it you, hold fast to it. “That which ye have already hold fast till I come” (Rev. 2. 25). His promise is the earnest of His coming, and though many deaths may be between, yet still God will be faithful.

Have we received anything from God, then? If we have, may we be enabled to humble ourselves before Him, for we have nothing of ourselves. Some, it may be, could say, I believe the Lord has given me the forgiveness of my sins; He has graciously given me to feel I am justified in the obedience and righteousness of Christ. O what a great thing for a poor sinner, a sinner deserving hell, to receive! O it would break the hearts of some of you to receive it now; I believe it would mine. But what have we that we have not received? Therefore if the Lord has made that distinction in our cases, may He help us to give Him the glory for it. Amen.

## A SYMPATHISING HIGH PRIEST

*An extract from John Owen (1616-1683)*

*The Lord Christ suffered under all His temptations, sinned in none.*

He suffered, being tempted; sinned not, being tempted. He had the heart of a man, the affections of a man, and that in the highest degree of sense and tenderness. Whatever sufferings the soul of a man may be brought under, by grief, sorrow, shame, fear, pain, danger, loss, by any afflictive passions within or impressions of force from without, He underwent, He felt it all. Because He was always in the favour of God, and in the assurance of the indissolubility of the union of His Person, we are apt to think that what came upon Him was so overbalanced by the blessedness of His relation unto God as not to cause any great trouble unto Him. But we mistake when we so conceive. No sorrows were like to His, no sufferings like unto His. He fortified not Himself against them but as they were merely penal; He made bare His breast unto their strokes, and laid open His soul that they might soak into the inmost parts of it (see Isa. 50. 6). All those reliefs and diversions of this life which we may make use of to alleviate our sorrows and sufferings He utterly abandoned. He left nothing, in the whole nature of sorrow or suffering, that He tasted not and made experience of. Indeed, in all His sufferings and temptations He was supported with the thoughts of the glory that was set before Him; but our thoughts of His present glory should not divert us from the contemplation of His past real sufferings. All the advantage that He had above us by the excellency of His Person, was only that the sorrows of His heart were enlarged thereby, and He was made capable of greater enduring without sin. And it was to be thus with Him –

1. Because, although the participation of human nature was necessary that He might be a High Priest, yet His sufferings under temptations were so that He might be a merciful High Priest for tempted sufferers. Such have need not only to be saved by His atonement, but to be relieved, favoured, comforted by His grace. They did not only want one to undertake for them, but to undertake for them with care, pity and tenderness. Their state required delivery with compassion. God, by that way of salvation that He provides for them, intends not only their final safety in heaven, but also that, in the sense of the firstfruits of it in this world, they may glorify Him by faith and thankful obedience. To this end it was necessary that they should have relief provided for them in the tenderness and compassion of their High Priest; which they could have no greater pledge of than by seeing Him for their sakes exposing Himself unto the miseries which they had to conflict withal, and so always to bear that sense of them which that impression would surely leave upon His soul. And –

2. Because, although the Lord Jesus, by virtue of the union of His Person and plenary [entire or absolute] unction with the Spirit, had a habitual fulness of mercy and compassion, yet He was to be particularly excited unto the exercise of them towards the brethren by the experience He had of their condition. His internal, habitual fulness of grace and mercy was capable of excitation unto suitable actings by external objects and sensible experience. It added not to His mercifulness, but occasioned His readiness to dispose it unto others, and shut the door against pleas of delaying succour. He bears still in His holy mind the sense He had of His sorrows wherewith He was pressed in the time of His temptations, and thereon seeing His brethren conflicting with the like difficulties is ready to help them; and because His power is proportioned unto His will, it is said "He is able" (Heb. 2. 18). And whatever may be the real effects on the mind of Christ from His temptations and sufferings now He is in heaven, I am sure they ought to be great on our faith and consolation, when we consider Him undergoing them for this very end and purpose, that seeing He was constituted our High Priest to transact all our affairs with God, He would be sensible of that condition in His own Person which He was afterwards to present unto God for relief to be afforded unto it.

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## BROTHERLY COMMUNION

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Leicester  
October 2nd, 1865

*To Joseph Parry*

My dear Friend and much-esteemed brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,

I will now try and write you a few lines to let you know that I am not altogether unmindful of you under your painful affliction and suffering. No, my friend, I have not had you out of my mind and memory long together since I left your bedroom on August 9th; and I believe I have felt more sympathy with the afflicted family of God within the last six or eight months than in all my life before.

Since I parted from you I have been brought very low and weak in body. My short visit into Wiltshire was a great benefit to me. I returned to London a great deal better, and was helped through my pulpit labour; but I soon fell back again. My exercises have been many and most trying, because my bodily strength seemed to go so fast; and sometimes I have feared I must give up the work of the ministry. But I have a desire

to live and die in the harness. And now, my friend, I am in a position to tell you that through the great goodness and mercy of the Lord, I am gathering strength; therefore I think the Lord may have a little more pulpit labour for me to do. And who can tell but what the Lord will spare you and me to meet each other once more in the flesh?

We have had a great many meetings and partings within the last twenty-eight years, but we shall meet shortly to part no more, and sing an everlasting song together “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1. 5). And have we not wept together and rejoiced together, fasted and fed together, sunk down and been raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places through Christ Jesus? We have been cursed together under the law, and we have been blessed under the gospel; we have been condemned under the guilt of sin, and have been justified in His pardoning blood and justifying righteousness. And we have been travelling through a barren wilderness for some years past. Then, my dear afflicted brother, cheer up. The road is good, although it is rough. The prize is sure, although the way is so dark that the soul cannot see the mark; yet we are pressing towards it. And the victory is sure, because the Lord Jesus has conquered death, hell, sin and the grave for our poor, helpless souls; for “He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. 32. 4).

But I must not let my pen run on so, because I am not very strong. My wife unites with me in love to yourself, Mrs. Parry, Mr. Tuckwell, and to your family.

Yours affectionately,

Thomas Godwin

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### THE PROMISE TO SINNERS LOOKING FOR CHRIST

*An extract from John Duncan (often known as Rabbi Duncan) of  
Edinburgh (1796-1870)*

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“Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” Ah! my fellow sinner, I am one sinner; what art thou? My fellow sinners who, along with me, are going on to judgment, this is an important matter to hear of Christ in connection with sacrifice, and in connection with sins. There remaineth no other sacrifice, He being *once* offered to bear the sins of many; and so, when we come into judgment, either our sins will have been laid on Him, or they will be on us. If they were not laid on Christ, then are they on ourselves, and we have, with them lying on us, death before us, and judgment before us. And how shall we die with this weight upon us?

O perhaps, like many, we may sleep, and sleep on, and never feel the heavy weight, and die blind to what is immediately beyond death. But we shall not remain ignorant of the weight one moment longer. If our sins are out of our memory, they are in God's book of remembrance, and our own memories shall be refreshed – the memories of such as shall be found Christless – and shall testify against us to the awful facts.

But there shall be found those who had sinned – “fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards” (see 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10) – the apostle says to the believers, “Such **were** some of you” (1 Cor. 6. 11) – these shall be found – and “the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found” (Jer. 50. 20). “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” – **many**. Around the One, who died once, shall be found the many who were wicked as well as others – the many who ought to have died eternally, being condemned and executed. But no; their sin has been borne, and borne away. And mark how excellent that one offering must be, from a consideration of the many. No creature would have been able to bear – no mere creature would have undertaken to bear, God would not have allowed any mere creature to undertake to bear – the sins of others; and, if he had undertaken, he must have failed. But around the One are the many – “the number of them” as the apostle says in the Apocalypse, “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (Rev. 5. 11). Every one of them was a sinner. For ever shall be the song, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1. 5). O what must be the value of that redemption price that was paid, when it was a price for the many!

It was for many, not for all. The Word says **many** – not all; not all. We read in our catechism, “God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some unto everlasting life.” We are apt to wonder that the compilers did not say *many* instead of *some* merely, though no doubt they said *some*, meaning *many*, very many.

This leads us to the second part of this head, for it suggests the important question: How may I know – how may anyone know that he is among the “many”?

That is answered in the second part: “Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” The many for whom Christ was offered, and they that look for Him, to whom He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation, are the same.

The “many” are defined to be “those that look for Him.” We are not called in the gospel, first of all, to ascertain whether our names are in the Lamb's book of life, whether that propitiatory death was for us personally, or not. The Lord has not revealed the names of the elect saved, but He has revealed the name of the elect Saviour. And He has

given signs of the elect saved – they know, receive, come to, believe in, cleave to, the elect Saviour. The “many” know the One. “I ... know My sheep, and am known of Mine” (John 10. 14). “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (verse 27). He does not say that the sheep know themselves, but, “I know the sheep, and the sheep know Me, who, as the Good Shepherd, gives unto them eternal life.” The word “many” gives this great encouragement – the multitude of the saved. Ah! there is the multitude of the lost. “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22. 14). To those that have the everlasting gospel, the words of Christ are: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour” (Matt. 11. 28); “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37). To the enquiry, “What must I do to be saved?” the answer is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16. 30, 31).

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## COUNSEL AND SYMPATHY IN HEAVY SORROW

*Letter by Mrs. Mary Winslow*

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*To G.M., Esq., on the loss of his child*

I have only within a few moments heard of your loss. May the Lord comfort your heart, and make this affliction a stepping-stone to lift you nearer to Himself, and a little higher towards your heavenly home. This is not our rest, and the Lord causes us to find it so. The Lord, who loves you better than you love yourself, knows how and when to pour the balm of consolation into your soul, saying to you, as He once did to me, “I have done it.” O to live so with God as to listen to the still small voice of His Spirit, responding, “Speak, LORD, for Thy servant heareth”! This He often does in His providence, and still oftener when interceding with Him in earnest prayer. Sin, dear brother, threw us at an immense distance from God, but Christ came to bring us back again, and the Spirit is given to draw us sensibly near. May He speak to you in this trying dispensation, and comfort you as mortals cannot. It is inexpressibly delightful to know that in all our tribulations we have access to the ear of God, and His heart, too, is ready to answer. Let not the enemy suggest to your sorrowing heart that the Lord does not love you, or He would not chasten you in this way. The Lord does chasten those whom He loves, and for wise and gracious purposes too. Let us lie passive in His hands, leaving ourselves to be dealt with according to His infinite wisdom and love. Nestle in the bosom of Jesus, and wait until He speaks peace to you.

Our dear pastor has arrived safe, and is now with Jesus, and ere long we shall join him there. Let us, then, live more for eternity, and less for this poor, dying world. I know you have your cares, but if you would carry them simply to Christ, He would make the rough places plain, and the crooked straight. In every difficulty, go at once to Jesus, before you decide in your own mind, or listen to the dictates of your own heart. Seeing you are shut up to God, let this trying dispensation result in a closer fellowship with Him; for I am persuaded He so loves you, that He would not lay the weight of a feather upon you more than is needful. The love of Jesus passeth all knowledge, here and hereafter. We shall never be able to fathom or come to the end of it. You may know these things better than I, but when unexpected trial comes, Satan endeavours to fill the mind with misgivings and doubts about our interest in our best-beloved, our dearest Friend in heaven, and it is for this I venture to send you these few lines.

Your unworthy sister in a precious Jesus,

Mary Winslow

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## PARDONING MERCY IS A PERFECT MERCY

*An extract from Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646)*

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Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven, for this mercy is a perfect mercy. That is, where God pardons any sinner, such a one stands as perfect before God in point of justification as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or any of the prophets or righteous men who ever lived in the world. You poor soul, man or woman, youth or servant, if God comes to you and pardons your sins, you stand as fully justified as Abraham, Paul, Peter, or any of the apostles and prophets. Though in sanctification you fall short of them, yet you are justified as perfectly as ever they were. Justification is an act that is done altogether and at once; therefore it is a perfect work. And this is an argument of infinite consolation to the saints of God, that the great business between God and them in point of justification is perfected.

In Psalm 51. 7, David prays to God that He would purge him with hyssop so that he should be clean, that is, that he might be cleansed by justification, by having the guilt of sin taken from his conscience by a renewed act of pardon. And then it follows, "I shall be whiter than snow." Though the saints of God are sanctified, they are not whiter than snow in sanctification,\* but in justification they are whiter than snow. There is no spot at all in them (see Eph. 5. 27). Christ presents His

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\* That is, as pilgrims in their time state. Ed.



church unto Himself without spot. In point of justification, every believing soul is without spot before the Lord. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob" (Num. 23. 21). That is, though God knows there is iniquity there, yet He does not see it so as to charge them with it or impute it to them. All is done away in that regard by justification.

What we have in Song of Solomon 4. 7 is observable for this purpose: "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." No spot in you. There are spots in respect of sanctification, yes, but in respect of justification it may be said of her, "There is no spot at all in thee; thou art all fair, My love." These are the words of Christ. He comes forth and says, "Thou art all fair, My love."

Alas, when the believer looks at himself, his own duties and performances, he sees nothing at all *but* spots, all smeared and spattered over. Why, though you look on yourself as spotted, yet Christ looks on you without spot, and God the Father looks upon you through Christ without spot and says, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee."

You think it may be that if God should make a discovery of your heart to all your Christian friends and acquaintances, you would appear so foul that they would cast you out of their society and never have anything more to do with you. Yet, for all this, Christ says, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee."

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## THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER

### CHAPTER 14

#### A GREAT HIGH PRIEST

##### **Blessing the People**

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

*(Continued from page 55)*

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One important part of the ministration of the blessed Lord, as the great High Priest over the house of God, we have not yet touched upon. This is His *blessing the people*.

This, we know, was committed to the typical high priest under the law as one of the functions of his ministerial office. "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: the LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them" (Num. 6. 23-27). The chief season when the high priest blessed the people according to this formula was on the great day of atonement, when, after having

carried the blood of the bullock and the goat into the holy of holies, and sprinkled it on and before the mercy seat, he laid aside his linen garments, and putting on the garments of glory and beauty, showed himself to the people who were praying without (see Luke 1. 10).

In all this there was a beautiful propriety. The high priest had two distinct sets of consecrated garments. One set was made wholly of linen, which he wore on the great day of atonement. This was simplicity and purity itself, and as such is elsewhere used as a type of the pure humanity of the Son of God in the flesh, as Ezekiel 9. 2, 11; Daniel 10. 5. The other set of consecrated garments was worn on days of high and great solemnity, and being made of gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, was called “golden,” or “garments of glory and beauty.”

The linen garments, then, which the high priest wore when he offered the bullock and the goat, and took their blood into the most holy place, were not only typical of the pure and perfect human nature of the Lord Jesus, but of that nature in its state of humiliation on earth. Similarly, the garments of glory and beauty, such as the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue, with its hem adorned with bells of pure gold and pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, and the ephod on the breast, with the twelve precious stones on which the names of the tribes were engraved (Exod. 39), typically and figuratively represented the glorified humanity of the blessed Lord, which He now wears at the right hand of the Father.

As then the high priest, when he had laid aside his linen garments, and assumed the garments of glory and beauty, blessed the people from the court of the tabernacle, so the Lord in His glorified humanity blesses His waiting people here below from the courts of bliss. In Him, as the church’s risen Head, all spiritual blessings are lodged: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1. 3). He is the living Fountain whence all the streams flow to water His church here below. The ancient promise made to Abraham was that in him and his seed, that is, Christ, as the apostle explains the word (see Gal. 3. 16), all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Every blessing, then, which the elect enjoy either for time or eternity, in providence or in grace, comes from Him as their covenant Head. They are blessed *in* Him as they are chosen, adopted and accepted *in* Him (see Eph. 1. 4-6). Not to speak of His blessings in providence, though in these He “daily loadeth us with benefits” (Psa. 68. 19), how unspeakable are His blessings in grace!

Look at the blessing of eternal life which hangs before the eyes of the poor, way-worn pilgrim in this world of sin and sorrow, as the prize

of his high calling, the prospect of which, at the end of his race, animates his drooping spirits – this rich and glorious crown, without which all others would cease to be blessings, is given in Christ. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5. 11). This blessing the risen Lord bestows on His people when He first quickens their souls into spiritual life, for He is “the resurrection, and the life” (John 11. 25), and “quickeneth whom He will” (John 5. 21), and the life thus given He ever maintains, for His own words are, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14. 19). As, then, He ever lives at God’s right hand, for He says, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1. 18); and again, “Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7. 25); He sends down the blessing of eternal life into their soul.

And this blessing of eternal life which He thus bestows has a sweet connection with the anointing which He received as the consecrated High Priest; for the droppings of that rich unction went down to the very skirts of His garments, and falls in regenerating grace upon the hearts of His people, like the dew of Hermon: “It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore” (Psa. 133. 2, 3). How sweet to carry in the bosom the pledge, earnest and foretaste of eternal life, and to feel it to be the gift of God (see Rom. 6. 23); stored up in Christ, who is Himself “the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5. 20); manifested and brought to light in the Person of Jesus (see 1 John 1. 2); and firmly secured by covenant oath and everlasting promise (see Psa. 21. 2-4; 89. 34-37; Titus 1. 2; 1 John 2. 25).

From this ever-flowing and overflowing fountain of eternal life proceed all other spiritual blessings, as reconciliation to God by the blood of the Lamb; free and full justification by His imputed righteousness; deliverance from all condemnation, past, present and to come; and, as a consequence of these glorious mercies, manifested pardon of sin; peace of conscience; fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; revelations of His presence, power, loveliness, glory and beauty; sips and tastes of His dying love; spiritual affections; heavenly desires; holy longings after conformity to His image, for grace and strength to imitate His example and walk in His footsteps, for power to do that which is pleasing in His sight, and to live to His praise – in a word, all that sweet and sacred intercourse with the blessed Lord which is the very life and power, sum and substance of all vital godliness; and without which all religion is but an empty form, a name and a notion. It is thus that the reality of the presence of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of the Father

is made experimentally known. He is seen, felt and believed in as “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14. 6); for He is walked in as the Way of access unto God; sought unto as the Truth, the knowledge of which maketh free; and cleaved unto as the Life, from whom it was first received, and by whom it is ever maintained.

Our blessed Lord was to be “an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” It will be remembered that Melchizedek met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him (see Gen. 14. 19). In the same way our great High Priest blesses the seed of Abraham, for “they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Gal. 3. 9); and as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they walk in his steps who “believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. 4. 3, 12). But Melchizedek the type could only *ask* God to bless Abraham. He could not himself confer the blessing; but Jesus, the Antitype, our great Melchizedek, whose priesthood is “after the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7. 16), blesses His people, not by merely asking God to bless them, but by Himself showering down blessings upon them, and by communicating to them out of His own fulness every grace which can sanctify as well as save. Even before His incarnation, when He appeared in human form, as if anticipating in appearance that flesh and blood which He should afterwards assume in reality, He had power to bless.

Thus we read that when Jacob wrestled with the angel – which was no created angel, but the Angel of the covenant, even the Son of God Himself in human shape – he said, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” And in answer to his wrestling cry we read that “He blessed him there.” Jacob knew that no created angel could bless him. He therefore said, when he had got the blessing, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (Gen. 32. 26-30). To this blessing Jacob afterward referred when, in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, he said, “The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads” (Gen. 48. 16).

Thus also our gracious Lord, immediately before His ascension to heaven, as if in anticipation of the gifts and graces which He was to send down upon them when exalted to the right hand of the Father, lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples, and as if to show that He would still ever continue to bless them, “He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven,” even “**while** He blessed them,” as if He were blessing them all the way up to heaven, even before He took possession of His mediatorial throne (Luke 24. 50, 51).

As, then, He sits in glory at the right hand of the Father, He sends down blessings upon His people. He blesses them “with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the

breasts, and of the womb ... unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills" (Gen. 49. 25, 26). He holds all nature in His hands; the gold and the silver are His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; His is the earth and the fulness thereof; "all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28. 18); He holds the reins of government, doing "according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4. 35). He is the sun and shield of God's people – their sun, ever to be their light; their shield, to be ever their defence. He giveth grace and glory – grace here, glory hereafter (see Psa. 84. 11). He makes His strength perfect in their weakness, that they may glory in their infirmities (see 2 Cor. 12. 9); nourishes and cherishes them, as being members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones (see Eph. 5. 29, 30); and communicates to them more than heart can conceive or tongue express out of His own fulness; "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (1 Cor. 2. 9, 10; John 1. 16; Col. 1. 19). He can see all the designs of their enemies, and defeat them; all the temptations of Satan, and overrule them; all his snares, and break them to pieces; all his enmity and malice, and can bruise him under their feet shortly. He can pity their case when bowed with grief and afflictions; can hear their sigh and cry out of the depths of trouble and sorrow; and can stretch forth His hand to deliver them from the worst of foes and the worst of fears.

*(To be continued)*



## OBITUARY

**Sidney Joseph Hickman**, a beloved deacon at Hope Chapel, Blackboys and Ebenezer Chapel, Horam, for over fifty-one years and a member of the church for over sixty-four years, passed to his eternal rest on Lord's day evening, March 19th, 2017, aged 97 years. He served on the Committee of the Gospel Standard Societies for fourteen years, and, for a while, on the Bethesda Committee.

Our dear friend was born on February 11th, 1920 at Mill Cottage, Coldharbour Lane, Lower Dicker, East Sussex. He was brought up from infancy to attend Zoar Chapel, The Dicker.

The first convictions of his sinful state before God were at twelve years of age when he was a bearer at the funeral of a second cousin, and again later, when an older man, a lodger at their home, suddenly died, apparently out of Christ without any hope. These solemn events produced a sobering effect upon him, bringing him into the distress of knowing he was lost, but being young it led him into a slavish fear of

dying. However, these early convictions slowly wore away. At the age of fourteen years, he commenced work, staying in the same employ for fifty-one years, eventually becoming the manager for a large number of those years.

Around this time, he began occasionally to join a mini-coach that took some people from the surrounding district, including four of his Cottington cousins and their widowed mother, to Hope Chapel, Blackboys. Having gone with them for a few times he found a special attraction to the people and the chapel, especially the ministry of the pastor, Mr. Jabez Field. It was after his grandfather's death (Mr. William Hickman who after a year as the pastor at Dicker passed away) that he began regularly to attend Blackboys, making it his spiritual home from 1937. Therefore from small beginnings, commenced his long connection and sojourn of over eighty years in this house of prayer.

He writes, "My beginning spiritually appears to be so small!" He was always cautious and reticent in claiming great things in his soul's experience. He often expressed to his close friends his anxiety for "living realities," aware of the dangers of "religious emotions of the flesh and a traditional or hereditary religion." In prayer, we have witnessed him pouring out the lines of John Newton:

"Lord, decide the doubtful case;  
Thou who art Thy people's Sun,  
Shine upon Thy work of grace,  
If it be indeed begun."

He continues, "Before wholly settling at Blackboys, I remember going with my grandfather, Mr. William Hickman, to Beulah Chapel, Notting Hill in August 1936 for the special services, where grandfather preached two sermons to a full chapel. In the discourse he remarked, 'When I was a young man I used to pray this prayer: Lord, if Thou hast never begun with me, do begin tonight.' Inside I said, 'I know what you mean, Grandad.' How I wish I had told him about this; I shall ever regret that I didn't. The dear man died some six weeks later." Some time after he had started to attend Blackboys regularly, the pastor, Mr. Jabez Field preached from Ecclesiastes 12. 1: 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.' In the sermon Mr. Field, while addressing his remarks to the young people (there were a good number of us in those days), suddenly said, 'I will come as low as I can, as low as the Scripture warrants me: have you got a desire for a real desire? If so, you go to the Lord and tell Him all about it, and tell Him I sent you; He won't be offended.' This touched a chord within me. It seemed as if there was something within me which reached out from my soul to lay hold upon. In those days I began to understand the language of the psalmist who says, 'Remember me, O LORD, with the

favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation' (Psa. 106. 4).

"I now commenced to bow my head and try to pray, 'Lord, do quicken my dead soul,' when I took my seat in the chapel. On looking back, it seems I was praying for something the Lord had already done. I prayed this prayer for years, because I thought the Lord dealt with all His people in the same way as He dealt with the Apostle Paul on the Damascus road. Also, our dear pastor was dealt with severely under the law, so I concluded I was still spiritually dead. Gradually however, the depth of the depravity of my evil heart began to be opened up to me, and this has spread over a period of many years. Yes, 'line upon line; here a little, and there a little.' In the account of the woman of Sychar at the well, it seems I had never seen the wonderful, faithful and tender way the blessed Lord had dealt with her. In after years I have felt somewhat encouraged when considering her case.

"During this period of my life, after the two services at Blackboys, I went as was the custom with most of the Blackboys congregation, to the evening service at Pick Hill, Horam. On one occasion, as I sat with my four cousins on the side seat close to the pulpit steps, the dear pastor (Uncle Jabez we called him), after announcing his text, immediately turning to his right, looked straight at us five and said, 'I can't preach tonight, so I'm going to talk to you boys.' The dear man was a faithful spiritual father unto us. He told us that as we were now all going forth into life, we must not think we were now beyond the commandments of God, and exhorted us still to honour and obey our parents. Also, we should be obedient to our masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as unto Christ. He then proceeded to speak of spiritual things, warning us of the many dangers that surrounded us, and that we should seek 'first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.' We loved our dear pastor for his faithfulness, although sometimes he stripped us and left us with nothing."

Now came the war years. Our dear friend joined the 4th battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1940 to serve in the armed forces. It was through the Lord's great grace that he was kept from the numerous, never-ending surrounding snares and temptations. He was very conscious of what his dear pastor, Mr. Jabez Field used to warn, that "if temptation, opportunity and inclination meet together, no man can stand." He was, through grace, preserved from the many snares and temptations surrounding him, so often having to cry to "be kept." His life was also wonderfully preserved throughout the war.

In 1942, he was sent to Egypt where he experienced bitter fighting, many comrades being hurled violently into eternity. After the defeat of the Afrika Korps he was in Palestine for a while, encamping at Hebron. While there he went to Jerusalem twice, visiting Bethany, the Mount of

Olives, the garden tomb, Gethsemane, the old city and the temple area. He fought in Italy at Monte Casino where many comrades were killed. After the occupation of San Marino, he moved to Greece, being promoted to sergeant and transferred to administrative duties. When VE\* day arrived, he was on the Greek/Bulgarian border. He was then flown to Austria as part of the army of occupation.

At the time of VJ day,\* he was on a month's leave. It was during this time that an exercise arose in his heart concerning the Lord providing him with a wife. On the last day before returning to his regiment, he felt confirmed in this step concerning a young lady, when Mr. Field, preached from Proverbs 16. 1: "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD." This, along with the words, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Prov. 16. 33), caused him to venture in the matter. He was finally released from the army in 1946. He was married to Ruth Martin in October 1947, and set up home at The Dicker, where they lived until moving to Ringmer in 1986.

After he and his wife were settled together, our dear friend writes, "We soon found that, 'Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward'" (Job 5. 7). They waded through several trials, culminating in the loss of their first-born child of six weeks. During these days it was laid upon him, "This is not your rest: because it is polluted" (Mic. 2. 10). He found an aching void the world could not fill. He often breathed forth in great need the lines of William Hammond: "Give me Christ, or else I die." In their distresses, Mr. John Sperling-Tyler, the Dicker pastor, was very supportive, assisting them in several practical ways.

Sidney writes, "During 1950, our pastor Mr. Field preached from Nehemiah 4.10: 'And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.' I felt to be completely full of rubbish and I thought our dear pastor could see it. The word was pointing at me, and I realised, 'Thou art the man,' and all I could see and cry out was with Job: 'Behold, I am vile.' I knew it to be so."

He continues, "A short while after this the lines from John Kent came to me which addressed me by my real name, Sinner!

‘Sinner, if thou art taught to see  
How great thy guilt and misery,  
In every thought and act impure,  
The blood of Christ thy soul can cure.’

I saw immediately that there was hope in the precious blood of Christ. I longed for an application of it personally to my soul. Some while later

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\* VE day means "Victory in Europe" and VJ day means "Victory in Japan." Ed.



on, these words came with sweetness and power: 'I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys' (Song 2. 1). If not awfully deceived, the arms of faith stretched out to lay hold on Him. Yes, 'My Beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him.' What beauty and preciousness I saw and felt in that chapter 5 of Solomon's Song, especially from verse 9 onwards where Solomon attempts to describe the graces of Christ. It always seems to me that when he gets to verse 16, words fail him, so he says 'Yea, He is altogether lovely,' and then concludes, 'This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.' The Word of the Lord was especially precious and blessed to me in those days."

He continues, "I now thought of a vow I made in the fear of God in 1940 when going off to war, that if the Lord would quicken my soul into life, reveal His Son in me and bring me home safely again to the house of God, I would make an open profession of His name. I had a humble hope that the Lord had quickened my soul into life, and He had wonderfully returned me home again after six weary years of war service, but had He revealed His Son 'in me'? Here I was at a stand! Yes, He had made Himself very precious to me, but had He been revealed to me? Though He was precious, I wanted to have Him in possession to be able to say with Thomas: 'My Lord and my God.' Around this time, I went to hear Mr. Sperling-Tyler at The Dicker on a Thursday evening, and during the sermon he said this: 'You may question whether Christ has revealed Himself to you. Is He at times precious to you? If so, then He must have been revealed to you.' This settled me for a while, yet I still could not move to venture forward, so still held back. Often I looked in desire to the Lord's table yet was unable to move in the sacred matter."

Early in May 1951 his much-loved and esteemed pastor, Mr. Jabez Field suddenly passed away. He writes, "What grief and sorrow this caused among the little flock. I personally felt, 'Now, no man cares for my soul.' He had been a spiritual father to me, but sadly I had never been able to tell him anything of how profitable his ministry had been to me. How I deeply regret this. Our pastor possessed much discernment and I feared he could see right through into me, as I often felt to be a deceived character."

He continues, "Mr. Reginald Jupp, the youngest of our three deacons, had been sent out into the ministry a year after Mr. Field's departure to glory. In that same summer of 1952, Mr. Jupp quoted in a sermon from Deuteronomy 2. 3, 'Ye have compassed this mountain long enough.' I immediately looked at my cousin and thought, 'That applies to him, not me.' However, his wife was moved to venture and apply to unite in church membership. This only increased my exercise concerning the Lord's gospel commandment. On returning home after the mid-week service at Horam, and knowing she was under the blessed influence of

the love of Christ, a fear came upon me that I had injured her feelings by a remark I had made after the service. I therefore resolved to call and see her on my way to work the next morning to put the matter right. Upon my visit, she assured me I had not grieved nor offended her at all. In the ensuing gracious conversation, she told me that Mr. Percy Laver of Rotherfield had recently quoted in the pulpit at Blackboys from Luke 12. 47: 'And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' This had an immediate effect upon me. I could tarry no longer, so I approached one of our deacons and at the same church meeting as my cousin's wife I came before the church; we both being baptized on August 31st by Mr. Jupp, myself being the first into the water, and therefore being the first ever that Mr. Jupp baptized."

Our dear friend and his cousin's wife were children of promise to the late beloved pastor, Mr. Jabez Field. In the closing years of Mr. Field's life, the Lord God spoke to him: "For there is a sound of abundance of rain" (1 Kings 18. 41). Mr. Field, who had baptized a good number during his pastorate, was graciously given this promise as he came to the close of his days, and baptized two in the closing scenes of his sojourn below. He died in assurance of this blessing. In the three years following his death, nine more friends were baptized, all fruits of Mr. Field's ministry. Sidney and his brother deacon of over forty-five years, Mr. Alec Saunders (see obituary, *Gospel Standard* September 2014) were found among that favoured band of the abundance of rain.

He continues, "During 1954, I was sitting in our chapel listening to Mr. Jupp who was supplying that day, and while in attention to his discourse the word was given me with a measure of power: 'There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep' (1 Sam. 16. 11). There he was, the youngest of our three deacons (Mr. Thomas Burfoot and Mr. Charles Dobell being the other two) already feeding us sheep! Upon these thoughts came, 'Arise, anoint him: for this is he.' I said nothing to any person about the Lord speaking, but shortly afterwards a move was made within the church to invite Mr. Jupp to be pastor over us at Blackboys and Horam. At the church meeting when the exercises of friends were related concerning Mr. Jupp, I of course told of the Lord speaking to me. Mr. Jupp commenced his gracious pastorate of forty years on January 1st, 1956."

In 1965 Sidney was appointed a deacon. In less than two years, both the other two deacons passed to glory. This meant Sidney was the only deacon, so stood alone with Mr. Jupp until two more were appointed, Mr. Alec Saunders and Mr. James Weaver.

During the winter of 1967/1968 the church and congregation passed through much tribulation, by way of two road accidents, resulting in the

loss of three lives – a gracious church member and then some weeks later two young children – both occasions coupled with injuries to loved ones. The immediate families and church and congregation were grief stricken. Sidney writes, “‘Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?’ (Psa. 77. 7-9). Pastor and I wept together; we wondered where the scene would end. These were indeed heavy days. Family, church and personal cares provided plenty of ballast. ‘How stands the case, my soul, with thee?’ O for grace to ‘let all fruitless searches go,’ and be given that gracious determination to know nothing among men, ‘save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.’ O to be able to behold:

‘Yes, now I know ’tis He, ’tis He!  
 ’Tis Jesus, God’s dear Son,  
 Wrapped in humanity, to die  
 For crimes that I had done!’

I feel I am so often like poor Martha: ‘careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful.’ I would be like Mary and choose ‘that good part, which shall not be taken away.’ ‘Oh that I knew where I might find Him!’ I come so short. I fail in everything.”

Dear Sidney was very reticent in talking much religion. He was truly an exercised man, waiting personally, quietly and continually upon God. He endured much conflict with the power of unbelief, crying to the Lord daily in the fight of faith for the Lord to shine. Therefore, little is known of his deep, personal, soul exercises, which were visibly apparent. However, we do get an insight of his soul exercise on occasions.

On November 26th, 1988, he was in much soul trouble through many encompassing trials and afflictions. Preparing for the Lord’s day, hymn 749 was his soul’s experience which includes the lines, “I call on God, and cry and shout, but all my prayer He shutteth out.” A still small voice sounded into his spirit with power: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4. 15). He relates, “My hard, black heart was melted down in a moment, and I sat and wept and sang for a while. Hymn 120 flowed in and I knew that this was the one to commence the services with in the morning. I was overcome, saying to the Lord, ‘Lord, Thou wilt kill me with kindness!’ The savour of this visit lasted for quite a while.”

At the end of June 1990, his dear wife entered hospital for surgery. It was a shock to them, causing much exercise and prayer. But the Lord kindly whispered to our dear friend, “Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it” (Isa. 65. 8). He was much strengthened in faith, receiving from the

Lord some precious promises. On July 15th, he was contemplating the way ahead, when the Lord spoke these words to him: "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with Me" (Isa. 63. 3). This melted him completely down, the Lord Jesus being made very precious to him, especially in viewing the Lord's deepest sorrows for his sins, contrasting with all the Lord's goodness to him and his wife. He cried out with David, "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together." His wife was brought safely through and wholly recovered.

In March 1991 at the Lord's supper in the morning Mr. Jupp gave out hymn 1116. The lines, "'Tis the Christ by man rejected! Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He." Sidney's heart was softened and warmed, the Lord Jesus being in view by faith. Mr. Timothy Rosier preached one afternoon from Hebrews 12. 2: "Looking unto Jesus...." and in the sermon, spoke of the smell of faith. This touched our dear friend's heart, so that he was led out in meditation, remembering the blessedness when the Lord Jesus had been made precious to him some years before with, "I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys."

In 1994, Sidney faced an operation. Prior to it on Lord's day, April 10th, Mr. Harold Jempson preached in the afternoon from Isaiah 54. 10: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." He repeated several times, "Saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee," which so filled Sidney's spirit with hope. The following Lord's day, Mr. Gilbert Hyde spoke from Psalm 145. 19: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them." This was a good time for him, especially when Mr. Hyde quoted, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God," which had already been sounding in Sidney's heart.

After the operation, when having his catheter dealt with, the word dropped forcibly and very sweetly in, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (Psa. 22. 16). He felt very calm, blest and favoured, and wept much at the mercy of the Lord to him, again viewing the Lord Jesus suffering for him.

After returning home from the hospital, and attending the anniversary services at Blackboys in May, Mr. Peter Woodhams spoke from Nahum 1. 7: "The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." This was a blessed time of confirmation, as the very word had been with him following the operation.

On several occasions in recent years, he contacted the present pastor to relate some help under the ministry. One instance was when the words

were quoted from John 7. 37, 38 during a discourse on Acts 13. 38, 39: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He, with tears of joy, said he knew what it was to have the living water of the Spirit to rise within and flow forth. Another instance was in 2010 from Isaiah 41. 13: "For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." Again, with tears of thankfulness he expressed the mercy of the Lord being near him and a good hope of His right hand upholding him when coming to Jordan. Also, from Psalm 34. 6: "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." He said he was ashamed of his spiritual poverty, but he knew that the Lord heard his cries and had many times saved him out of his troubles, and he still had a quiet trust in His abiding faithfulness. If Sidney found the sermon profitable he would often at the close of a service quote to the writer and to other ministers who had been preaching, "The Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath." Dear Sidney was a discerning and hungry hearer for the truth in Jesus. He was a gracious, exercised office bearer in Zion. He breathed his soul out to the Lord God daily. It is true to say, often hourly!

Both dear Sidney and his wife Ruth entered Bethesda, Harpenden in June 2015.

When visiting him in Bethesda, he often referred to the early days of his spiritual espousals. Invariably he expressed his deep exercise to be ready when the end came. He on one occasion said, "As poor as I am, I quietly wait for Him." Then he added with a smile, "Not without a good hope."

He entered the Luton and Dunstable Hospital on February 18th, 2017.

When one of his grandsons was visiting him in hospital, he talked about his early days and blessed hearings, especially mentioning the woman of Samaria. He said, "Beautiful words from Christ." Also, he talked of the blessings he had from Solomon's Song. He then quoted, "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling." When parting, he said to his grandson, "I just lie here and wait for the Lord."

On my last visit to him on Friday, March 17th, two days before he died, he was visibly much weaker than on my previous visits. He hardly opened his eyes and his breathing was getting laboured. He said with a whispered voice, "Pastor, the Lord Jesus is near me." "I am all right and it is well." When my wife and I departed after being with him for over two hours, he put his hand up to wave and warmly smiled, hoarsely saying. "Christ is very precious." He passed to eternal glory two days later, on Lord's day evening, March 19th, around 10.15 p.m.

The church at Blackboys and cause at Pick Hill have lost a very able, peaceable, wise, stable, godly counsellor from among them. I have lost a kind, tender and firm spiritual friend. A strong pillar in Zion has been taken home.

“Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou madest strong for Thyself” (Psa. 80. 14, 15). “Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?” (Psa. 85. 6).

John L. Rosier

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**David – Shepherd, Soldier, King**, by B.A. Ramsbottom, illustrated and designed by M.H. Philpott, hardback; 44 pages; price £5; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Harpenden bookroom and agents, and from Christian bookshops.

On the few occasions when we were not engaged to preach on Lord’s day afternoons, we have listened to a mother reading Mr. Ramsbottom’s books for children, to her family. Even now, the youngest, who is afflicted, enjoys them being read, and with animated sign language demonstrates when anticipating the development of some of the scenes in the sacred Scripture narratives. *David – Shepherd, Soldier, King*, is the third book in the new “Faithful Footsteps” series, and follows on in the high standard set in the earlier “Miracles” series. The illustrations are attractive and the narrative by the author is simple, precise, scriptural, accurate and reverent. Mr. Ramsbottom has been blessed with a particular gift in engaging with, and holding the attention of children, whether by verbal communication or by simple prose.

The book is divided into ten chapters depicting some of the scenes in the life of David from early days as a shepherd boy until he was crowned king. Psalm 23 and Psalm 63. 1-7 are also included in the narrative. As with others in this series, there is also a colouring book by Mark Philpott which can be purchased to accompany this publication at a cost of £2.50 as with others in this series. The colouring books are very suitable for families with dear children with plenty of energy, and who need to be profitably occupied on the Lord’s day.

When Mr. John Kingham reviewed *Elijah – Prophet of God* in the September 2016 number, he made some allusion to the second publication in this series, namely, *Elisha – Man of God*. The remarks that we have made about *David – Shepherd, Soldier, King*, also appertain to *Elisha – Man of God*. The children’s books by Mr. Ramsbottom are very excellent books. May Almighty God distil some truth into the young hearts of the dear children, that will eventually bring forth and bud, and blossom in their later lives, that they may be among those who are called “trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD.”

After reading this book and also hearing it being read recently, we felt compelled to review it very favourably. We warmly recommend both this latest

publication to our readers, and all of the very good children's books written by Mr. Ramsbottom.

**The Doctrines of Grace – As Delineated in the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith**, by Kenneth F.T. Matrunola; paperback; 138 pages; price £4.50; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Harpenden bookroom and agents, and from Christian bookshops.

It is both cheering and refreshing to read some of our Articles of Faith being faithfully expounded by a gospel minister who was brought up in a completely different background. Mr. Kenneth Matrunola moved and preached among lighter Baptist circles for a time, but as led and taught by the Holy Ghost, he yearned to find a people whom he felt were taught the same glorious salvation that he had tasted for himself. It is solemn to observe that some people brought up under the precious doctrines of grace, begin to clamour for a watering down of the truth and go after a light and easy profession. As it was with Mr. Kenneth Matrunola, so there are some ministers today in our circles who, like him, have come from various backgrounds, and as led and taught by the Spirit of Truth, truly value our articles of faith, doctrine and reverent worship.

In the early 1990s Mr. Kenneth Matrunola delivered a series of addresses at Bethel Chapel, Guildford, on each of the thirty-five Gospel Standard Articles of Faith. We remember how at the time when these addresses were taking place, the late Mr. Arthur Risbridger, the deacon at Bethel, Guildford, felt that the meetings were truly profitable to him personally, and also to the brethren.

This publication consists of five chapters on each of what are termed the five points of Calvinism. The five points are Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Final Perseverance. In the first chapter, Article 4 is considered, The Fall of Man; in the second chapter, Article 3 is considered, Everlasting Love and the Eternal Covenant of Grace; in the third chapter, Article 6 on Particular Redemption and Article 25, Universal Redemption denied; in the fourth chapter, Articles 8, 9 and 12, Effectual Calling, and the last chapter is Article 23, on Final Perseverance. In all, eight articles from the thirty-five in the original addresses, have been selected under the heading of the five points of Calvinism. These addresses are a faithful expounding of the doctrines of grace most surely believed among us. They are sound in doctrine, with the historical background also considered, together with an insistence on the need of the experiential teaching by the Holy Ghost.

There is also a very informative foreword by Mr. Henry Sant, pastor at Salem, Portsmouth. A little of the Lord's teaching and leadings to Mr. Matrunola is traced out. For a more detailed account of Mr. Matrunola, see the obituary in the February 1998 *Gospel Standard*. We are given some background to the lectures on the thirty-five Articles, and to the way in which Mr. Kenneth Matrunola was so graciously enabled to bring back the church at Salem, Portsmouth, into the Gospel Standard communion of churches once again.

We warmly recommend this book, and may it be made a blessing as either a warning or a true help in confirming any reader who may be under some temptation or wrong influence to wander away from the precious and glorious truths contained in our Articles of Faith. We hope that this book will have a wide circulation.

## PLEADING WITH CHRIST

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Lamb of God, enthroned in glory,  
 Trembling to Thy cross I flee;  
 O reveal its wondrous story!  
 Didst Thou bleed and die for me?  
 Helpless, Lord, I fall before Thee,  
 Poor and needy, vile and base;  
 Send an answer, I implore Thee,  
 Full of truth and full of grace.

'Tis necessity that urges –  
 Drives me to Thee, Lamb of God;  
 Nought I know the conscience purges,  
 But Thy all-atoning blood.  
 When for sin Thy soul was smitten,  
 Tell me, was it, Lord, for mine?  
 Is my name, so worthless, written  
 In that precious book of Thine?

While I thus with Christ was pleading,  
 Suddenly deliverance came;  
 On the cross I saw Him bleeding,  
 Bearing all my guilt and shame.  
 Cleansed by blood, the Spirit brought me  
 Spotless raiment, white as snow;  
 Wrought and finished, ere He bought me,  
 By the Son of God below.

Thus doth boundless love receive me,  
 Wretched, guilty, black as hell;  
 Brethren, do ye now believe me?  
 This salvation suits me well:  
 Ask the Spirit to apply it,  
 Ye who seek the Saviour's face;  
 He has bade the needy buy it,  
 Not with money, but of grace.

William Brown

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As Jonah's gourd withered in the morning, when he hoped for most benefit by it against the ensuing heat of the day, so the blessings of this world frequently wither when we expect to find most freshness in them, and to receive most nourishment from them.

Arrowsmith



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
APRIL 2018

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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 STONE ALREADY ROLLED AWAY**

“Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great” (Mark 16. 3, 4).

The stone was a perplexity to the godly women who came early to the sepulchre. Yet they found the stone rolled away. We are reminded of the parable of the gospel feast in Luke 14: “For all things are now ready,” and again, after the resurrection, Jesus on the sea shore said, “Come and dine.”

So it is with the dear people of God today; many heavy burdens and impossibilities needing to be rolled away. Only the risen and ascended Saviour can perform those things. All things are now ready with the dear Saviour in heaven, who said at His resurrection, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Pilgrims have to face things that they cannot face alone; therefore they have to “cry unto the LORD in their trouble,” to be saved “out of their distresses” (Psa. 107).

The burden of sin is so often such a weight accompanied with grief. Pilgrims meet with, and have to pass through, many distressing trials that only the Lord can truly deal with. There are ongoing family trials and cares which only God can roll away. Heavy afflictions come by divine appointment, and sink us so low. In the midst of all these conflicts, Satan goes about “as a roaring lion ... seeking whom he may devour.” It is in these appointed tribulations here below that the Lord both instructs His dear people, and draws them to His feet, as He sits upon the “throne of grace.” David said, “I flee unto Thee to hide me” (Psa. 143. 9).

In this fleeing and supplicating by sinners here below, Jesus who is “sitting on the right hand of power” is “moved with compassion.” As “a merciful and faithful High Priest,” He begins to drop down the heavens, and lets “the skies pour down righteousness” (see Isa. 45. 8). Being the blessed, good and great Physician, He ministers that “everlasting strength” that we poor sinners so much need. He speaks those “fear nots” and fills His dear people with some everlasting peace. Only Immanuel can intimate forgiveness and remove the burden of guilt. He makes His presence felt, and sheds abroad His love in the hearts of His people. He makes His Word a living Word. It is only the Lord that has skill, love and power to “command deliverances for Jacob” (Psa. 44. 4).

“A feast is now prepared for thee,  
In spite of all thy unbelief;  
A feast of mercy, sweetly free  
For sinners and the sinners’ chief.”

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### THE GOD OF BETHEL

*Sermon preached by John Samuel Green at Gower Street Memorial  
Chapel, London, on Lord’s day morning, September 2nd, 1962*

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**Text:** “I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred” (Gen. 31. 13).

It is a great blessing indeed to be able to look back to some special time, some spot, where God has met with us in His great love and mercy, and given to us some word concerning our interest in His great salvation, and also given us inwardly to feel that God has a gracious and a merciful interest concerning our souls.

During the years now passed away, Jacob had been the subject of many changes. Things in some respects had become prosperous for him. He had had his trials and his difficulties, but the eye of God was ever upon him. And now God reminds him of a past blessing. And good it would be today, if the Lord should bring clearly and sweetly to our memory some time of real, sweet blessing that we have had in days past. And some of you, I believe, have had a real Bethel in the wilderness. Some of you, perhaps, are waiting for this blessing; you are praying for it day by day. You look at the blessing God gave to His servant Jacob, and your prayer is that God would give you some such like blessing, some spiritual Bethel, that you might, from time to time, look back to the spot, and to that blessing, and feel that to be a strength and support to you for the future.

It was a wonderful condescension on God’s part when He met with Jacob. He was alone, going a way that he had not gone heretofore. It appears that he had, that night, one of the choicest blessings of the whole of his life. And so with some of us here, I trust, during the week there has been a looking back according to the commandment Word, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee” (Deut. 8. 2). There are times when our sins and our unbelief seem to obliterate these past blessings, when we cannot view them as we once did. We need the Lord to come and bless us again. We need a word from Him, as Jacob did on this occasion.

But it is a comfort sometimes to God’s people to remember that their God never forgets, although they sometimes do. And in our text we are

reminded that God heard all that went on in the heart of Jacob, how that place was so very, very sacred to him, although alone and a good distance from home, so that he called it Bethel – that is, the house of God. It was to him a solemn, sacred spot. He felt, How solemn and how sacred is this place, this spot, where I have been sleeping. And I believe Jacob had a blessed revelation of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in that ladder, which was set up from earth to heaven, upon which the angels of God were ascending and descending. Jacob had a sweet, clear view of how the Lord can and does communicate His blessings to His people.

Jacob also had a sweet, clear view of the way in which unworthy sinners can approach that great, almighty God. And I do feel this is the blessing of blessings to God's people. They may receive some blessed helps by the way; they may get spiritual comforts; they may feel that God has a purpose of love and mercy towards them; but O that time when a poor, unworthy, sin-oppressed, tempted, harassed sinner gets this sacred view of the Lord of life and glory! My dear friends, this will ever really stand out in your experience. It will be a blessed foundation to your hope, a support to you in the most difficult things that come in your life. And when death at last confronts you, this blessing, this revelation you had of the Lord Jesus Christ, will bear you up and support you sweetly through death.

“I am the God of Bethel.” Is it not wonderful to feel that God has been the God of your richest and most sacred blessing here on earth, and that He has not forgotten it? He very kindly and graciously puts His dear people in remembrance of it. So Jacob saw by precious faith how God can have to do with a sinner, an unworthy sinner, and how an unworthy sinner can have to do with God. What a wonderful Person is the Lord Jesus Christ! What should we do, but for Him and His work of love and grace? God could only look upon us in our sins, in His just anger, and consign us to everlasting perdition. But now He looks upon His Anointed, He looks upon the Son of His love, the Friend of sinners, the Mediator of the new covenant, and for His sake He blesses unworthy sinners, and they have to do with Him. And sometimes He breathes into their hearts that sacred Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, “Abba, Father.” And God owns them as His children for Jesus' sake.

Now this, and much more, was what Jacob saw on this memorable night. And some of you here have been so blessed. Your heart has rejoiced; all the prejudice you might have had towards the Person and work of this glorious Redeemer was completely broken down, and by the arm of faith you embraced Him, you loved Him and you worshipped Him; and you anticipated the day when faith will be changed to sight, and you will see Him as He is.

But at Bethel, there was something more. This man received a heavenly blessing, a blessing direct from God. And that is what we need!

Our friends wish us well. They pray for us, but they cannot give us a real blessing. But our God can and He does – not for any worth or worthiness in His Jacobs, no – but on account of His rich and His sovereign mercy. And He gave to Jacob at Bethel a wonderful promise. “And, behold, I am with thee” (Gen. 28. 15). Could one setting forth in life have a greater blessing? One taking any particular step in life – could they possibly have a greater blessing than this? O that we had more grace to look more closely at the blessings God can bestow, that we might seek them more earnestly, and thus honour Him!

So at Bethel, God said to His servant Jacob, “And, behold, I am with thee.” O to have the Lord’s presence, to have His blessing, to feel that He is near at hand! My friends, what else really matters? Nothing. On the other hand, we may have every earthly blessing we could imagine, and yet not have God with us, being a stranger to the God of Bethel. And how poor are they who have the things of this world, but who have no spiritual Bethel, who have never had a word from God! I do not envy them. I feel sorry for them. But I do sometimes trust I can rejoice with those who have had a real, spiritual Bethel to their souls.

“Behold, I am with thee.” Surely, Jacob, you will never forget this; surely this will help you through the worst; surely thou wilt have no doubts, no fears, no unbelief, when God has spoken so personally, so clearly to thee? It does appear that Jacob had become much taken up with other things. His eye was upon earthly prosperity. It seems to a great extent that he did forget the God of Bethel. And what about you, my friends? Have you not sometimes forgotten the God who has been so gracious to you? This word came to me in the night: “Now arise, get thee out from this land.” Jacob must arise. The time of his departure had come, and he must leave these idolatrous people, and he must return to that sacred place where the Lord blessed him.

Perhaps there may be some dear friend this morning, who has been much held down to this poor earth, and to the things of time and sense. They may have occupied too much of your time. The time has come for you to arise, to leave these other things, and to return to your God, to return to the God of Bethel, and recall to your mind what the Lord was then pleased to speak to your heart. How we do forget sometimes! How unbelief seems to creep over us and to hide the blessings that the Lord has given to us!

And so it may be, my friends, you must, as helped, go over things once more, as Jacob did, and recall to your mind what the Lord was pleased to speak to you. Jeremiah, in his Lamentations says, “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope” (Lam. 3. 21). And a blessed thing it is to be enabled to recall to one’s mind a few of the things God has spoken to us! That will strengthen your hope, and will help you again to make progress in your journey.

So the God of Bethel says, "And, behold, I am with thee." And when God gives a word like that, you may be sure the one who receives it will need it. There will be that opposition; there will be those trials. In their way they will come across their Labans who will oppose them and seek to do much against them, as Laban did literally against Jacob. He did not care a scrap for his religion. No; Laban was after his flocks; he was after their fleece. That was the truth. Jacob could go anywhere, could fare anyhow; Laban was not concerned about him. But Laban had to confess that he observed that the Lord dealt well with him for Jacob's sake. God's people find, as they journey on, that they come across their Labans, who have no interest in them, and they find they need God very mercifully to fulfil the promise given at Bethel. It may be during the past week some have felt a particular need for the Lord to fulfil some word that He had given to them years ago. And the Lord does come when, as our text says, we obey and rise up and do what the Lord commands. Then again we feel the sweetness and the blessedness of our Bethel.

And God gave Jacob another word on that memorable night, and He said, "And will keep thee in all places whither thou goest" (Gen. 28. 15). What a comprehensive blessing! "In all places." Wherever Jacob might go, whatever trials he might have to endure, the Lord's eye would be upon him and the Lord would keep him. Have not some of us felt the need of the fulfilment of our Bethel promise? I am sure we have. I believe before coming up here as pastor, the Lord did speak to me and gave me a word, but it has sometimes been severely tried. I believe, before ever venturing out into the ministry, the Lord gave me such clear credentials that I could not doubt His word. But, my friends, it has been severely tried. I have sometimes had a thousand fears lest I should live too long for my religion, and my poor ministry would come to an end. I live to prove that we need spiritually to arise, we need to go back to our Bethels. What a mercy that God does not forget, that He does sometimes put His people in sweet remembrance of His former blessings!

So, poor, tried child of God, perhaps today you must look back a bit, as the Lord helps you; you have to do with a faithful God. The God of Bethel is a very faithful God, and nothing can ever come to prevent Him from keeping a promise given to His people. Not even all their sins, and all their wanderings, will prevent the God of Bethel from keeping His word. But there must be this arising. There must be this venturing, as it were, upon the Lord. There must be this supplicating and pleading with Him. Not, as I have said, that God forgets. And that has been a wonderful thought to me, that God remembers. But there must be this arising. There must be this leaving of those things which have held us too firmly. We must lay these things down.

And He promised Jacob, "And will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." O what a promise! What a word! And God did fulfil that

word, and watched over His servant, because He loved him. His thoughts towards Jacob were thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give him an expected end (see Jer. 29. 11).

Then God gave to His servant another promise, after the years had passed away, after Jacob had had trials and difficulties, after some had risen up who were against him. Then, God says, "I ... will bring thee again into this land." So our text speaks of the appointed time having come when Jacob must arise. And he must return to that place. It appears he was quite ready, quite prepared to do it. And when God thus speaks to him, he yields obedience to God's commands. He quickly gathers up all that he had, and he begins to return.

That may be so with some of you who have felt to be in a backsliding state and condition. The Lord has spoken to you. You have obeyed His word and His voice, and now there is that returning to the Lord. There is a willingness to leave the poor, perishing things of this world, and you long to get near to the Lord. You long for His real blessing. You seek once more His smile and that fellowship and communion with Him. O what a good God He is! How thankful His Jacobs should be that He puts them in remembrance, that He does sometimes give them a word! It may be a word, almost, it seems, of rebuke, a word that is not very palatable to our poor nature. But it is a good word. And the Lord meets with us in the trial and in the difficulty, and we get back to Bethel. Sweet spot! A blessed spot to get back to! Now the Lord's people sometimes do recall by God's grace the time of their first love. And again it produces such sweet assurance, such comfort! The child of God says,

"His love in time past forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink."

Faith and hope spring up in the ever-faithful and unchangeable God of Jacob.

He said to Jacob, "For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Amen.

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## RESURRECTION OF THE BODIES OF THE JUST

*An extract from John Bunyan (1628-1688)*

I. The just must arise, because Christ is risen from the dead. Christ is the Head of the just, and they are the members of His body, and because of this union, therefore the just must arise. This is the apostle's own argument: "If Christ," saith he, "be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen"

(1 Cor. 15. 12, 13). Now, I say, the reason why the apostle thus argueth the resurrection from the dead, by the resurrection of Christ, is because the saints, of whose resurrection he here chiefly discourseth, are in their bodies, as well as in their souls, the members of Christ. "Know ye not," saith he, "that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor. 6. 15). A very weighty argument; for if a good man be a member of Christ, then he must either be raised out of his grave, or else sin and death must have power over a member of Christ. I say again, if this body be not raised, then also Christ is not a complete conqueror over His enemies, forasmuch as death and the grave have still power over His members. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15. 26). Now, though Christ in His own Person hath a complete conquest over death, yet death hath still power over the bodies of all that are in their graves. Now, I say, Christ being considered with relation to His members, then He hath not yet a complete conquest over death, neither will He, until they every one be brought forth of their graves; for then, and not till then, shall that saying be every way fulfilled, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15. 54).

II. As there must be a resurrection of the just, because Christ is their Head and they His members: so also, because the body of the saints, as well as their soul, is the purchase of Christ's blood. "Ye are bought with a price," saith Paul; "therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6. 20). Christ will not lose the purchase of His blood. O death, saith Christ, I will have them; O grave, I will make thee let them go; "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." I have bought them, and they shall be Mine. "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction" (Hos. 13. 14). I say, though the power of the grave be invincible, and death be "the king of terrors" (Job. 18. 14), yet He who hath the "keys of hell and of death" at His girdle (see Rev. 1. 18), to Him belongeth the issues from death. "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death" (Psa. 68. 20), and we, the price of His blood, shall be delivered.

III. As the body is the member of Christ, and the price of His blood, so it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in us. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you ... and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6. 19). The body is no such ridiculous thing in the account of Christ as it was in the account of the Sadducees. "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body," and that not only in this world, but that which is to come; wherefore He saith, "God hath both raised up the Lord [Jesus], and will also raise up us by His own power" (1 Cor. 6. 13, 14). That is, as He hath raised up the body of Christ, so will He raise up ours also by Christ.

IV. The bodies of the just must arise again, because of that similitude that must be betwixt the body of the Lord Jesus Christ and the bodies of the saints. “When He shall appear, we shall be like Him” (1 John 3. 2). Now we have it abundantly manifest in Scripture, that the body of the Lord Jesus was raised out of the grave, caught up into heaven, and that it ever remaineth in the holiest of all, a glorified body (see Luke 24. 3-7; 36-43; John 20. 24-28; Acts 1. 2-11; 2. 31; 17. 31, 32; Mark 16. 6, 7, 19; Heb. 10. 12).

Now, I say, it would be very strange to me if Christ should be raised, ascended and glorified in that body, and yet that His people should be with Him, no otherwise than in their spirits; especially seeing that He in His resurrection is said to be but “the firstborn from the dead,” and “the firstfruits of them that slept” (Col. 1. 18; 1 Cor. 15. 20). For we know that a first-begotten doth imply more sons, and that firstfruits do foreshow an after-crop; wherefore we conclude, that “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Cor. 15. 22, 23).

And hence it is that the Scripture saith, He “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. 3. 21). And hence it is again, that the day of Christ is said to be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, and of the redemption of our body (see Rom. 8. 18-24). For then shall the saints of God not only be, but appear as their Saviour, being delivered from their graves, as He is from His, and glorified in their bodies, as He is in His.

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## FATALISM

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

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This article was written in answer to the following query:

“Recently a minister at chapel made the following statement: that he was not concerned about dwindling congregations, because those who are to be saved, will be saved, no matter how many missionaries go about preaching. Do you subscribe to this doctrine, which is definitely fatalism?”

Mr. Gosden replied:

The minister’s identity not being disclosed, our reply can be unprejudiced. We have no hesitation in saying that if the first observation was really in the terms alleged without any governing clause, it was most improper. Fatalism is the proper designation of such a sentiment. Not to be concerned about the low state of Zion, manifests, especially in a minister, either a condition of spiritual death, or at least most grievous torpor. The blessedness of those who mourn and are “sorrowful for the



solemn assembly” cannot apply to such. Moreover, seeing that the glory of God is definitely connected with the prosperity of the church and the fruitfulness of individual believers, where is the love of God in a heart unaffected by the sight of the desolation which overspreads the churches today? Even the Son of God wept over Jerusalem, notwithstanding He thanked His Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, because He had hid the things of the kingdom from the wise and prudent and had revealed them unto babes (see Matt. 11. 25; Luke 19. 41, 42). Not concerned? It was vastly different with Jeremiah when his eye affected his heart and he wept day and night without any intermission; Daniel also, who mourned and supplicated the Lord for His name’s sake to shine upon the sanctuary which was desolate (see Lam. 2 and 3; Dan. 9).

One perfectly and painfully realises the absolute impotence of mere human power to further or retard God’s work. His purpose must ever be unfrustrable [cannot be frustrated or thwarted], blessed be His holy name! Yet He condescends to use means in the development and execution of His eternal purpose of grace and mercy toward His elect. Often very feeble means the Lord Himself selects, in order that it may be seen that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man. Paul was no fatalist, but he fully believed in and taught the doctrine of election, even when as a “labourer together with God” he strove for the furtherance of the gospel and travailed in birth for the Galatians until Christ was formed in them. He did not complacently say in self-indulgence: God will have His own; but, knowing that to be blessedly true, laboured more abundantly than all others in preaching the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ. Knowing that their work would not be in vain in the Lord, he entreated the Corinthians to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15. 58). He was not unconcerned, but sought by any means to provoke to emulation some Israelites, and might thus save some of them (see Rom. 11. 14). It is greatly to be feared that there are not a few preachers who are not “labourers together with God,” and whose motive in emphasising divine sovereignty is rather to indulge sloth than to exalt that solemn attribute of the eternal God.

Dependence upon the Lord’s gracious promises rather energises than stifles faith and prayer. Fatalism, that cold, loveless principle, enervates [weakens] while it lulls into indifferent security by the misuse of divine truth. When the psalmist said, “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Psa. 127. 1), he did not discourage diligence or inculcate [urge] sloth, but sought to correct self-dependence and to stimulate watchful prayer and faith in the Lord’s promised help. Gideon’s appeal to the Lord (see Judg. 6. 13) manifested not indifference, but anxiety of faith concerning the promised deliverance of Israel, in effecting which he was shown that he was an honoured instrument employed of the Lord, and lest Israel vaunt themselves against the Lord, saying their own

hand saved them, the army was reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred. Micah was not indifferent when, filled with woe because of the desolations in Zion, he waited upon and for the Lord in penitence and vigour of faith under all his anxiety (chapter 7). David, deprecating his own sin and loss, pleading for the Holy Spirit, was not unconcerned for Jerusalem: "Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem" (Psa. 51. 18). Zechariah did not discharge the people from their work when he prophesied that the building was "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD" (Zech. 4. 6). He and Haggai, with Zerubbubal, Jeshua, and the people together wrought the more earnestly, in spite of opposition, because (as Haggai assured them) the Spirit would remain with them according to God's covenant. And we read that the work prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah. Yet it did not prosper by merely assenting to God's prophets, but through believing obedience to the direction: "Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you" (Hag. 2. 4). This represented not carnal activity, but spiritual obedience.

*(To be concluded)*

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## THE TWO NATURES

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Cranbrook  
November 20th 1871

My dear Friend,

Give my love to your mother, with warmest thanks, and may the Lord reward her for her kindness to His poor servant. I know it gave you pleasure to forward it, and I am glad of the Lord's kindness towards you.

I am helped in speaking, and the Lord keeps me faithful.

I feel that your complaints are the exercises of a living soul.

May the Lord lift upon you the light of His countenance, and give you peace.

"Did Jesus once upon *thee* shine?  
Then Jesus is for ever *thine*."

Sin is a restless devil in my flesh, that can't and won't be quiet; but I feel from time to time that the spirit lusteth against it. I loathe, hate and abhor it, and am glad when I can believe my completeness and perfection in Him. It is a mercy to know, love and adore God in Christ, and for the Father to reveal His Son in us. No man can be a Pharisee, who deeply feels the fall, and no man can be an Antinomian, with the fear of God in his heart; but sin in ourselves, and in others, will bring many perplexities. I am humbled in gratitude, from time to time, with the Lord's great goodness and tender compassion toward me, the most unworthy of His

children, though I have room in my heart, affections and desires for all His people in heaven and earth, and feel pleasure from time to time in supplicating for those travelling home to heaven.

It is a mercy to be favoured, in singleness of eye and heart, to seek His glory and His people's good.

I thought of those words this afternoon: "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her" (Jer. 12. 9).

Saving religion hath only one true friend, and that is God, its Author. Sin hath marred everything and everybody. What discords and distractions it hath rent the world with! and yet there is nothing so befriended in the carnal mind; and no man so rejected and despised as the Man Christ Jesus.

I have felt earnest desires of late to be brought safely through. I would rather die than live to bring reproach. Life has ever been a struggle to the saints, but the milk and honey are beyond the wilderness.

In love to your circle, desiring the best of blessings might rest upon you and yours – I remain, yours affectionately,

Daniel Smart

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## OBSERVATIONS ON CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE

*An extract from John Owen (1616-1683)*

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An unseen glory accompanied Him in all that He did, in all that He suffered. Unseen it was unto the eyes of the world, but not in His who alone can judge of it. Had men seen it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Yet to some of them it was made manifest. Hence they testified that, in the discharge of His office, they "beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1. 14); and that when others could see neither form nor comeliness in Him that He should be desired (see Isa. 53. 2). And so it is at this day. I shall only make some few observations; first, on what He did in a way of *obedience*; and then on what He *suffered* in the discharge of His office so undertaken by Him.

1. *What He did*, what obedience He yielded unto the law of God in the discharge of His office (with respect whereunto He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God; yea, Thy law is in My heart"), (see Psa. 40. 7, 8 and Heb. 10. 7-9), it was all on His own free choice or election, and was resolved thereinto alone. It is our privilege to endeavour after freedom, willingness and cheerfulness in all our obedience. From the very constitution of our natures we are necessarily subject unto the law of God. All that is left unto us is a voluntary compliance with unavoidable commands, in which we fall short; with Him it was not so. An act of His own will and choice preceded all obligation as unto obedience. He

obeyed because He would, before because He ought. He said, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God,” before He was obliged to do that will. By His own choice, and that in an act of infinite condescension and love, as we have showed, He was “made of a woman,” and thereby “made under the law.” In His divine Person He was Lord of the law – above it – no more obnoxious [liable] unto its commands than its curse. Neither was He afterwards in Himself, on His own account, unobnoxious [not liable] unto its curse merely because He was innocent, but also because He was every way above the law itself, and all its force.

This was the original glory of His obedience. This wisdom, the grace, the love, the condescension that was in this choice, animated every act, every duty of His obedience – rendering it amiable in the sight of God, and useful unto us. So, when He went to John to be baptized, he, who knew He had no need of it on His own account, would have declined the duty of administering that ordinance unto Him; but He replied, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3. 15). This I have undertaken willingly, of My own accord, without any need of it for Myself, and therefore will discharge it. For Him, who was Lord of all universally, thus to submit Himself to universal obedience, carrieth along with it an evidence of glorious grace.

2. This obedience, as unto the use and end of it, was not for Himself, but *for us*. We were obliged unto it, and could not perform it; He was not obliged unto it any otherwise but by a free act of His own will, and did perform it. God gave Him this honour, that He should obey for the whole church – that by “His obedience many should be made righteous” (see Rom. 5. 19). Herein, I say, did God give Him honour and glory, that His obedience should stand in the stead of the perfect obedience of the church as unto justification.

3. His obedience being absolutely *universal*, and absolutely *perfect*, was the great representative of the holiness of God in the law. It was represented glorious when the ten words were written by the finger of God in tables of stone; it appears yet more eminently in the spiritual transcription of it in the hearts of believers; but absolutely and perfectly it is exemplified only in the holiness and obedience of Christ, which answered it unto the utmost. And this is no small part of His glory in obedience, that the holiness of God in the law was therein, and therein alone, in that one instance, as unto human nature, fully represented.

4. He wrought out this obedience against all *difficulties* and *oppositions*. For although He was absolutely free from that disorder which in us hath invaded our whole natures, which internally renders all obedience difficult unto us, and perfect obedience impossible; yet as unto opposition from without, in temptations, sufferings, reproaches,

contradictions, He met with more than we all. Hence is that glorious word, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5. 8). But –

5. The glory of this obedience ariseth principally from the consideration of the *Person* who thus yielded it unto God. This was no other but the Son of God made Man – God and Man in one Person. He who was in heaven, above all, Lord of all, at the same time lived in the world in a condition of no reputation, and a course of the strictest obedience unto the whole law of God. He unto whom prayer was made, prayed Himself night and day. He whom all the angels of heaven and all creatures worshipped, was continually conversant in all the duties of the worship of God. He who was over the house, diligently observed the meanest office of the house. He that made all men, in whose hand they are all as clay in the hand of the potter, observed amongst them the strictest rules of justice, in giving unto every one his due; and of charity, in giving good things that were not so due. This is that which renders the obedience of Christ in the discharge of His office both mysterious and glorious.

Again, the glory of Christ is proposed unto us in what He *suffered* in the discharge of the office which He had undertaken. There belonged, indeed, unto His office, victory, success, and triumph with great glory (see Isa. 63. 1-5), but there were sufferings also required of Him antecedently thereunto: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24. 26).

But such were these sufferings of Christ, as that in our thoughts about them our minds quickly recoil in a sense of their insufficiency to conceive aright of them. Never anyone launched into this ocean with his meditations, but he quickly found himself unable to fathom the depths of it; nor shall I here undertake an inquiry into them. I shall only point at this spring of glory, and leave it under a veil.

We might here look on Him as under the weight of the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; taking on Himself, and on His whole soul, the utmost of evil that God had ever threatened to sin or sinners. We might look on Him in His agony and bloody sweat, in His strong cries and supplications, when He was sorrowful unto the death, and began to be amazed, in apprehensions of the things that were coming on Him – of that dreadful trial which He was entering into. We might look upon Him conflicting with all the powers of darkness, the rage and madness of men – suffering in His soul, His body, His name, His reputation, His goods, His life; some of these sufferings being immediate from God above, others from devils and wicked men, acting according to the determinate counsel of God. We might look on Him praying, weeping, crying out, bleeding, dying – in all things making "His soul an offering for sin"; so

was He “taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression” saith God, “of My people was He stricken” (Isa. 53. 10, 8). But these things I shall not insist on in particular, but leave them under such a veil as may give us a prospect into them, so far as to fill our souls with holy admiration.

Lord, “what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” (Psa. 8. 4). “Who hath known thy mind, or who hath been thy counsellor? O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (see Rom. 11. 33, 34). What shall we say unto these things? That God spared not His only Son, but gave Him up unto death, and all the evils included therein, for such poor, lost sinners as we were – that for our sakes the eternal Son of God should submit Himself unto all the evils that our natures are obnoxious [liable] unto, and that our sins had deserved, that we might be delivered!

How glorious is the Lord Christ on this account, in the eyes of believers! When Adam had sinned, and thereby eternally, according unto the sanction of the law, ruined himself and all his posterity, he stood ashamed, afraid, trembling, as one ready to perish for ever, under the displeasure of God. Death was that which he had deserved, and immediate death was that which he looked for. In this state the Lord Christ in the promise comes unto him, and says, Poor creature! How woeful is thy condition! how deformed is thy appearance! What is become of the beauty, of the glory of that image of God wherein thou wast created? how hast thou taken on thee the monstrous shape and image of Satan? And yet thy present misery, thy entrance into dust and darkness, is no way to be compared with what is to ensue. Eternal distress lies at the door. But yet look up once more, and behold Me, that thou mayest have some glimpse of what is in the designs of infinite wisdom, love and grace. Come forth from thy vain shelter, thy hiding place. I will put Myself into thy condition.\* I will undergo and bear that burden of guilt and punishment which would sink thee eternally into the bottom of hell. I will pay that which I never took, and be made *temporally* a curse for thee, that thou mayest attain unto *eternal* blessedness. To the same purpose He speaks unto convinced sinners, in the invitation He gives them to come unto Him.

Thus is the Lord Christ set forth in the gospel, “evidently ... crucified” before our eyes (Gal. 3. 1) – namely, in the representation that is made of His glory, in the sufferings He underwent for the discharge of the office He had undertaken. Let us, then, behold Him as poor, despised, persecuted, reproached, reviled, hanged on a tree – in all,

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\* Sin excepted. Ed.

labouring under a sense of the wrath of God due unto our sins. Unto this end are they recorded in the gospel – read, preached and represented unto us. But what can we see herein? – what glory is in these things? Are not these the things which all the world of Jews and Gentiles stumbled and took offence at? – those wherein He was appointed to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence? Was it not esteemed a foolish thing, to look for help and deliverance by the miseries of another? – to look for life by His death? The apostle declares at large that such it was esteemed (1 Cor. 1). So was it in the wisdom of the world. But even on the account of these things is He honourable, glorious, and precious in the sight of them that do believe (see 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7). For even herein He was “the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1. 24). And the apostle declares at large the grounds and reasons of the different thoughts and apprehensions of men concerning the cross and sufferings of Christ (see 2 Cor. 4. 3-6).

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### A BLESSING WHILE AT WORK

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The Square, Framlingham,  
Woodbridge, Suffolk.  
June 28th, 1934

Dear Sister,

No doubt you will be surprised to hear from me so early, but I had a love visit from my Lord this morning – something I have not had for years. I hope I am not presumptuous, but speaking only what God has wrought in me by the Holy Ghost.

“Why should the wonders He has wrought  
Be lost in silence and forgot?”

Whilst I was behind the counter, all alone, these words came to me with power: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” I had a melting time, and a humbling time with my Lord, and tears of joy ran down my cheeks. I had a job to keep customers from seeing them. I had to ask the question, “What me, Lord? a vile sinner like me? I am not worthy of it.” Also these words came with power: “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

“True religion’s more than notion;  
Something must be known and felt.”

What a vast deal of so-called religion there is abroad in the world,  
which is only dead!

“Have I union  
To the church’s living Head?”

I do bless God for keeping the spark alive in my soul. If it had been of my own kindling, it would have died out long ago, but having begun a good work in a poor sinner’s soul, He will complete it. I hope I am not boasting in speaking thus, but such wonders lay me low in the dust. I am glad you got on with Percy Laver.\* I like to know God’s servants are growing in grace. Kindest love from us all to you all,

Your loving brother,

Walter Hartley

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### TURNING TO THE RISEN SAVIOUR

*An extract from a sermon on John 20. 16, 17, preached at Inverness in 1932, by Malcolm Gillies (1885-1945), pastor at Stornoway.*

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Mary was coming unto Him “as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious” (1 Pet. 2. 4). The emptiness of the tomb, and that the Saviour was not in it, made Mary mourn. Many a poor soul mourns because of the emptiness of his poor heart. There is so little of Christ in it, so little of the grace of faith and hope and love in the empty tomb of their own heart. But, ah dear friends, the word of the Saviour is an all-prevailing word. He turns the soul away from itself.

His voice is all-prevailing, and O that our souls would hear His all-prevailing voice; *and O that our souls would hear His all-prevailing voice this evening.* He said unto her, “Mary.” She turned herself and put her back to the angels, and set herself in all her need before Him who spoke, and not only did she turn herself, but she said, “My Master.” She said, “Rabboni” – Master, and not only Master, but, “My Master.” There is that in the word of Him who is the resurrection. There is in it the power and grace which not only enables the soul to turn altogether to Christ, but it enables the faculties of the soul to embrace the Lord as the soul’s portion, as the soul’s Master, as the Saviour, as the All in all. And ah, what a thanksgiving Mary Magdalene began here. Although she had a long fast, when she found her Lord who was dead, but who is now alive, and alive for evermore, having the keys of hell and death in His hand, then she began her thanksgiving which we believe she had more or less all her life, and now she is keeping a thanksgiving day in glory. It

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\* Percy Oliver Laver later became the pastor at Providence Chapel, Rotherfield, East Sussex, from October 1941 to October 1969.



is there the Lord's people have the perfect thanksgiving day when they get to heaven, but they have and they ought to have a thanksgiving day for a risen Christ and for grace in the midst of their temptations and trials, for Christ is risen from the dead and has all the power.

His word was so effectual that it made a willing conquest of Mary. He captivated her. She was delivered from darkness and unbelief. She was begotten again, as the apostle puts it: "Begotten us again unto a lively hope." She was a woman in whose heart the work of righteousness had begun, but at the resurrection there was begotten in her a lively hope, and, ah dear friends, that is the basic cause we have for thanksgiving, that there is such a Saviour, and that He is one that can speak to your own cold, black heart. If He spoke to your heart one day there was something of the same effect as it had when He spoke to Mary Magdalene's heart, and this is what you would like tonight for yourself and for every other sinner in Inverness, that He who is the resurrection and the life would speak to your own heart, and to the heart of others.

The last thing is this: the guidance that was in the word of Him who is the resurrection. He put an end to her sorrows, brought her night to an end and brought in the day. The Sun of righteousness arose with healing in His wings upon her soul. She was not to be left without guidance. The Lord does not give life and does not maintain that life that He gives in order that it might be spent ruthlessly [without pity or compassion]. Each one of His children are heirs of salvation. They are sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. They are kings and priests unto God. They must learn the rules of the kingdom while they are children. Therefore, He said, "Touch Me not." Mary Magdalene could spend all her time at the feet of Christ. She would remain there enjoying fellowship with her risen Lord, and she would deem her time well spent at His feet.

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## THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER

### CHAPTER 14

#### A GREAT HIGH PRIEST

##### **Blessing the People**

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

*(Continued from page 85)*

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And what a matter this is of living, daily experience, so as to make the presence of Jesus at the right hand of the Father no mere doctrine seen in the letter of truth, but a very fountain of spiritual life in the heart. How continually, how, in deep trouble, almost unceasingly, is the poor, tried, tempted and afflicted child of God, looking up to this merciful and faithful High Priest and begging of Him to appear and bless his soul!

This is all that he needs. For the Lord Himself to bless him comprises every desire of his heart. One word, one look, one touch, one manifestation of His love and blood, is all that he wants. But if he did not see Him by the eye of faith at the right hand of the Father, and able to bless him with the blessing that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it, would his prayers, desires, tears and supplications be so directed toward Him? If, too, at times he has been blessed with a sweet sense of His presence and His love, he cannot rest satisfied without some fresh manifestation of these blessings to his soul.

And how fully adapted and divinely qualified He is to communicate these rich blessings; for God, by exalting Him to His own right hand, has “made Him most blessed for ever,” or as we read in the margin, “set Him to be blessings” (Psa. 21. 6). He has prevented Him (or, as the word means, anticipated Him in His wishes and petitions) “with the blessings of goodness,” and set “a crown of pure gold on His head.” This is the reward of His sufferings, for “His glory is great in His salvation,” and therefore “honour and majesty hast Thou laid upon Him” (Psa. 21. 5). And does He not deserve it all? Has He not “obtained eternal redemption for us”? (Heb. 9. 12); and is He not “of God ... made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”? (1 Cor. 1. 30). Is He not “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10. 4), and “the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him”? (Heb. 5. 9).

How, then, can we doubt that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him? For what is there which He has not done for their salvation in His finished work? and what is there which He cannot do in the application of that finished work to their heart? For we need His present help as well as His present obedience. When the soul, then, sinks low into trouble or dejection; when troops of sins come to view, like so many gaunt spectres of the past; when innumerable backslidings, slips and falls crowd in upon the conscience, bringing guilt and fear in their train, how the cast-down spirit will sometimes look at and ponder over the various cases of those sinners of every shape, and hue, and dye, whose salvation, without money and without price, is recorded in the Word of truth. How it looks, for instance, at a sinning David, a blood-stained Manasseh, a dying thief, a returning prodigal, a weeping Mary Magdalene, a denying Peter, a persecuting Saul, a trembling jailer, the Jerusalem sinners who killed the Prince of life. And as it views these self-condemned, self-aborred sinners, so freely accepted, so everlastingly saved, how it looks up to the Lord of life and glory that it may receive similar blessings out of His fulness.

It is in this and similar ways that a communication is kept up with the risen and ascended Lord upon His throne of grace. And as He, in

answer to prayer, from time to time drops down an encouraging word into the soul, each fresh discovery of His Person and work, of His beauty and blessedness, of His grace and glory, raises up renewed actings of faith, strengthens a lively hope, and draws forth every tender affection of the heart to flow unto and centre in Him. Seeing light in His light, and how rich and free His blessings are, it cries out with Jabez of old, "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed." An "indeed" blessing is what the soul is seeking after which has ever felt the misery and bitterness of sin, and ever tasted the sweetness of God's salvation. And these "indeed" blessings are seen to be spiritual and eternal.

Compared with such blessings as these, it sees how vain and empty are all earthly things, what vain toys, what idle dreams, what passing shadows. It wonders at the folly of men in hunting after such vain shows, and spending time, health, money, life itself, in a pursuit of nothing but misery and destruction. Every passing bell that it hears, every corpse borne slowly along to the grave that it sees, impresses it with solemn feelings as to the state of those who live and die in their sins. Thus it learns more and more to contrast time with eternity, earth with heaven, sinners with saints, and professors with possessors. By these things it is taught, with Baruch, not "to seek great things" for itself (see Jer. 45. 5), but real things – things which will outlast time, and fit it for eternity. It is thus brought to care little for the opinion of men as to what is good or great, but much for what God has stamped His own approbation upon, such as a tender conscience, a broken heart, a contrite spirit, a humble mind, a separation from the world and everything worldly, submission to His holy will, a meek endurance of the cross, a conformity to Christ's suffering image, and a living to God's glory. Compared with spiritual blessings like these, it sees how vain and deceptive is a noisy profession, a presumptuous confidence, a sound creed in the letter of truth, without an experience of its life and power; and afraid of being deceived and deluded, as thousands are, it is made to prize the least testimony from the Lord's own lips that its heart is right before Him.

Looking around then, as with freshly-enlightened eyes, it sees how the world is filled with sin and sorrow; how God's original curse on the earth has embittered every earthly good; how it has marred the nearest and dearest social relationships; how trial and affliction, losses, crosses, bereavements, vexations and disappointments enter every home, and especially that where God is feared; how, amid these scenes of sorrow and trouble, all human help or hope is vain, that it is dying in a dying world, and must soon pass away from this time state, where all is shadow, into eternity, where all is substance. As, then, the gracious Lord is pleased to indulge it with some discovery of Himself, shedding abroad

a sweet sense of His goodness and mercy, atoning blood and dying love, it is made to long more and more for the manifestation of those blessings which alone are to be found in Him. For His blessings are not like the mere temporal mercies which we enjoy at His hands, all of which perish in the using, but are for ever and ever, and when once given are never taken away. They thus become earnest and foretastes of eternal joys, for they are absolutely irreversible. When Isaac had once blessed Jacob in God's name, though the blessing had been obtained by guile, yet having been once given, it could not be recalled. He said therefore to Esau, "I ... have blessed him ... and he shall be blessed" (Gen. 27. 33). So when the Lord has blessed His people with any of those spiritual blessings which are stored up in His inexhaustible fulness, these blessings are like Himself, unchanging and unchangeable, for He is in one mind and none can turn Him; "The same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Those whom He loves, He loves to the end, and His gifts and calling are without repentance (see Rom. 11. 29), for He never repents of having bestowed them, as everlasting love is their unvarying, unceasing source.

But these blessings have more than the sweetness of their present communication. They stretch forward as well as reach backward; look into eternity to come, as well as from eternity past. By their communication and manifestation His people are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, for these blessings have a sweet, sanctifying influence. Thus believers in Jesus are said to rejoice in Him "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1. 8), and having a hope of seeing Him as He is, to purify themselves "even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 3).

Spiritual blessings are not like mere doctrinal opinions, which often leave a man just where they found him – a slave to sin, self, Satan and the world. They have a blessed, sanctifying influence upon the heart. They prepare the soul for glory. They are earnest and foretastes of it, and are an enjoyment beforehand on earth of the delights of heaven. Thus their effect is to separate the heart with its affections from the world; to subdue and crucify a worldly spirit; to mortify pride and covetousness; to cause the conscience to be tender and alive in the fear of God; to make sin exceedingly sinful, its remembrance bitter, and its indulgence dreaded; to draw forth a spirit of prayer and supplication; to open up the Scriptures in their spiritual meaning; to encourage holy meditation; to feed the soul with choice fruit out of the Word of truth; to breathe into it that spirit of faith which gives life and feeling to every gracious movement Godward, and in a word, to communicate, maintain and keep alive that inward holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

Can earth show a more blessed sight than a believer upon his knees before the throne of grace, looking up to the most blessed Lord at the

right hand of the Father, and his sympathising High Priest looking down upon him with love in His heart, pity in His eye, and blessings in His hand? These are, indeed, for the most part but rare seasons, and are often sadly broken through and interrupted by coldness, carnality and death. But it is only in this way, however long the interval or dark the mind in the intermediate season, that fellowship is maintained with Jesus as the great High Priest over the house of God, and He experimentally made the soul's all in all.

*(To be concluded)*

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Jan Hus - Reformation in Bohemia**, by Oscar Kuhns and Robert Dickie; paperback; 208 pages; price £9.75 plus postage; published by the Reformation Press and obtainable from their web site ([www.reformationpress.co.uk](http://www.reformationpress.co.uk)) and Christian bookshops. Also available as an e-book (price £3.25).

Jan Hus (more often known by his anglicised name, John Huss) was an early reformer living between the times of John Wycliffe and Martin Luther. Born in Bohemia in 1369, and training for the Roman Catholic priesthood, in 1402 he became rector of Prague University and then preacher at Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. Influenced by the works of Wycliffe, he soon became known for his knowledge of the Scriptures, his godly and blameless life and his temperate and yet forceful preaching in contending for scriptural principles and denouncing the degeneracy and ecclesiastical corruption in the Church of Rome. Such faithfulness could not be tolerated by a religious hierarchy wedded to such corruption, and in the end he was burnt at the stake in 1415. His reforming influence lasted long after his death.

This book was written by Oscar Kuhns and originally published in 1907. The current edition has been edited and annotated by Dr. Robert Dickie with helpful footnotes and "thumbnail biographies" of the principal characters associated with the life of Jan Hus. Although little is known of the early life of Hus, this book gives a captivating historical account of the effect of his life and witness. It begins with a survey of the political, social and religious conditions prevailing at the time, and concludes with a summary of his influence in the wars which followed, sadly some between rival factions of those who claimed allegiance to Hus, but who manifested little of the grace which was so clearly seen in him whom they professed to follow. It is not a spiritual book, but Hus's own correspondence and writings bear eloquent testimony to him as a humble man of God, though still entangled in false doctrines he had been brought up to receive.

We recommend this book, especially to our younger friends, that they may know something of the history of our godly forefathers, and the terrible cost by which many of our present liberties were purchased, which are now being solemnly despised by the present generation.

John A. Kingham, Luton

## OBITUARY

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**Gordon Seymour**, minister of the gospel, pastor of the Australian Strict Baptist churches for twenty years and previously pastor at Providence Chapel, Staplehurst, for thirteen years, died on January 23rd, 2017 aged 88.

Gordon wrote some details of his life and this forms the first part of this obituary.

“Having been spared to reach my fourscore years through God’s longsuffering and patience towards such a sinner, I desire to write a few things for the encouragement of the following generations, to the honour and glory of God through Christ Jesus.

“I need to be kept from presumption and trust the Lord will be my Remembrancer of the many events in my life.

“On reflection, I was privileged to have been born to parents who had been brought up among the Strict and Particular Baptists. Bramble Reed Lane, Matfield, was where I was born, and the chapel in that village was my parents’ place of worship.

“There was a split (around 1938) and some went to East Peckham and opened up an empty chapel there, which had been closed in earlier years. My parents left and followed the minister and others to the newly-opened chapel.

“This involved travel difficulties, especially on a Sunday, and the war clouds were threatening (which commenced on September 3rd, 1939), so a local carrier was used, which was very basic. The lorry which was used to get us there had temporary seating down each side in the back and a ladder was necessary for the people to climb up into it. There was one seat next to the driver and that was reserved for the minister. Petrol became rationed and those who had cars were restricted as to their use. Bus services did not commence running before 1p.m., and then their services were cut back further.

“Because of the proximity of Kent to the English Channel, and following the fall of France to the German forces, the county was split up into different areas of defence in case of an invasion. Therefore we had to pass a check point on the way to East Peckham, and if I remember rightly, identity cards were checked and the reason for travel had to be given, and we had to say where we were intending to go, before letting us through.

“As I grew up, I found nothing to hold my attention to going to chapel, especially when it seemed so tedious to travel all that way. I only went because my mother pressed me to go with my brothers. Then as I became more self-willed, I stopped going, although I sometimes went to the local church. I went to a local youth club, and one Sunday it was

arranged to have a day out to the Brands Hatch racing track. O dear! What a dreadful day it was to me. The smell of burning oil and the noise made me feel so sick, I hated it. As I look back, I realise how the Lord was in this and other things that I did also, which were contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures.

“When I became 18, although serving an apprenticeship, I went for my medical for National Service. To my surprise, I was classified as grade 3 and therefore not fit for service. However, at 20, I completed the apprenticeship and volunteered to join the R.A.F. To my delight, I was accepted and joined up in April 1949. All this to get away from my mother’s apron strings. Cardington in Bedfordshire was where we were kitted out and thence to Melksham, Wiltshire for initial training; back to Henlow, Bedfordshire for passing out parade, and then to Yatesbury, Wiltshire, for training in radar maintenance and servicing.

“Following a posting to Middle Wallop in Hampshire, I was among many who were posted overseas to Malta, staying in a transit camp for a few days. The first Sunday out there in the transit camp, I was in the billet and such an aching void came over me that I had forsaken God, and with it the exercise that I must venture to attend the camp church service – also a desire to go back to the courts of God once I returned home.

“I was then posted to a radar station in South East Malta, which was named Ta-Silch (which means ‘hill of ice,’ and it was an old Turkish fort), arriving in September 1950. From then on I found there was a Methodist church in the Valletta area of Malta where service personnel and their families joined for worship. I was not fully convinced of my sins, but felt comfortable in hearing the elderly minister at the church. After a year out there, I was requested to go home to act as best man for my older brother’s wedding. I travelled overland from Malta to Sicily and up through Italy via Rome, Paris, Calais, Dover, London and down to Kent.

“I said to my mother, I would go to East Peckham with her, which I did, and met there my first wife-to-be. It was hard going back to Malta, but I soon settled down and our friendship came to a halt. I looked forward to Sundays to be at the church at Valletta, as there was a kindred spirit and desire to worship God.

“Shortly before our due return to England after two-and-a-half years in the island, the Maltese driver was driving the truck up the steep hill to our camp, when he caught the edge of the kerb and almost tipped the truck over the embankment, which would have meant severe injuries or even death, as we would have rolled over and over, and the boxes we were carrying would have fallen upon us. Then, on the flight previous to ours, taking men back to England at the end of their term overseas, they had a crash. How we can look back and say, ‘All my times are in Thy hand, all events at Thy command.’

“On returning to England, my friendship was renewed with Mary (Tompsett) and in due time we were engaged to be married. It was to be hoped that for my last year in the R.A.F., I would get a home posting nearer to my family in Kent, but not so. I was sent up to Sheffield in Yorkshire and it was virtually a waste of time, as the thing we had been trained for was not put in use for all that time. However, in time, I returned to live at home and was able to attend chapel at East Peckham. We got married in November 1954 and we lived at the in-laws’ home, as my mother-in-law was bedridden and was dependant upon her daughter to care for her, with help from her sisters.

“Soon after being married, and going to an anniversary service at East Peckham, when Mr. Tyler of Dicker was preaching, he quoted these words,

‘How stands the case, my soul, with thee?  
For heaven are thy credentials clear?  
Is Jesus’ blood thine only plea?  
Is He thy great Forerunner there?’

This was applied with power and caused exercise of soul. At a later date, Jesus Christ was made to be felt as the one thing needful. What real conviction of sin I had then.

“In due time it was decided to find a house for ourselves, as we now had our first child, Anne; so father-in-law came to live with us in Paddock Wood, nearer to East Peckham. Sadly he died in 1965. In 1966, my wife and I felt we could no longer attend East Peckham and ventured to go to Matfield for worship and we were helped under the ministry and by the hymns. One particular hymn’s words,

‘Show pity, Lord; O Lord, forgive;  
Let a repenting rebel live;  
Are not Thy mercies large and free?  
May not a sinner trust in Thee?’

had a softening effect upon me, and then,

‘Not a glimpse of hope for me,  
Only in Gethsemane.’

“On another occasion when sleeping with one of the children, because his brother had to go into his mother’s bedroom, I opened my Bible to read, and verse 10 of the 41st chapter of Isaiah was illuminated before my eyes. What did it all mean? Soon after, Mr. Bradford preached from this text.

“I was taken ill in 1969 and Joseph Wigley, the deacon, came to our home, and read Psalm 46 and prayed. Soon after this, I was admitted to hospital, and while waiting in the hospital for an operation to find the cause of the pain, I read Psalm 9 and came to verse 9 and these words:



‘The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.’ This was a calming influence upon me. The operation was for appendectomy, which was apparently difficult to locate. On the following morning, I read in the newspaper that a nurse somewhere in the country had died, after having had a similar operation.

“Whilst in hospital, Mr. Bradford came to visit me and read part of Hebrews chapter 12: ‘For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.’ I had such a glimpse of faith’s view of Jesus on the cross looking down upon me; the memory of it is with me now as I write it down. When I reflect upon that view by faith, it was, I believe, to help me be patient, as the wound after the operation caused me to remain in hospital for nineteen days, whereas most people with the same operation were discharged after five days.

“Soon after, Mr. Bradford spoke from the following words: ‘I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD,’ which caused much exercise. And then in March 1971, Mr. Bradford spoke from, ‘Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.’

“There was such a feeling within, that on the Monday morning, when going out of the village of Matfield en route to Tunbridge Wells about my business, I was so persuaded to turn back and ask our pastor and deacon if I may come before the church with a view to joining in fellowship with them.

“A church meeting was arranged for March 23rd, 1971, and my wife and I came before the church, and our testimonies were accepted unanimously, and following baptism, we were joined to the church.

“I had been exercised about the ministry shortly after attending Matfield in 1966. Our friend, Joseph Wigley, gave out the hymn 906, and the text over the top, ‘I will instruct thee,’ went home to my heart with much power, and I was quite broken down. Time passed and the exercise was not very strong until one Sunday in 1969 or 1970 when the words, ‘But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high,’ came from our dear pastor’s lips. The following day, being the time for the anniversary services at Hanover, Tunbridge Wells, I went to hear Mr. L.S.B. Hyde, and during his prayer, he prayed concerning those that might be exercised about the ministry, and then quoted the same words.

“Mr. C.A. Wood came to Matfield on the afternoon of July 8th, 1973 and spoke from 1 Thessalonians 2. 12. I trembled in my seat as he spoke of the ministry, but still we went on, I trust, begging the Lord would make it plain in His time.

"In May 1974, Mr. L.R. Broome, preaching at Rotherfield anniversary services, dwelt upon the exercise of the ministry during the afternoon. It seemed that he looked straight at me and said, 'When the time is come you will know it.' I felt broken down by that statement, and afterwards my mother, who was next to me with my wife, questioned me about the ministry.

"Late in the summer of 1975, the words, 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist,' were received with some power from our dear pastor during his sermon. And now the exercises increased, and one was further encouraged when my wife and I took Mrs. Smith of Hanover home following a funeral. I spoke about the possibility of a certain person being raised up for the ministry, to which the reply was, 'I haven't thought much about him, but I have concerning you.' Shortly afterwards I received a letter from her.

"The exercises were getting heavy now, and I begged the Lord to bring it to light, and then on March 25th, 1976, Mr. D.E. Cornford was preaching at a baptizing service at Broad Oak Chapel, Heathfield from Matthew 28. 19, 20, and he dwelt for some time on, 'Go ye therefore,' bringing out those things that we had fervently prayed for. One would have thought he knew all about me.

"The next Friday, I had such a severe migraine attack and was confined to my bedroom for three days. With the annual church meeting due on Tuesday, March 30th, I had so desired I might receive a word from the pastor on the Lord's day, and here I was confined to my bed through much weakness, but my dear friend, Joseph Wigley, came down in the evening and said he would read Psalm 32. How I trembled as he read it and came to that verse, 'I will instruct thee.' Then he engaged in prayer and afterwards I felt I must speak to him about my exercises for this solemn work, and how confirming to hear that he too had been exercised about me."

Gordon was sent out to preach by the church at Matfield and spoke for the first time in the Lord's name at Staplehurst on Sunday morning, April 4th, 1976 (his 48th birthday). He had had visions of preaching in three separate chapels, prior to being sent into the ministry, and in each case the vision came to pass. He preached among the churches and travelled away many Lord's days, including as far away as Manchester. In late 1982 he was approached by Staplehurst regarding becoming their pastor, and after months of heavy exercise felt led to accept, and the following is an extract from his letter to the deacon in May 1983.

"The Lord hath appeared and answered my request for what I believe is a fleece wet and a fleece dry blessing. There has been so much

prayer gone up from my sin-polluted lips, and you know the exercise when one is burdened over a matter. Well, last Friday morning I awakened around 4 a.m., and not for the first time, especially of late, I went downstairs to try and search the Scriptures for some word of divine guidance. I got into such a state, that I was ready to shut the Book, it being so dead to me. Then my eyes alighted on these words: 'For this child I prayed,' and then the words flowed into my soul as a still small voice: 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.' This is as the words dropped in, and are not quite word for word as in the Scripture but they have lain upon me and Moses' experience in the Book of Exodus has been very much on my mind.

"Since then I have been looking and begging for the Lord to give me a fleece dry and having been very busy, work-wise, I have been tried in not having the time to read and pray and meditate as one would. Then some days later, after a clear providential deliverance in a financial matter, the Lord broke in with the words again, 'I will give thee thy wages.' It quite broke me down, and I immediately said, 'I shall have to go.' Consequently, I am now writing in my poor way to accept the invitation to be your pastor, if the Lord will. I hope the wages will prove to be souls."

In January 1984 he commenced his pastorate, which continued until January 1997. He continued to preach among many chapels, and we do believe that the Lord often used him despite his low esteem of his own preaching. Many have mentioned the help received through his ministry, and several after he died. The Lord's servants little know where the word is being used. His ministry was also blessed and used at Staplehurst, and there were three friends who joined the church during this time, and one sent into the ministry very soon afterwards. Gordon's ministry was used in the cases of several of those that have been led to join since that time, and also as a help for friends in the congregation.

In March 1989, his first wife Mary passed away after a short illness with lung cancer. He was wonderfully upheld at that time, and was enabled to preach at East Peckham on the evening of her funeral, and was particularly helped on that occasion. In 1991 Gordon felt able to accept an invitation to preach in Australia and to visit family – his niece Hilary and her husband Rowland Wheatley. Again from his writings:

"Ever since my first visit to Melbourne and Geelong in 1991, I felt I should return again sometime, and when I received the invitation to Hawthorn (Melbourne) church in 1993 to give them three months' ministry in 1994, I wondered what it all meant. The words immediately given to me on receipt of that letter were, 'I will go.' I knew I must get the sanction of the church. One male member was surprised, but afterward agreed and so did another church member. A further church

member telephoned to say she did not think I should go, but no sooner had I put the telephone down from her, it rang again. The same lady said that as she put the phone down from the former call, these words came: 'Come over into Macedonia, and help us,' so she said, 'I felt we must let you go.'

"Afterwards when reading Judges chapter 4 the words in verse 8, "Then I will go," were an encouragement to accept and venture with the invitation, God willing, for twelve weeks from April 1994.

In due course, I ventured to go to Australia and stayed for most of the time with Rowland and Hilary Wheatley, with preaching engagements at Melbourne and Geelong. It would appear our poor ministry was profitable to the friends in Victoria as well as in Sydney, N.S.W. Without being presumptuous, I trust I felt helped in preaching the Word. I went to Australia in April with no thought of ever getting married again, or even looking for a wife, but then we have to prove as the Lord says in Scripture, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways.'

"During my sojourn in Australia I came into contact with Annette Toogood, and an exercise commenced regarding each other, but one was very tried having soon mentioned the fact to Annette. The trial was so great, I felt such a fool to have opened my mouth to her. It was a few days before the Lord raised up a hope in my heart with the words, 'I shall yet praise Him.' On June 13th, 1994, Annette agreed to marriage, so we became engaged. I had wondered at times if I would come out to Australia on a permanent basis, feeling at times my work was done at Staplehurst, yet still having a love to the people there.

"Our marriage was planned for February 18th, 1995, and all my family agreed to come out to Australia, and Mr. Rowland Wheatley was to officiate.

The day of (but after) the wedding I received an invitation to take the pastorate at Geelong church, which was such a shock to me, and after returning to England I waited upon the Lord to show me what to do, and as I received nothing from the Lord, I had to decline the invitation with some sadness. In July 1995, having been poorly in health for two months, I ventured to make engagements for the year 1996, although one's thoughts were often with the flock out in Australia.

"In May 1996, our friends Mr. and Mrs. C. Bird came over from Australia and gave me a letter from the deacon, Mr. Ray Fry, from Hawthorn Chapel, Melbourne, with regard to their exercise to my becoming their minister. It had been on their minds for some long time that I might be led to settle with them.

"This letter made one's heart really heavy, especially as Annette had settled so well in England, but I now had to make a very great decision and in due course reply.

"I acknowledged the letter and told Mr. Fry that I hoped to go to Australia early in 1997 for a holiday, but now looked to the Lord to grant me a fleece wet and dry blessing. I also received a letter from Mrs. Polley at Geelong Church, telling me that she had heard from Mr. Fry about the matter and how she and others had made it a matter of prayer and if it were the Lord's will, He would bring it to pass. Mrs. Polley told me in the letter she had received an encouraging letter from a friend in America pointing them to Jesus in these anxious times. This God-fearing man said, 'If the Lord gathers a people, He will bless them with a preached gospel.'

"I had so desired the Lord would give me divine direction before booking up time for the next year's engagements, but the only words laid upon my spirit were, 'I have commanded a widow woman to sustain thee,' and I do believe that it referred to Mrs. Polley, a gracious lady who was very much exercised over the matter. This I believe was spiritual. Intermingled with these words was the temptation as to how I could give up the pastorate at Staplehurst.

"During this waiting and watching time, my son mentioned to me about Mr. George Rose who had left Cranbrook to go to Croydon, and on reading through his book I found my exercises were similar to his. Time was drawing near to making engagements for 1997, and on Friday, June 28th, I went to Uckfield to preach, without a text. I sat down in the minister's chair at the front of the chapel, and as I opened the Bible prior to going into the pulpit, my eyes were directed to, 'Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee.' I ventured then to speak as helped on a few things. This in itself was not the fleece wet, but when a deacon chose hymn 277 in conclusion, and we started to sing the words, "He has promised to provide; may He teach me to resign," they were applied with power, and in the sense also that the Lord would enable one to resign the pastorate at the end of the year.

"The following Monday, July 1st, I was taken quite poorly with an attack of vertigo which included sickness, and the doctor came and injected me and ordered a week's rest. Now towards the end of the week, I noticed in the *Gospel Standard* that Mr. Gerald Buss was to preach at Lamberhurst. So on Friday, July 5th, Annette and I planned to go to Lamberhurst for the afternoon service only, but feeling rather weary near lunch time we decided to venture for the evening service, when Mr. Buss was led to speak from, "It shall not be a burden upon your shoulders" (2 Chron. 35. 3). After the service I walked to the car and said to Annette, 'We have to go now.' This was to me the fleece dry. Another thing we noticed was that Annette's house in Ocean Grove, Australia, had not sold even though the price was considerably reduced. This then provided accommodation for us until, God willing, we were able to move nearer to Melbourne and Geelong.

“These are the exercises concerning leaving the dear friends at Staplehurst and venturing to come out to Australia to help the churches in this country, and our prayerful desires are that the Lord will undertake for the church and congregation at Staplehurst.

“How we prove His ways are past finding out, and we trust He will make His goodness pass before us in the way.”

Gordon took two weddings in England and was helped in the funerals of at least ten of his own flock at Staplehurst, as well as others in the denomination.

Gordon left England in January 1997 and left Staplehurst in peace and unity, although there was much sadness among the people at his call to Australia. But the Lord had a rich provision in hand for a future pastor soon to follow, and Gordon always felt that this was a further confirmation of his own move to Australia.

An elderly member in Sydney recalls that as she returned home after saying goodbye to Gordon at the airport after his visit in 1994, the words “Faith ... laughs at impossibilities, and says, ‘It shall be done,’” came three times with power and laid on her mind. She had been contemplating how wonderful it would be if Gordon had an open door to return. And so it proved to be.

The churches in Australia were favoured with almost twenty years of gracious ministry and there are those that can truly testify of the Lord’s blessing on his ministry there. Gordon would take regular services at Geelong and Melbourne chapels as well as visiting Sydney twice a year if he could. In addition, services were relayed to the chapel at Sydney and also to friends in Adelaide. During his time in Australia, he was helped in taking a wedding at Sydney and the funerals of seven friends across the various chapels.

The few elderly members of the Geelong chapel congregation were greatly helped by Gordon’s ministry, and Roy Polley, who had been taking reading services until then, had many godly conversations with Gordon.

Eventually Geelong chapel had to close when Mrs. Polley, the last remaining member, died.

As Gordon spoke at Roy Polley’s funeral in June 2000, Roy’s nephew heard the gospel preached for the first time in over seventeen years, and began to understand that he was a sinner in the sight of God when the arrow of conviction went into his soul. He was led to return to chapel by the end of that year, and the preached Word was often suited to his state and condition. He considered Gordon as his earthly counsellor and spiritual father, and in 2009 came forward for baptism at Melbourne.

Gordon’s ministry was also blessed to others at Melbourne, Geelong and Sydney. One friend writes, “What a wonderful thing if this dear man

should be sent all the way for just one person, and dare I say, what if that one were me?" May there yet be those further signs following, and what a favour that the Lord raises and uses men as His instruments in His great work of salvation.

Gordon was much exercised about the souls of the extended congregation in Australia, and there was peace and unity throughout his pastorate. He felt that although they did not often speak on spiritual things, yet they gave abundantly in their carnal things, evidencing clearly their love for the Lord. The Australian friends have asked that mention is made of how Gordon's ministry was greatly valued by them all and that they felt truly favoured to have him "come over into Macedonia and help us."

After he removed to Australia, he always kept a close interest in the English chapels and maintained a deep love for the church and people at Staplehurst. He felt a bond to Peter Cottingham who had been led to take up the pastorate soon after his move to Melbourne, and was shocked at his sudden death in July 2014. He commented from his hospital bed, having just been brought through surgery, "Why have I been spared and he taken?" He was moved to tears. Peter had prayed so profusely for his safe deliverance in this surgery, little knowing that it was his own last Sunday on earth.

He was very encouraged on hearing a recorded sermon by Marcus Funnell in late 2015 on 2 Chronicles 20. 12: "For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." He was very thankful that the Lord had provided once again for his old church, and that his prayers for them had been answered.

Gordon generally was kept in very good health until the last few months of his life. However, the illness that brought him down to his end became very apparent around August 2016. From that time he was in hospital and subsequently in a care home, suffering from Lewy body dementia.

There was a touching note written by Gordon near the end in his last illness to his dear wife and family in which he referred to his forty years in the ministry as "a poor effort." This summed him up – a man of humility in the things of God. He also put in that note, "May the churches continue," referring to the churches in Australia and it is the prayerful desire of friends in Australia and in England that this will be the case with the Lord's help.

Rowland Wheatley was very much helped in taking the funeral service and committal on February 3rd, 2017, and this was watched over the internet, both live and also later on, by many friends in England. The text on the hymn sheet which Gordon's wife Annette had felt led to was confirmed by talking to Rowland, and we believe it sums up his life and

faith: “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psa. 73. 24).

Mr. John Rosier was also helped in a memorial service held at Staplehurst Chapel on March 25th, 2017 at which there was a good gathering of friends.

Gordon’s wife and family both in England and Australia, and the friends at Melbourne and Sydney chapels, continue to feel their loss keenly, but are assured he is now with his God, which is far better.

His family

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### COMFORT FROM THE RESURRECTION

*“Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord” (John 20. 20).*

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Glad they were, how should they not?  
 Glad to see the Lord again;  
 When He breathed His last, they thought  
 All was lost; they sorrowed then;  
 But the world rejoiced to be  
 Rid of Him they loathed to see.

But His people’s grief is now  
 Turned to joy, as He had said;  
 While His hands, His feet, His brow,  
 Proof afford that He was dead;  
 Dead, indeed; but now He lives,  
 And to others life He gives.

All the power above, below,  
 All is His, by compact His,  
 Fruit of strife, and toil, and woe.  
 But His conflict over is;  
 Him in glory now we see,  
 “Lord and Christ” ordained to be.

His we are, we love His name,  
 And would serve Him as we ought,  
 But, we own it to our shame,  
 What we would, we do it not.  
 Thine it is to pardon, Lord,  
 Pardon us, and strength afford.

Thomas Kelly (1769-1855)

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### NOTICE OF DEATH

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**David Cyril Relf**, a faithful deacon at Tamworth Road Chapel, Croydon, for over thirty years, passed away into eternal rest on Wednesday, March 7th, 2018, aged 95 years. “The Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim. 2. 19).



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**MAY 2018**

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

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**PRAYING FOR THE WORK OF GOD'S HANDS**

“God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matt. 3. 9 and Luke 3. 8).

John the Baptist spoke this in reproof to the Pharisees and Sadducees when he saw them come to his baptism. He warned this “generation of vipers” not to trust in being Abraham’s seed, because “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” This is, no doubt, a reference to the calling of the Gentiles, who were alienated from God with such stony hearts. This word began to be fulfilled at the first effusion of the Spirit of Truth as both Jew and Gentile, who had stony hearts, began to turn from their sins in repentance and faith toward God.

What a word of comfort and instruction this is today, to those believers who are much exercised by the low state of Zion, or anxious about the eternal welfare of loved ones, or for those who meet for worship in Zion’s courts. Exercised souls long to see the work of the Holy Ghost appearing in the hearts and lives of one and another. It is not of pedigree, culture, mere conformity, or of good works. “The Son quickeneth whom He will” (John 5. 21), as we read, “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). Moses prayed in Psalm 90, “Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children.” The prayerful request in Psalm 85 is, “Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?”

As we consider the present scene, may we, by precious faith, arm ourselves in our petitions with the Word of God. The Lord favour us with wrestling enquiry for His grace and mercy to be made manifest in our dear family circles, and among the company of those who worship with us. Also that His Spirit might yet compel many to turn in who at present are walking in darkness. Stones are hard and lifeless, which is the natural state of mankind. May we be enabled “by faith” to wrestle more and more, pleading with the great Head of the church which is Jesus Christ, that He might return with power in the gospel ministry and awaken many souls out of their graves of sin and death. The wind of God brought the “dry bones” in the valley to life, which became “an exceeding great army” (Ezek. 37). “Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” (Gen. 18. 14).

Is it not a most solemn thought, if our loved ones, or our dear friends in our congregations should perish in their sin? May we never presume, or sit back unconcerned. May we enquire of the Lord for His divine enabling so to plead for His work to appear. The Saviour's name is an all-prevailing name given by God. The blessed Prince of Peace on the throne of grace is of "good will" to remember His own Word of grace with promise, in His own covenant faithfulness. May we not only be "instant in prayer," but in gracious conversation speak of the value of our never-dying souls, and the unspeakable horror that awaits the impenitent; and also of the infinite goodness, love and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus sitting "on the right hand of power," who is "mighty to save."

"His tender, loving heart  
The vilest will embrace;  
And freely to them will impart  
The riches of His grace."

"Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me" (Isa. 45. 11). "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock" (Ezek. 36. 37).

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## **BELIEVERS WASHED, SANCTIFIED AND JUSTIFIED IN CHRIST**

*Sermon by William Tiptaft (1803-1864), date unknown.*

**Text:** "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6. 11).

My brethren, these words have been encouraging to the most profligate. If the blood-thirsty Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, and the persecuting Saul were made fit for heaven, who can tell where a work of grace may be wrought? The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth to the utmost all who are brought to know their real need of a Saviour, and knowing His cleansing blood, they will acknowledge that salvation is of grace. Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God"; and he then says, "Such were some of you." He does not say that they are now so. He speaks of a very particular religion: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." In

the first chapter he addresses them: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," and the apostle says, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ," and he also says, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

My brethren, can ministers of Christ address you as "sanctified in Christ Jesus," and "called to be saints"? Then you must have a very particular religion, that but few are blessed with. You stand on high ground, through grace, and have cause to be kept humble. Paul says, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4. 7). There is no room for boasting; grace makes all the difference.

How much is contained in those words, "Called to be saints"! Here we have set forth the effects of divine calling. Paul says to Timothy, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling" (2 Tim. 1. 9), as the effects and fruits would be manifest. A mere profession of religion, without feeling, will not allow a man to say how he is called to be a saint. We want to find the fear of God, real repentance, real faith and real prayer; and such who can say that they are "called to be saints," will be much tried about all their evidences. True faith will be tried. Such paths of trouble, sorrow and distress work for good to the Lord's people, and make them profitable hearers. If a man stands on high ground, unexercised, we doubt whether he is blessed with grace, which shall be tried. The Lord's people are a tried and afflicted people, and through much tribulation they must go to glory. The one hundred and seventh Psalm describes their various afflictions and troubles, and their deliverances which caused gratitude. How they repeated again and again these striking words: "Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Real religion cannot be learnt in the heart, except God's mighty power is put forth, which makes the difference between possessors and mere professors. They can know but little of real religion, if they are not willing to tell what God has done for their souls. What a great change had taken place with these ungodly Corinthians, and it was described in a particular way: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

My brethren, if you can say that you are blessed with such a religion, can you say that ministers of Christ could say, with Paul, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ"? Ministers of truth are glad to see real signs of a divine calling, so that they may give you the right hand of fellowship, seeing the fruits of grace. Paul has set forth a similar warning in different parts of Scripture; but more particularly in the fifth chapter of

Galatians, in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, and also in Colossians: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Col. 3. 5, 6).

We are all by nature dead in trespasses and sins. We cannot go to heaven without the good work begun. Paul says, "You hath He quickened." No new birth, no real religion. What are we to think of ministers, deacons and old professors among the dissenters who are not exercised what this work of grace on a sinner's soul is! Those who ridicule the new birth and the work of the Spirit on a sinner's soul seem to be in an awful state. Paul gives a dreadful account to Titus of the fallen state of man. He then says, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (chapter 3. 4-7). Now, my brethren, who profess to know what this washing is, Christ says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3. 5). There is no real washing but in the fountain opened for uncleanness.

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

For all the elect people of God, Jesus Christ has shed His blood, and they are sure to be in heaven. John says, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1. 5). All those who can really use such language should not envy the rich and great, if they are penniless, for they are far richer, having an enduring substance. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (see Heb. 9. 22). David says, in the fifty-first Psalm, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Not many want to be washed thoroughly from their iniquity, and to be cleansed from their sin. But these ungodly Corinthians were brought to know their vileness and guilt, or they would not have wanted to know how they were to be saved. They were real seekers, as all must be who come to Christ. Whether the most ungodly or Pharisees, they must know the plague of the heart. Whoever have been ignorant of that, have never prayed aright, or really believed. "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD" (Prov. 16. 1). All who are favoured to know that they are washed, must have been sensible

sinner, and have cried for mercy. When Jesus Christ is earnestly sought sorrowing, and is found, He is precious, and you can speak well of His holy name. The strongest language of praises suits your soul. What a very great mercy to have such divine enjoyments, and to value them above gold and silver! Christ is precious, we really love Him, and He shall have our praises.

“But sure no ransom will take place,  
Except the costly work of grace,  
Which Jesus Christ has wrought.  
His precious blood and righteousness  
Is made our peace and glorious dress,  
And free salvation brought.”

Paul thanked God always on their behalf for the grace of God which was given them in Christ Jesus. No work of grace, no real religion; all must perish who die destitute of grace. What a favoured people they are who have authority to say, “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10. 39). A grain of saving faith is worth more than all the gold in the world. The apostle says, “But ye are washed,” drawing a distinction between the godly and ungodly. What a solemn declaration it is in Peter’s second Epistle: “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (chapter 2. 9).

My brethren, how the apostle says, not only, “Ye are washed,” but also, “Ye are sanctified.” What a great doctrine is the doctrine of sanctification! How deep, mysterious and wonderful is that great work of God the Holy Ghost on sinners’ souls! You will stand in the great day if you have experienced that great change. “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power” (Eph. 1. 18,19).

None can go to heaven without being sanctified. So that all the ministers and hearers who are not blessed with this good work begun must perish in their sins, and sink into endless torments; but alas! how few you can find that you can really hope have been blessed with such proofs of the Lord’s lovingkindness. How few in this dark county could you find that could give any proof of the divine calling. If you doubt the declaration, search for those who have experienced the change, so that you may address them, “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” When ministers preach the glorious gospel, they are highly favoured if the Spirit of truth will bear testimony, so that the ungodly may be brought

to know the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost; so that they may thank God for the grace of God given to them. All preaching must be in vain if God withhold His blessing.

My brethren, what a solemn subject this is about being sanctified! Ministers of truth in their right minds do not want to deceive people. *Soul blood stains deep!* How can you make out that you are so greatly blessed? Do you hope that for years you have had the fear of God? If you can make out that you are blessed with that rich treasure, what blessings belong to you, as well as to the real saints! But if you profess to have such a treasure, are you sufficiently grateful to God? The Lord's people will be led to bless God for their mercies and blessings, temporal and spiritual.

“Mercies of providence and grace  
Flow from Thy bounteous hand;  
These claim incessant songs of praise,  
And fervent love demand.”

You, my brethren, who are rightly taught by the Spirit of God, and have been blessed with a sound repentance, and have also been brought into the liberty of the gospel, knowing the forgiveness of your sins, can you say how you have blessed God for being interested in Christ's prayer? John 17: “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” “And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16. 15, 16). In Acts 13 we read, “And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” What solemn words are those respecting the man which had not on a wedding garment! “And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt 22. 12-14).

“The soul that fails, draws back and faints,  
And walks the ways of God no more,  
Proves that he never was a saint,  
And makes his own destruction sure.”

Christ says, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them.” “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17. 9, 10, 20, 21). With what a blessed declaration the Lord Jesus concludes the chapter! May the Lord's people realise

more of the love of God through the preaching of the glorious gospel. "And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." What fervent love the apostles had for Christ, and how they wished to preach that others might be brought to love Him! If a minister has no charity as described in 1 Corinthians 13, he is in an awful state. No gifts can be compared with that best of blessings, love.

"We pray to have our faith increased,  
And O, celestial Dove!  
We pray to be completely blessed  
With that rich blessing, love."

What great love the Apostle Paul had when he says, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20. 22-24).

My brethren, can you say how deeply you are exercised whether you are sanctified? How those called among the Ephesians and Colossians gave proofs of their calling by having faith in Christ, and love to all the saints. Can you say that you have faith in Christ, and love to the saints? Can they talk to you, and can you talk to them about your trials, afflictions and sorrows, as well as the consolations of the gospel? God's children are described in this manner in the Old Testament: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. 3. 16, 17).

"When saint to saint, in days of old,  
Their sorrows, sins, and sufferings told,  
Jesus, the Friend of sinners, dear,  
His saints to bless was present there."

My brethren, do you love the truth? and have you received it in the love of it? Can you say that you believe that the "gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance"? (1 Thess. 1. 5). If you say you have had such blessed proofs of a work of grace, you will have the work tried: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," but the Lord will deliver them. God's children must buy the truth, and must find very many difficulties and trials in the narrow way to heaven.

My brethren, the apostle also says to the Corinthians, "But ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." How certain it is that all will be in heaven that are justified, for their sins have been laid on Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to them. Paul says to the Romans, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is "in the name of the Lord Jesus" that we are washed, that we are sanctified, and that we are justified, and "by the Spirit of our God." These are striking words: "By the Spirit of our God." How little the Spirit's work is preached in this dark day of profession, either in churches or chapels. There is very little searching preaching, separating the precious from the vile. What an alarming and searching chapter is the first of Galatians to God-fearing ministers! "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (verse 10).

A century ago, England had two faithful preachers, Whitefield and Berridge; their labours were great, their success in calling souls was great, and their sufferings and persecutions were great. When the gospel is preached faithfully, it will surely give offence, and the minister and his hearers will be hated and despised. Very many people love smooth things, and a minister is tried about being faithful. If a minister contend that there is something great in real religion, and that few comparatively are fit for the great change, he will give offence. If we are to be in heaven, we must be made fit for heaven, and that by the Spirit's teachings, so that we may know the washing, sanctifying and justifying "in the name of the Lord Jesus."

You that wish me to encourage you as being in the narrow way to heaven, can you say, "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"? (2 Cor. 1. 21, 22). Those who have such an experience are contending for the realities of religion. Can you say that you have that experience, as to be considered washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God? You did not come to know such a religion without repentance; you have had a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, so that you begged for mercy from necessity. You have had the Word of God come with power, so that you wanted to know how a sinner was to be saved, and that sinner was yourself. You have had the divine calling, bringing you among the saints, and in time you could find what blessings belonged to such; but you felt yourselves unworthy of the name.

The Apostle Paul exhorts them to be prayed for in the last chapter of the Ephesians: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for



all saints.” Christ “gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4. 11, 12). There are many and great blessings for the real saints, and for those who fear God.

My brethren, do you profess to have such a blessed experience of the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, so that you are comforted with many portions of Scripture? The Lord “will keep the feet of His saints” (1 Sam. 2. 9). “O love the LORD, all ye His saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer” (Psa. 31. 23). “O fear the LORD, ye His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him” (Psa. 34. 9). “For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved for ever” (Psa. 37. 28); and, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints” (Psa. 116. 15). What blessings, mercies and favours belong to such characters as those who fear God, and are real saints! What debtors all such are to the grace of God for saving them, and also for restraining them!

If we hold with the communion of saints and the forgiveness of sins, we contend for real religion. How few you can meet with who know the pardoning love of God shed abroad in their hearts, or any sweet enjoyment in the communion of saints. When the five cities were destroyed, there was but one God-fearing man. If God-fearing people were searched for now, they would be scarce; many might presume, who were destitute of such a blessing; and many might fear and tremble, and yet stand. It is a narrow way to heaven, and but few are in it. How few you can find that are really concerned about their souls; if there be no blossoms, there will be no fruit. “And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Pet. 4. 18).

Nearly all the Lord’s people are to be found among the poor and needy: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Cor. 1. 26). Let six well-taught men go to Cambridge, and search for those who know a work of grace on their souls; they would not find many among the respectable, noble, great and learned. How very many are satisfied with their portion here! Many children of God may envy them, like Asaph: “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction” (Psa. 73. 17, 18). What a very great mercy to be among the outcast, despised and persecuted in the narrow way to heaven, rather than to be at ease in Zion! “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Rev. 3. 1).

The Lord’s people are poor and needy, have many wants and many troubles, much to pray about, and various cases for ministers of truth to describe: they find that they have the world, the flesh and the devil to

contend with, which makes them to know what difficulties must attend their path. Their afflictions and troubles wean them more and more from this vain world, and if God would but shine on their souls, that they might have a fresh proof of their interest in the covenant of grace, they would be willing to die. What a very great mercy for those who have a religion to make them fit for the great change! They may say,

“A few more days, or months, or years,  
In this dark desert to complain;  
A few more sighs, a few more tears,  
And we shall bid adieu to pain.”

How very awful is the difference between those who die in Christ, and those who die out of Christ! How precious is that real faith in Christ; a grain of it is worth more than the world! My brethren, if you profess to be favoured with such a religion, that you shall die in Christ, what blessed proofs have you had of your love to Christ, and Christ's love to you? Did you ever ask Christ this favour: “Set me as a seal upon Thine heart, as a seal upon Thine arm: for love is strong as death”? (Song 8. 6).

My brethren, those blessed with real faith in Christ and real love to the brethren have cause for much gratitude and praise. Afflictions and troubles you will surely meet with. You may ask,

“Is this, dear Lord, that thorny road  
Which leads us to the mount of God?  
Are these the toils Thy people know,  
While in this wilderness below?

“’Tis even so; Thy faithful love  
Does all Thy children's graces prove;  
'Tis thus our pride and self must fall  
That Jesus may be All in all.”

Trials and afflictions have been blessed to my soul; it is in the furnaces and fires we learn our profitable lessons. God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth:

“Then help me by Thy grace to bear  
Whate'er Thou send to purge my dross;  
If in His crown I hope to share,  
Why should I grudge to bear His cross?”

All present are in the broad way or in the narrow way. This must be a solemn declaration for those who are exercised about their souls, and want a better experience before they die. Those who are not exercised about their souls are certainly in the broad road. What grace may do for your souls before you die, it is not for me to say. Those of you who hope that God has blessed you with a religion of the right sort, may you be more grateful, and may your last days be your best. May you love Christ more and more; may you live more with a singleness of eye to His glory. If we are fit for the great change, we are greatly favoured. What debtors

we are to grace! and what a Friend we have in the precious Saviour! All real lovers of Him shall surely be in glory.

“O that my soul could love and praise Him more,  
His beauties trace, His majesty adore;  
Live near His heart, upon His bosom lean;  
Obey His voice, and all His will esteem.”

“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake” (Psa. 115. 1).

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### FATALISM

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*  
*(Concluded from page 106)*

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The Lord Jesus Christ (who surely knew that God would save His own!) inculcated [urged] not indifference but watchful diligence when, in view of the declension of the church in Sardis, he warned the “angel” to strengthen the things which remained that were ready to die, for his works were not perfect before God. Rather, that faithful Witness directed the church to the *cause of declension*, and to the *means of recovery*. Who would have the temerity to suggest that Christ infringed the doctrine of divine election, and denied that God would save His own people, because He threatened to remove the candlestick from Ephesus if she did not repent?

It has been said that some preachers have tartly told their hearers that if they were not elected they cannot be saved, implying thereby that they need not trouble, and inferring a fault in God. Damnable error can be taught by an improper presentation of what is most true. Disproportion can very seriously falsify truth, even as a half-truth can be a gross lie. How urgent, how imperative, then, is that infallible instruction, light and unction of the Holy Spirit for a right discharge of the solemn work of the ministry! Paul’s exclamation will be that of each man whom the Lord ordains to this serious office: “Who is sufficient for these things?” And woe be to him who obtrudes himself into that office without divine ordination! The Lord in great mercy forgive us and deliver us from our ministerial sins! May He give us grace, also, in our anxiety concerning the depletion of the churches and the lack of signs following the ministry, sincerely and deliberately to search and pray to be shown the procuring causes of the Holy Spirit’s withholding; and to turn from everything which provokes that gracious Teacher to withdraw from the ministry and from the churches.

Christ’s perfect teaching gives a true perspective of divine sovereignty, attractive to every truly-exercised soul: “No man can come

to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him"; "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). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). And this perspective will be the background of all right ministerial labour, a labour which begins not in the pulpit but in the closet. Although none can come but such as are drawn of the Father, none need thereby be discouraged from coming to Christ; nor on that ground should any minister hesitate to invite a convicted, penitent sinner to come to Christ (even though he is troubled because his convictions and repentance are deficient). We solemnly realise that the most earnest appeals a minister may make will have no effect without the Holy Spirit's power; but in our view the absence of those appeals betrays not faith in the covenant promise: "They shall all know Me," but rather a practical fatalism which, however, may not be always detected.

On the other hand, a prejudiced mind might misconstrue an utterance intended to rebut the idea of creature power, and attribute fatalism unjustly. Churches are not sustained nor people saved by the mere mechanism of organised missionary or evangelistic work. Some utterances give the impression that, given sufficient financial support, the salvation of men and the edification of the church of God is but a matter of human business organisation!

We believe there is a very real connection between the ministry of the gospel and the covenant of election, which invests the sacred office with awful importance calculated to make any poor man tremble in undertaking it. If success apparently attends their labours, they will be deeply humbled by the Lord's condescension in using them as instruments in His hand. If fruits are lacking, they will be seriously concerned as to the cause. Both complacency and elation ill become a minister of the gospel. Men are liable to err in either case, unless steadied by some sacred, inward confirmation of their divine ordination to the momentous work. The disciples were elated on account of the spirits being subject to them (see Luke 10. 17-20). Elijah, making intercession against Israel, was ready to despair when he thought he was alone (see 1 Kings 19; Rom. 11. 2-4). Isaiah mourning that he had laboured in vain and spent his strength for nought and in vain, was encouraged in realising that his judgment and his reward were both with his God (see Isa. 49). This is interpreted by Paul as prophetic of the Israelites rejecting the Messiah, and the extending of the gospel to the Gentiles (see Acts 13. 46-48).

Notwithstanding that, like all other doctrines, it may be abused, the sacred truth that the Lord will save all His elect people and that none of them can be lost, is a strength to a minister in his arduous and anxious work, and also to the individual believer whose faith is tried as by fire.

The encouragement Paul gives to the Philippians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, was derived from his firm belief that God had begun the good work of grace in them and would finish it: therefore they were to work out in their experience, through faith, that which God wrought in them (see Phil. 1. 6; 2. 12, 13). Daily to prove Christ's word: "Without Me ye can do nothing" does but necessitate one's daily fleeing to Him. Thus in due time and in spite of all enemies, the believer shall prove that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him. Yet when he has done all, he is an unprofitable servant and contributes nothing to his own salvation, which is the Lord's work from first to last. And to ascribe all to Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb, will be his eternal employ.

Among the tears that God will wipe away from the eyes of some when through grace they reach that land of pure delight, will be the tears of mourners over the desolations of Zion. But "in heaven there's ne'er a vacant throne." How many of our readers will reach that holy, happy place? Each who does so will be a miracle of grace, and trophy of redeeming love. Rutherford in his inimitable way said:

"Oh! if one soul from Anwoth  
Meet me at God's right hand,  
My heaven will be two heavens,  
In Immanuel's land."

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### A STRONG REFUGE

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Long Wittenham,  
Near Abingdon, Berks.  
November 6th, 1932

Dear Mr. Lewin,

Several times since you were kind enough to visit me at the Radium Institute I have felt I should like to write you a few lines. I was so disappointed that day, the nurse sending you away so abruptly after taking the trouble to come and see me. That is more than six months ago, and I have been brought through much since then. Through mercy, I am now so far restored as to be able to take my usual place in the home. I am indeed a wonder unto many, and can I not add, "But Thou art my strong Refuge"? (Psa. 71. 7). I was very ill for two months after my return, suffering agonising pain (as the result of the radium treatment) till my doctor put me on to morphia, which I continued for six weeks. And worse than the pain was the darkness of mind for the most part, when I verily felt it was a time of Satan's power. When in my terrible pains he

would say, “Curse God, and die.” But there was One stronger than he, who was still sitting by *as a Refiner*. One morning it was a sweet word of comfort:

“Not all the pains that e’er I bore  
Shall spoil my future peace;  
For death and hell can do no more  
Than what my Father please.”

I feel God has granted me a fresh lease of life. I know not for how long, but this I know, it is a way of tribulation. There are heavy, cutting trials in my lot that cause me more pain than my bodily affliction; yet, as a hymn we had today in chapel said, “And all the trials here we see, will make us long to reign with Thee.” What a wonder of wonders if such a sin-polluted creature as myself should ever stand at His right hand! Sure enough it will be of His grace alone.

I hope dear Mrs. L. is somewhat better in health than she often is, also yourself, and that you both, too, realise the blessing of God which maketh rich; and that He is with you in your going out and coming in amongst the people of God.... Our little cause is still kept going. We are favoured with a comfortable little congregation, but some of us want to see more, even the Lord at work in our midst.

With Christian regards to you and Mrs. L., I remain,  
Yours sincerely,

M.A. Wigley

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### ASCENSION GIFTS PROMISED FOR SINNERS

*Extract from William Gurnall (1616-1679)*

*First.* There is a bank and treasure of gifts in the hand of Christ. “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).

*Second.* *Who entrusts Him with them*, and that is His Father – “Thou hast received gifts” – that is, Christ of His Father.

*Third.* When, or *upon what consideration*, doth the Father deposit this treasure into Christ’s hands? “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts.” That is, when Christ had vanquished sin and Satan by His death, and rode in the triumphant chariot of His ascension into heaven’s glorious city, then did Christ receive these gifts. They were the purchase of His blood, and the payment of an old debt which God, before the foundation of the world – when the covenant was transacted and struck – promised His Son, upon the condition of His

discharging sinful man's debt with the effusion of His own precious blood unto death.

*Fourth.* The *persons* for whose use Christ received these gifts – “for men” – not angels – for “rebellious” men, not men without sin; “Yea, for the rebellious also”; so that, poor soul, thy sinful nature and life do not make thee an excepted person, and shut thee out from receiving any of this dole [charitable gift].

*Fifth.* Observe the *nature of these gifts*, and the *end* they are given Christ for: “That the LORD God might dwell among them.” Now, nothing but faith can make a soul that hath been rebellious a place meet for the holy God to dwell in. This is the gift indeed He received all other gifts for, in a manner. Wherefore the gifts of the Spirit and ministry, apostles, teachers, pastors, etc., but that by these He might work faith in the hearts of poor sinners? Let this give thee boldness, poor soul, humbly to press God for that which Christ hath paid for. Say, “Lord, I have been a rebellious wretch indeed; but did Christ receive nothing for such? I have an unbelieving heart; but I hear there is faith paid for in Thy covenant. Christ shed His blood that Thou mightst shed forth Thy Spirit on poor sinners.” Dost thou think that while thou art thus pleading with God, and using Christ's name in prayer to move Him, that Christ Himself can sit within hearing of all this, and not befriend thy motion to His Father? Surely He is willing that what God is indebted to Him should be paid; and therefore, when thou beggest faith upon the account of His death, thou shalt find Him ready to join issue with thee in the same prayer to His Father. Indeed, He went to heaven on purpose that poor, returning souls might not want a friend at court, when they come with their humble petitions thither.

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### SOUL COMMUNION WITH GOD

*An extract from John Rusk (1771-1834)*

Sunday, August 31st, 1817. Shortly after I got out, I felt a heart truly thankful to God for all His mercies. This to me is very particular; and how delightful it is secretly to bless and praise the Lord when the heart and tongue go together; but how often have I received mercies from the Lord and yet felt no gratitude, neither to the Almighty nor to the instrument, but a hard heart; but this was different. I heard Mr. Robins very well. Text: “By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life” (Prov. 22. 4). At night: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not” (1 John 3. 1).

Monday, September 1st, 1817. I cannot describe the tenderness, the fear, the love, and the delight I do feel this morning in the Almighty, earnestly wishing to be led by Him in all things, for I have proved Him to be a faithful God who has heard and answered my prayers both for soul and body. I have now been to Him, and from my heart entreated Him to direct my every step this day as He did His servant David when he prayed, "Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?" And he got an answer to his prayer. O what a high privilege to have a covenant God to go to in all our troubles. Language can never express the greatness of it. I feel nothing in myself, and desire to lie in His hands as clay in the hand of the potter. After this, I read a good book, and also the Scriptures; but I believe we must be kept lively in our souls by the power of God's grace; for it is not what I felt yesterday will do for today. No. There must be a continual communication from the blessed fulness that is treasured up in Christ Jesus, or we cannot "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2. 1), or, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6. 10).

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### THE LORD RULES OVER US FOR OUR SOULS' PROFIT

*An extract from David Clarkson (1622-1686)*

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That He who rules over all is sufficient for all this, will be more evident if we consider particularly,

1. He wants no *wisdom*. He that is wise enough to rule and order all and everything in the whole world, wants no wisdom for upholding or restoring His own interest. Those who are wisest for the managing of their interest are but fools to Him. The apostle, where he styles Him King, calls Him also "the only wise God" (1 Tim. 1. 17). The profoundest and most improved wisdom deserves not the name of wisdom compared with His. He is only wise, He alone. None so well understand their interest, none are so apprehensive of what may endanger it, none are so knowing of what may promote it, or for the ordering of all things in a subserviency to it. The wisdom of angels is but folly to Him.

2. He wants no *power*. He that rules over all has power to keep all in subjection, to make all things obey Him, to force all to move or stand still at His beck. It is the Lord God almighty that reigns. It is the God "who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4. 17), and makes them to be what He calls them by so calling them. It is He who has power to rule and order all things in heaven and earth as He will. If some wise men had the power to order all things as they pleased, they would never question the securing of their interest. What fear is there, then, that the Lord will let



His interest miscarry, when He has power at will, no less than infiniteness of power, as well as wisdom?

3. He wants no *instruments* to serve His interest, nor can want any, if the whole world will afford enough, for all in heaven and earth are in His hand and ready for His use, who is Lord and absolute Sovereign of all things. The highest angels think it their chief honour to serve His interest, and to serve it in any capacity, and so, we find, are called sometimes His chariot, sometimes His warriors, sometimes the conduct of His people, sometimes their purveyors, always His ministers. And He can make the most untoward instruments to serve His turn, whether they will or no. The crookedest tool will become straight in His hand, who overrules all things to be and do what He will have them.

4. He wants no *opportunities*, through want of which many a man's interest miscarries, for times and seasons are in His hand; He has reserved them in His own power (see Acts 1. 7). He rules them as He does all things else. That must be a season which He will have so. He can make any part of time to be a fit season, and what we count unseasonable, He can render it the fittest opportunity. He can remove when He pleases whatever in us or in others renders that unseasonable which would promote His interest. The unfitness of the subject, the incapacity of the matter, the unpreparedness of His people, cannot nonplus Him who rules over all, or make Him to seek or leave Him at a loss for a season; He can overrule these, or anything else, into a seasonable compliance and subserviency to Him in any moment.

5. He wants no *will*. For who can doubt that the great Ruler of the world is not willing to secure and advance His own interest? Sure this must be pleasing to Him, and He will do all His pleasure (see Isa. 46. 10).

*Objection:* But if He be so willing and all-sufficient to maintain His own interest, why does He suffer it to decline and be borne down, and His people who only own it, and sincerely design the promoting of it, to be oppressed and kept under hatches, to be deprived of power, kept low and weak, and for the most part in an afflicted condition, and their necks under persecution? By this He seems not willing to uphold or advance His own interest in the world.

*Answer:* We may mistake His interest, and are apt to judge that to be for it which is not. We are apt to think that if the Lord would put His people in a prosperous and plentiful condition, and give them power and greatness, and free them from the cross, and advance them in a worldly station above others, and enable them to shake off the yoke, and to keep those under who oppress and persecute them, this would be more for His interest than the low and distressed state which is commonly their portion. But it is otherwise, and the Lord, who rules and disposes of all with infinite wisdom, knows it, and He has not only said but done

enough to make His people understand it. He has given experiments thereof in several ages sufficient to convince us, though we be slow to understand or believe that which does not please us.

We have ground enough, both from Scripture and experience, to believe that His interest lies not so much in the outward prosperity of His people, as in exercising them with afflictions and sufferings, and appearing for them therein. This seems to be most for His honour, and best for them too, if they judge like themselves, and count that best which proves so to their souls. That which is most for His honour is most for His interest. Did He not get more glory, by keeping His servants untouched, unscorched, in the midst of the raging flames, than if He had kept them from being cast into the furnace? Does it not honour Him more to let the world see that He can keep the bush, when it is burning, from being consumed, than if He should keep the fire from coming near it? Is it not more to keep a spark alive in the midst of the waves, than to make it flame in a chimney, and more for His honour that can do it? Why, thus does the Lord do, and thus does He honour Himself, by keeping up a people for Himself in the midst of the rage and fury of the world. They are like a combustible body in a fiery furnace, or like a bush flaming, or like a spark in the midst of the sea, and yet kept alive, secured, preserved. Who can do such a thing but He who rules over all? How much is this for His honour! A thousand preservations from trouble, danger and extremities, keeping these from coming near them would not be so much, if at all taken notice of, would be in a manner lost upon them, would not be observed with any such honourable reflection upon the great God, as His upholding, maintaining and delivering them when they find themselves in the mouth of dangers, and in the midst of extremities.

It is better for His people too; better for their souls than that condition which is more pleasing to flesh and blood. And that which is better for their souls is more for His interest. It makes more for peace and holiness. They have ordinarily more peace with God, when they meet with tribulation in the world; more peace within, when more trouble without. And then holiness thrives more under afflictions, and corruption has less advantage against us, than in a prosperous condition. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4. 16). Though he was harassed by affliction, and brought low as to his outward state, yet his soul had great advantage by it. He lost nothing, but what the eagle loseth by moulting her old feathers; she gets fresh and more beautiful plumes, and is renewed into a better state. His inward man is hereby renewed, and refined, and holiness more revived and reinforced. He was freed more from the incumbrance of the old man, and that corruption which brings and keeps the soul in a crazy and decrepit condition. And thus it is ordinarily with the people of God.

## UPHELD HITHERTO

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Rose Cottage,  
Sible Hedingham, Essex  
December 17th, 1930

Dear Friend and fellow-traveller to Mount Zion,

“To lovely mount Zion my heart is now bound,  
But many a lion is in the way found.”

It did me good to read how good the dear Lord has been to you all these years, and how He has blessed you in time past; and,

“He who has helped *you* hitherto,  
Will help *you* all *your* journey through.”

We can say with another,

“In darkest shades if He appear,  
My dawning is begun;  
He is my soul’s sweet morning Star,  
And He my Rising Sun.”

Well friend, I have not been in the way so long as you. I was over forty years old when called by grace. I was called in a vision in the night, in which I met a dear old servant of God who used to preach at our little cause. I appeared to be going away from the chapel when I met him, going toward the recreation ground, as I thought. He called me and said, “Young man, you come back to chapel with me.” I began to make excuses, but he said, “You have got to come,” and he made me go back with him. But I was not obedient to the call.

“Against the God who rules the sky  
I fought with hand uplifted high;  
Despised the mention of His grace,  
Too proud to seek a hiding-place.”

But the dear Lord brought me down to the dust, and I got into great troubles and did not know what to do. I had never prayed before that I know of, but I was made to go down on my knees and beg for mercy. I thought Satan would have me and I should go to hell. My troubles got worse; I used to walk in the fields all alone and creep into a ditch and cry unto the Lord to have mercy upon me. My friends all turned against me and said, “He is going out of his mind,” and I used to think I should, which was a great trial to me. I felt like the dear psalmist when he said, “My soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath

no strength” (Psa. 88. 3, 4). O the many enemies that did rise up against me, and they said, “You are in a sinking boat.” But, blessed be God, He has not let me sink yet, for who can sink with such a Prop as God who holds “the waters in the hollow of His hand” (Isa. 40. 12), who has said, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed”? (Job 38. 11). But I have been kept by the grace of God, bless His holy name, and after a time He, in His great mercy, was pleased to speak pardon to my soul with these words: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1. 18). I know I am a great sinner, the vilest of the vile, yet, “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). So I have been

“Preserved in Jesus when  
My feet made haste to hell;  
And there should I have gone,  
But Thou dost all things well;  
Thy love was great, Thy mercy free,  
Which from the pit delivered me.”

I began now to feel a love for the house of God and His dear servants; and that dear old minister I saw in my vision, how I loved to sit under his ministry. The dear Lord did so bless the Word to my soul, I did not care how much He cut me up. I used to feel annoyed the sermon was so short, I could have stayed there all day. But O the great temptations of Satan I had to endure! and I was as weak as water and as chaff before the gale. But as Satan kept putting water on the fire, the dear Lord was pleased to pour in His oil of grace. I was thus kept alive, and am pleased to say He has brought me thus far and not put me to shame, nor made my enemies to rejoice over me. He has given me many tokens of His love since, for which I do desire to bless and praise His dear name.

I do not know if you knew the late Mr. Elijah Coe, of Cambridge; he was the dear old minister I was blessed under. He was eighty years of age or more, but was a faithful servant of God. I have sent you a little book of his to read, by which you will see that he was so.

Well, dear friend, I must not run on too much, though I have not told you half. My greetings to you are, that the dear Lord will be pleased to give you that peace that passeth all understanding, and that the love of God may richly dwell in you through Jesus Christ our Lord.

With Christian love,

Robert Drury

## THE SACRED HUMANITY OF THE REDEEMER

### CHAPTER 15

#### THE SECOND COMING

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

*(Concluded from page 117)*

We have another view to take of our blessed Lord as having entered into the courts of bliss. He is gone thither as His people's *Forerunner*, as the apostle speaks, "Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 6. 20). How blessedly did the Lord comfort His sorrowing disciples when He said to them, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14. 2). He is gone to take possession beforehand of His and their everlasting home, for He is ascended to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. He has, as it were, filled heaven with new beauty, new happiness, new glory. His glorious Deity shining through His spotless and glorified humanity illuminates heaven with a peculiar glory, for He has fought the fight and won the day; He has fulfilled all the types and figures of the Old Testament, accomplished the purposes of the everlasting covenant; glorified God by the highest obedience that could have been yielded to His will, and having finished the work which the Father gave Him to do, has returned triumphantly to the courts of bliss to receive the reward of His humiliation, sufferings and death. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9). His glorious Person as Immanuel is become the Object of heaven's praise and adoration. The elect angels, whom He has confirmed in their standing, adore Him as God-Man, and the spirits of just men made perfect worship Him in company with the angelic host.

What a view had holy John of heaven's glorious worship (Rev. 5) when he saw the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders fall down before the Lamb; when he heard their new song and the voice of many angels round about the throne, and all saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5. 12). Heaven itself is waiting for the completion of the great mystery of godliness, when the whole church shall be assembled around the throne; when the marriage supper of the Lamb shall come; when the top stone shall be brought forth by the hands of the spiritual Zerubbabel, with shoutings of "Grace, Grace unto it." Earth itself is groaning under the weight of sin and sorrow; and the souls of those under the altar who "were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held," are crying with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost

Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6. 9, 10). Nay, the very signs of the times themselves are all proclaiming as with one voice that it cannot be long before the Lord will come a second time without sin unto salvation.

And this brings us to the last point, with which we shall close our *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer*, His *second coming*, and the *posture* in which His people should be found, as looking for and expecting His return.

When the Lord ascended up on high in the sight of His disciples, "they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up," their faith, hope and love all following Him up the shining way, and as they thus viewed His glorious track, they seemed to lose sight of every other consideration. But, "behold, two men," two angelic beings in human shape, "stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1. 10, 11). It was as if the angels said to them, "Jesus, your Master, your Head, your King, is not gone away from you for ever. He will one day, according to His own promise, return in the same glorious Person as that in which He is gone up, in the same divine and human nature, and in the clouds of heaven which have now received Him out of your sight. For this, meanwhile, look, watch, wait and pray."

From that moment, therefore, the Lord's return has always been a leading feature in the faith of the church of Christ, especially in the early period of her history. Thus we find Peter at once proclaiming it: "And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3. 20, 21). That it ever after formed a prominent point in the teaching and testimony of the apostles is plain from the inspired epistles of the New Testament, in which it is continually brought forward and alluded to.

Thus, not to quote numberless passages, the apostle reminds the Thessalonians how they had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1. 9, 10), and seeks to comfort them under their persecutions with the prospect of eternal rest, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1. 7, 8); as well as to console them under their bereavements with the sweet persuasion that "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4. 14). To be looking, then, and waiting for the Lord's second coming was the especial hope and consolation of the saints of old. By this

prospect their hearts were comforted when they could look forward to that glory which should be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ, for they knew that when He should come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, He would be glorified in His saints, and be admired in all them that believe (see Matt. 16. 27; 1 Pet. 1. 7; 2 Thess. 1. 10). This faith and expectation had a most blessed and enduring influence on their hearts and lives. It made them feel that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; and that their Master having promised to return, and it being uncertain at what watch of the night He would come, their loins should be girded about, and their lights burning, and they should be "like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately" (Luke 12. 36).

We shall not enter upon the question of the nature and circumstances of the Lord's return, or its immediate consequences, as these are disputed points, and we wish to consider the subject more with a view to edification than to controversy. It is sufficient for us to believe that Jesus will come again with all His saints, and that when He comes it will be to the salvation and joy of His friends, and the destruction and confusion of His enemies. We shall, therefore, rather address ourselves to the consideration of the *posture* in which the church should stand as waiting her Lord's return.

During our present time state we are to be conformed to the suffering image of Christ, and to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal body (see 2 Cor. 4. 10). Our present life is to be one of trial, affliction and temptation, that we may walk in the footsteps of our blessed Lord (see Luke 22. 28). We are to be persecuted by the world, despised by professors, assailed and tempted by Satan, and walk in a path of tribulation and sorrow, that we may, as members of His mystical body, "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" (Col. 1. 24). We are to drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism, for, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him" (2 Tim. 2. 11), and we must "suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8. 17). The world knew Him not, and it is to know us not. It hated and despised Him, and it will hate and despise us; for the servant is not greater than his Lord; and "if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?" (Matt. 10. 25; see John 15. 18, 19).

But to suffer will not always be the portion of the church of God. There is a day coming when Zion shall be raised from the dust; when she shall put on her beautiful garments; when the marriage of the Lamb shall come, and to His bride and spouse it shall be granted that she shall be

arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, and shall sit down with her Head and Husband at the marriage supper (see Isa. 52. 1, 2; Rev. 19. 7-9). Then those who have been partakers of the sufferings of Christ shall be partakers of His glory. Then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then “they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12. 3). Then the mystery of God will be finished, and there will be time no longer, for all the former things of this miserable time state shall have passed away (see Rev. 10. 6, 7; 21. 4).

Now what should be the *posture* of the church as looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God? and what influence should this blessed truth have upon our hearts and lives?

1. First, it should reconcile us to afflictions, as feeling with the apostle that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4. 17). And again, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8. 18). Weighed in such a balance, what are all our afflictions, though seemingly so heavy? Are they not light indeed, if they are conforming us to the suffering image of Christ, and preparing us for an eternal weight of glory?

2. It should raise up and draw forth heavenly desires and spiritual affections, as the apostle says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3. 20). Believers are called upon not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind (see Rom. 12. 2), and to set their “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3. 2). They are said to “have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5. 24), and by the Spirit to “mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8. 13). It is true that we are sorely hindered in running the race set before us, for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, having to carry about with us a body of sin and death, which is our constant grief and plague; and the flesh lusting against the spirit, as well as the spirit against the flesh, we cannot do the things that we would (see Rom. 7. 24; 2 Cor. 5. 4; Gal. 5. 17). We are beset, too, by innumerable temptations, have often to mourn over our darkness, deadness, coldness and unbelief, as well as on account of the hidings of the Lord’s face, and the absence of that blessed Comforter who alone can console the cast-down spirit. Still, though in themselves grievous hindrances, spears in our side and thorns in our eyes, these things do not utterly quench that prevailing bent of the renewed heart to look up and look forward to a brighter day, when tears shall be wiped from off all faces.



As, then, a view of the glory of Christ is obtained, and His coming again is realised by a living faith, the soul looks beyond this time state, and all the cares and sorrows of this vale of tears, to that glorious day when it shall be perfectly conformed to the glorified image of Christ, and never sin against Him any more. At His second coming He will "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" (Phil. 3. 21). And "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15. 54, 55).

Now if these things are so, if Jesus is but gone before to prepare a place for us, and has promised that He will come again and receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also (see John 14. 3), will not this heavenly truth, if received into a believing heart, exercise a gracious influence upon our daily walk and life? Such, at least, is John's testimony: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 2, 3). If we are led by divine teaching to see and feel that this present world is an evil world, from which Christ came to deliver us by giving Himself for our sins (see Gal. 1. 4), and as such is under the wrath and curse of God; if we feel everything in it marred by sin and sorrow, and have a good hope through grace that when the Lord appears we shall appear with Him in glory, will not this separate us in heart and spirit from the world, and lead us, with God's help and blessing, to walk as becometh the gospel, and to speak and act as "a peculiar people, zealous of good works"? (Tit. 2. 14).

But taking a general view of the professing church, can we say that such is its experience or its walk? The wise virgins, as well as the foolish, are sleeping and slumbering, and a cold, lukewarm profession is everywhere prevalent. Error abounds on every side; strife and division widely prevail; and we seem fallen upon those last days when perilous times were to come. We cannot, indeed, marvel that the world is what it ever was, a foe to God and godliness, buried in carnality and death, ignorant of its misery and ruin, and unconcerned at the awful judgment that is awaiting it, and almost ready to burst upon it. But we may justly wonder that the church of Christ, which professes to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, should be sunk so low, and manifest so little of the life and power of vital godliness. Yet this is only what we are led to expect from the Word of truth. The Lord Himself said, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18. 8); and,

“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matt. 24. 12). Thus, instead of expecting that the world will gradually get better and better, as men idly dream, or that bright and glorious days are awaiting the professing church, we may rather expect that things will get gradually worse and worse with both, until He comes who shall come and will not tarry. But come when He will, come when He may, it shall be well with the righteous. Unto those that fear His name the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and to them that look for Him the Lord shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation (see Mal. 4. 2 and Heb. 9. 28).

Here, then, we close our *Meditations upon the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer*; and can only lament that our views of this most glorious subject have been so dim, and our expression of them so faint and feeble. But such as they are, we commend them to the God of all grace; and if they have been or should be in any way blessed to the spiritual profit of His people, to Him and to Him alone be ascribed all the glory.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Life and Sermons of John M’Kenzie**, edited by Matthew Hyde, hard-backed book with dust jacket; 540 pages; £24.95 plus postage; published by The Huntingtonian Press, and obtainable from 72A Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4EB.

John M’Kenzie was co-editor of the *Gospel Standard* magazine from about 1838 till his death in 1849 aged only 40. Of the first twenty-four years or so of his life very little is known, not even the date or place of his birth. In 1833 he was convinced of his sin, and struggling hard to obtain heaven by works, he joined the Independents in Preston, Lancashire, where his work as a travelling salesman had brought him from his native Scotland. He was appointed superintendent of the Sunday School in early 1834, but in July 1834 his eyes were opened to see the doctrines of grace, and later that year he began to speak more publicly. His faithful testimony to the truth led to his excommunication from the Independents in May 1835, after which he joined the Particular Baptists and was baptized in 1835. In May 1836 he was appointed pastor at Preston, which office he retained until a few months before his early death from severe bleeding in the lungs.

This book is a collection of all that is known about John M’Kenzie. There is a short biographical introduction, then the *Fragments of the Experience of the late John M’Kenzie* which was published after his death by J.C. Philpot, and consists of Philpot’s preface, M’Kenzie’s own accounts of his call by grace, and a diary kept from 1841 up until shortly before his death. Interspersed in the diary are a few letters he wrote, especially one written in March 1842 giving an account of a great blessing when he received the assurance of his eternal salvation. There is also an account of his last days in a letter written by his brother-in-law.

Finally, there are twenty of his sermons, most of which have never been reprinted since they were first published.

The biographical introduction necessarily draws heavily on the *Fragments* and results in some duplication; also there are interesting details in the *Fragments* and letters which are not in the biographical introduction. The reviewer felt it would have been better to have merged all the biographical material into one consistent account, leaving the diary and sermons separate. The diary shows M'Kenzie as a feeling sinner in his exercises before God; the sermons show M'Kenzie before men and that he was a gifted and gracious expositor of the Word of God, and especially able to "take forth the precious from the vile" in doctrine, experience and practice. He was one who mourned deeply over the depravity of his own heart and was often weighed down with temptation and sorrow. Yet he was favoured with the consolations of the gospel too, and thus could draw comfort from what he himself had proved of the Word of God for the mourners in Zion.

The sermon entitled "Believing and Sealing" from the text, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1. 13), is the one by which M'Kenzie is most known, it having been reprinted (and reviewed in this magazine) several times since his death. It has been made a blessing to many and yet the reviewer was perturbed to read the comments by the editor and compiler of the book on pages 33-36. When a godly minister is severely criticised, the AV translation of the Bible found fault with, and a need for a minister to have a knowledge of the original languages is emphasised, one cannot but feel thankful that God is often pleased to use those whom the world accounts fools to bring glory to His name. There is a place for an Apostle Paul, but also for fisherman like Peter, James and John, or poor weavers like William Gadsby and John Warburton – or, we might add, for a coalheaver, William Huntington. We will leave the reader to their own judgment on this section. Otherwise we found the book very profitable.

John A. Kingham, Luton

**Through Much Tribulation**, Life and Sermons of John W. Walder, pastor at Galeed Chapel, Brighton; hardback; 304 pages; price £8.50 plus postage; published by the church at Galeed Chapel, and obtainable from Mr. P. Hills, 84 Vale Avenue, Brighton, Sussex, BN1 8UA.

John William Walder was the faithful pastor at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, from 1983 to 2016. Our late friend was a gifted minister of the gospel, with a clear and precise delivery, full of glorious gospel truth. He had been well taught by the Spirit of God, and was established in the sacred truth of the everlasting covenant and the gospel of Jesus Christ. He always laid the sinner low, and exalted a precious Saviour. He always delighted to preach the suitability of Jesus Christ to "sensible sinners," that is, sinners knowing their great need. Mr. John Walder's sermons were preached in an orderly way.

There is a preface by his close friend Mr. Timothy J. Pocock, pastor at South Moreton. Mr. Pocock makes a worthy comment on the ministry of Mr. Walder in his preface to the book. "Because John Walder was anointed of the Spirit, his ministry was not superficial. He laid the foundation of sound doctrine, and went on to describe the vital, saving experience of truth by the Holy Spirit's revelation of Christ. He preached the law that he knew, the gospel he

knew, the Christ he knew and the Holy Spirit's work he knew. His hearers were left in no doubt that his heart was in it. Like Haggai, he was 'the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people.'" The preface is followed by twenty-five pages relating the life and experience of our late friend, interspersed with a few photographs. When reading his experience, one can readily see that his sermons relate to the Lord's blessing and teaching that he had received in his life. He had handled and tasted of the good Word of life that he delighted to preach.

The main body of the book consists of twenty-one sermons, followed by seven prayer meeting addresses. These were preached at week night services. One sermon, number 17, was preached at a baptizing service in 2002. These are true gospel sermons, and Mr. Walder's style of preaching makes them suitable for public reading, when no gospel minister is available to preach. We believe that spiritually-minded believers will find some profit in reading these sermons. God is an absolute sovereign in whom He chooses to show forth His praise. As it is with Abel, so we hope it will prove in some measure with these Christ-exalting sermons: "He being dead yet speaketh."

The church and brethren at Galeed, Brighton, are to be highly commended for their loyalty and love shown to their late dear pastor in his long affliction of recent years.

We warmly recommend this book.

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## OBITUARY

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**Herbert John Alfred Ruse** (known as John), a faithful deacon at Hope Chapel, Stotfold, for twenty-four years, passed away into eternal rest on Friday, September 22nd, 2017, aged 87 years.

John was born in Wicken Bonhunt, Essex, on November 6th, 1929. His family owned a bakery business, and worshipped God at the "meeting rooms" in Cherry Hinton, near Cambridge. John was brought up to attend the services, but had little interest in the things of God. When he was older and involved in the bakery business, he records, "I was equally at home in God's house and in the world; the cinema, the public house and dance floor." I remember him saying to me that on one occasion his father said to him, "John, it is not right that your car is parked outside the public house on the Saturday evening and then outside the house of God on the Lord's day." The services at the meeting rooms in Cherry Hinton ceased, and John's parents began to attend Hope Chapel, Stotfold, John attending with them. It was here that he met Margaret (Hare) who was to become his wife. They were married on September 1st, 1956 by Mr. E.J. Woodcraft.

John writes: "During 1961, I went to work one Tuesday morning as usual, and while delivering bread at 1.30 p.m., the Lord sent an arrow of conviction of sin into my soul by speaking, 'It is a fearful thing to fall

into the hands of the living God' (Heb. 10. 31). Fear and anguish filled my heart, and I felt a truly black, condemned sinner before God. I arrived home that evening trembling from head to foot. My wife asked me, 'Whatever is the matter?' I replied that I did not know what God was going to do with me, and I told her how the Lord had met with me during the day. In a spirit of wrestling prayer, I felt like Jacob when he said, 'I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me,' because I knew if the Lord did not bless me, I should be lost to all eternity.

"On the Wednesday afternoon, I was plunged into such depths of despair that wherever God was I would never be, and Satan tempted me by saying, 'Why don't you end it all?' I was delivering bread and was tempted to throw myself under a bus that would soon be passing. Immediately I felt those blessed everlasting arms powerfully holding me back, preserving me. Satan was defeated! On the Thursday, wrestling prayer was unabated, and while coming away from a customer's house, the Lord spoke: 'He is the Chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely.' The view I had of a precious Christ was so powerful and sweet that my soul cried out within me, 'Yea Lord, Thou art lovely!' The verse, 'In paradise within the gates' (*Young People's Hymnal* 232) gave me such a view of heaven that I could have left all to be with Christ."

The next Sunday, Mr. J. Tomkins preached at Hope Chapel on Romans 8. 14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." John writes: "He so described the way the Lord had led me during the week that I felt I was the only one in the chapel." Later, on a Monday evening, Mr. D. Mulvey was engaged to preach, and John desired to hear him, although the return journey was fifty miles. During the sermon, Mr. Mulvey asked the question: "Are you sure your evidences are of God and not of the devil?" John writes: "I went home in much darkness of mind, and on the Tuesday morning at work, the darkness increased so much that I had to leave my work, take myself into the storeroom, fall upon my knees before God and plead with Him, 'Lord, Thou must confirm to me what my evidences are.' I returned to my work, and shortly afterwards He so blessed my soul with Psalm 42. 11: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? ... hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.' I said, 'Lord, don't take the sweetness away!'"

At the start of 1963, it was apparent that the family bakery was declining and John felt constrained to look for alternative employment. This was a time of providential trial and much prayer. Margaret was expecting their third child whilst John was experiencing spells of unemployment. In 1967, John took up an occupation at Jones Cranes in Letchworth, where, in time, he became a senior expeditor. Initially he lodged during the week with Mrs. and Mrs. Cyril Jarman from Stotfold

chapel, until he was able to move his family to be with him in Letchworth. He continued here for nearly thirty years, raising his family of four children (one son and three daughters). Some years after his retirement, he moved with Margaret to live in Stotfold.

About the time of the decline of the bakery business, John became exercised about baptism through a sermon by Mr. C. Beadle from the prophecy of Haggai. The words, "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house," were laid home in his heart. He writes: "I came before the church in January 1965, but was told to wait. This caused much searching of heart – had I been presumptuous in so solemn a matter? But I knew the Lord had given me that command to go forward." We cannot pry into the reason for refusal. No bitterness towards anyone was ever expressed by John concerning the matter. In April 1977, when I was received into church membership at Hope Chapel, I could not help but notice the grace of God that was evident in John, although I had not known him very long. In my ignorance, I asked him why he could not become a member of the church. He came to see me at home and explained that he had been before the church. But then he simply said, "I was told to wait."

On May 15th, 1977, Mr. T. Elsom preached at Hope Chapel. He spoke much of the love of God to a poor sinner. John writes: "I had to mention to him how I had previously felt that love in my heart. His reply was, 'That is your sins forgiven.'" During the following week, the Lord spoke: "*I love thee well, My child.*" John continues: "Down through the years, His command to go forward has remained with me."

In 1991 there seemed to be a spiritual barrenness at Hope Chapel. I was now a deacon and it concerned me greatly. Opening my Bible at work one lunchtime, I read concerning the famine in David's day (see 2 Samuel 21). There was reason for that famine. It came powerfully to me concerning John. I raised the matter at a church meeting, where our late senior deacon, Mr. W. Christian, told me to visit John. I went to his home and found him in the front garden. I asked John if he could come before the church again. Tears ran down his face. He had been praying a long time for a way to be made. John was baptized in August 1991 by Mr. R.C.T. Warboys and received into church membership on the first Lord's day of September by Mr. Richard Field. Mr. Field gave him the text: "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit" (2 Tim. 4. 22). This was and has been evident in John throughout his life since the Lord called him by His grace.

John was appointed a deacon of Hope Chapel, Stotfold in January 1993. He was very fearful at accepting the office, but heard to profit a sermon by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at Bethel Chapel, Luton, on the text, "The King's business required haste" (1 Sam. 21. 8). John proved a most

faithful deacon, especially to me in the exercise of the ministry and when constrained to take up the pastorate of the church. John chose and gave out the three hymns at each service, choosing them beforehand. Remarkably, the last hymn often reflected the text preached from. He said to me on more than one occasion, "Graham, we have been to the same place for them!" John always stood at the door of the chapel at the end of the services, having a kind, thoughtful word for each one of the congregation as they left. Many commented on his gracious words at the end of a service.

John and Margaret celebrated their diamond wedding in 2016. By then, Margaret's mental health was failing quickly. Many commented on John's patience in managing his afflicted wife. He said to me, "The Word of God says, 'Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools'" (Eccles. 7. 9). How the grace of God shone out in John during this trying period of their lives.

Early in 2017, John's own health began to fail. He quaintly said, "My weakness is very strong." He last gave out the hymns at the midweek service on Wednesday, July 19th. It was not expected that he would be at chapel that evening, having had medical assistance called to his home earlier in the day. Only through the Lord's help did he manage to get to the desk. After the sermon, it was a good part of a minute before he had strength to announce the last hymn (326). He was taken into hospital with heart and kidney failure during the following evening, but sufficiently recovered to enter the Harpenden Bethesda Home, where his wife Margaret was already a resident. He was pleased to be there.

However, on Tuesday, September 19th, John became very poorly and was taken again into hospital. On visiting him, he kept repeating, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He knew that he was coming to his end, and despite extreme weakness, made a great effort to say that he could not thank God enough for all that He had done for him in his life. When it was mentioned that if he recovered, as before, he would be able to return to the Bethesda Home, he did not reply. He was looking heavenwards, where the Lord took him on Friday of the same week, to be with his Lord which is far better.

His children record how John was a very loving and caring father who is sorely missed. His gentle manner and actions set his children a lovely, true Christian example, not least in his care of their mother. In his later years he still took great interest in their families.

John is greatly missed at Hope Chapel, Stotfold, especially in the loss of his prayers for all who attended the chapel and for me before each service and at other times. His life was a witness of the words he often expressed: "By the grace of God I am what I am." To God be the glory.

Graham E. Hadley

### MERCY IS FREE

*"Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption" (Psa. 130. 7).*

In silence of night  
On past life I lay musing ;  
And wept that 'twas all  
God's great mercy abusing;  
And I scarcely could think there was pardon for me;  
But a voice in my heart whispered, "Mercy is free."

I thought of my sins  
That no angel could number;  
Their greatness and blackness  
O'erwhelmed me with wonder:  
If there be but *one* soul beyond mercy 'tis me;  
"But there's *none*," said the voice, "seeing 'Mercy is free.'"

I thought of the vows  
Which in fervour I'd spoken;  
All meant to be kept,  
Yet all shamefully broken;  
O, baser than Judas! can grace stoop to me?  
"E'en to thee," breathed the whisper, "for 'Mercy is free.'"

I thought of the talents  
With which I'd been trusted;  
Some wasted on pride,  
Some with slothfulness rusted;  
And I cried in my anguish, "O, where shall I flee?"  
Said the whisper, "To Jesus, His 'Mercy is free.'"

O how can such guilt  
As is mine be forgiven?  
O how can a soul  
Such as I enter heaven?  
When in hell there are millions that ne'er sinned like me;  
"It is all," said the voice, "because 'Mercy is free.'"

O Jesus, my Lord,  
At Thy footstool now kneeling,  
I ask Thee afresh  
Both for pardon and healing;  
And I pray that henceforward Thou'lt keep me for Thee;  
Said the whisper, "'Tis granted, for 'Mercy is free.'"

This poem by the late J. Dickie, an honoured minister of the gospel, Irvine, Scotland, was composed *whilst helpless* and bed-ridden for eight years, under intense bodily and mental sufferings, which terminated in a triumphant entry to his eternal rest in Jesus.



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
JUNE 2018

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

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**GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETY AND  
BETHESDA FUND MEETINGS**

*Report of the Annual Meetings of the  
Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society and also the Bethesda  
Fund, held on Friday, April 13th, 2018, at Clifton, Bedfordshire*

**THE BLESSED END OF THE BEGGAR**

*Sermon preached at the evening service*

**Text:** “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16. 22).

It is the case of the beggar that I desire to speak of by the help of God this evening. “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” “And it came to pass.” From one generation to another generation this will come to pass, and also in each of our own lives. We must die and leave this world of sin and death behind. My dear friends, how vital it is, to be carried to Abraham’s bosom, that holy, happy place where nothing that defileth or maketh a lie entereth in, where all is purity and righteousness and peace and everlasting rest, where you will see, and come face to face with, and gaze upon the Son of God, Jesus, God with us. O my friends, we must all die. When travelling this morning, as we left the M25 and queued on the slip road to the A1(M), with all the cars and lorries racing by, it struck me, man is whizzing along, but where to? Eternity, that long eternity.

“It came to pass” – in God’s time. There is an appointed time to man upon the earth. My dear friends, we have a stewardship, we have to give an account of our lives, of what we have said, of what we have thought, of what we have done. All things in that day will be brought to remembrance. May we each be rightly exercised, greatly exercised, graciously exercised, to know that our names are written in that book, which is called the book of life, the Lamb’s book of life. In there are the names of blood-washed souls.

We have before us this parable. It is a parable, remember. “There was a certain rich man.” He enjoyed life to its full, as our nature does. That is my nature; that is your nature. There is no difference between us in our nature, as we were born. We were born in sin, shapen in iniquity,

in sin our mothers conceived us, and we have gone forth from the womb speaking lies. But we read of a beggar in this parable. We must be clear on this point: it is a parable which teaches spiritual truths, gospel truths, and there is instruction for gospel blessing. We may think by natural poverty we deserve to go to heaven, or merit something, or deserve God's favour. Not at all. That is not the teaching, though it is true from the Scripture: "The common people heard Him gladly" (Mark 12. 37), and it is generally "the poor of this world rich in faith" (Jas. 2. 5) who are saved, but nevertheless, God is a sovereign. He blesses kings and rich men as well as poor men. But we read, "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called," and, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1. 26, 27).

What is the meaning? It has a spiritual meaning. There was a man enjoying life to the full. We are not casting stones. It is our nature and we have to confess it. We are made solemnly aware of the corruption within. But here we have *a beggar*, and the Lord is using the illustration from the life of beggars, vagrants on the street. We read of him, he "was laid at his gate, full of sores." What a dreadful condition! Poor man! My dear friends, the dear saints know something spiritually about that. We know the sores and issues of sin and uncleanness from our mind and our hearts. We know so many temptations from Satan, so much evil and corruption of nature. We fear sometimes it will break out. We become beggars. What for? Gospel crumbs; beggars at the table of Jesus Christ, at the footstool of mercy.

Well, in considering this, this evening, I desire to speak of it in three ways: the character of the beggar; then, as helped, to think something of the begging life. O there are some gospel beggars in this world, spiritual beggars, feeling their emptiness and poverty, and seeking Christ, for the fulness of grace, to be replenished in their souls, to be renewed within, and well established, fitted and prepared to be "with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23). And thirdly, something of this expression of Jesus: "Abraham's bosom" – rather a strange expression. We would have thought perhaps He might have said, to be with God, or, to be with Me in heaven. "Abraham's bosom." My friend, we believe it to be the description of the dwelling place of God. The best, I think, and the simplest interpretation: the dwelling place of God where those who live by faith, being sons of Abraham, go to at last.

Let us consider for a few moments *the character of the beggar*. Grace is a wonderful thing! O the work of the Spirit in our heart leads us into truths, glorious truths, that the wisdom of this world cannot know and cannot learn. We are led into truths that man naturally fails to understand. I believe the Lord's dear people are made "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3. 15), and they become beggars. Let us consider, he had no power. He could not make his own way through life. He was ever

in need of supplies, in need of charity, in need of the love of other people, the kindness of other people. A beggar.

You see many beggars in the earth. Some are genuine, and some are not so genuine. That we must leave. But let us be thankful, and ponder this when we see beggars. They sometimes have not the capacity to settle down into proper life – perhaps some mental difficulty or incapacity – and though there are many sham beggars, yet what a mercy if you and I are strengthened in body and mind to take our responsibilities. We do not give ourselves our own intelligence or physical powers. It is a gift, a sovereign gift. We have nothing to boast of. It is all a gift of God.

We are brought to realise, more and more, that we have no power. Jehoshaphat was brought there. We have natural powers, yes, but to get to heaven, we have no power; to be saved from our sins, we have no power. We have no power to wash away our guilt. We have no power to say to this mountain, “Remove hence to yonder place” (Matt. 17. 20). We need the grace of faith, with power. We are brought to beg for that power. So the natural beggar has no power, but the dear people of God in their emptiness are brought to beg for it.

Also, they cannot manage their lives. What a mercy to be a spiritual beggar in this. “Choose Thou the way, but still lead on,” says faith. Well, we should use our natural faculties rightly in the fear of God, yet we are brought into circumstances and trials again and again where we need the Lord to make a right way for us. As we heard earlier of Saul in the address this morning, “Behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9. 11), Saul said, “What wilt Thou have me to do?” (verse 6). His first prayer was, “Who art Thou, Lord?” I do not know Thee. “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (verse 5). He was shot down out of the sky of self-righteousness and human strength and wisdom, and he had to come right down, and he prayed a real prayer for the first time.

I do not want to repeat this morning, but, “What wilt Thou have me to do?” A beggar has no power. He cannot make his own way. He lives on charity, the hand-outs of others. O the Lord’s dear people live on the charity of the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God. To get to heaven, if I may be allowed to use a modern expression of the financial world, we have no purchasing power. We have nothing; we are bankrupt. If we want to get to heaven, we need to be saved; we have to beg.

This is the teaching of the Lord Jesus, but there is something more here. The dogs licked his sores. He was rather a sorry character, if I may put it in a polite way. Job knew it, and said, “My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me” (Job 17. 1), and David also, “My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness” (Psa. 38. 5). So said these poor, godly men. They knew it spiritually. My dear friends, we have no power; we have no purchasing power. We are in the degradation of sin.

“O thou hideous monster, Sin,  
 What a curse hast thou brought in!  
 All creation groans through thee,  
 Pregnant cause of misery.”

It makes the saints groan. The world groans in rebellion and defiance of God, but the saints go begging at the footstool of mercy.

O my friends, the dogs licked his sores, the issue from those running sores. We have running issues from our sinnership. This is like the woman with the issue of blood, which according to the ceremonial law is a type of sin, and such were not allowed to go into the temple to worship, as they were unclean. That is what we are like by nature. Our hearts by nature are continually evil, envious, jealous, bitter, full of wrath, worldly-minded, rebellious, murmuring, complaining. It is human nature. We have here a beautiful parable. It has a spiritual meaning. The beggar was such a poor man in degradation and ruin, and like David, his wounds stank. He was dependent on the Lord's charity, and he went to heaven. What is the meaning here? It is a spiritual meaning. We are taught our poverty, and the Lord's charity.

I want to come, then, to *the life of begging*. It is the life of faith. You may say, It does not sound much like faith to me, just being a beggar. We are taught by the Holy Ghost the whole truth of ourselves, not all in a moment, but “here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28. 10). As we journey on, the more we realise our poverty, rags and ruin, and the more we are led to Christ if we are children of the heavenly King.

“Jesus, my soul's compelled to flee  
 From all its wrath and curse to Thee.”

Hymn 378 is a beggar's hymn, “A beggar poor, at mercy's door.” The minister on these occasions, chooses the last hymn, but this was too long to have; perhaps you would like to refer to it when you get home. We are poor beggars, but what door do we go to? Whose feet do we come to beg at? We beg at the gospel door, the feet of Jesus, do we not?

In the second thought we consider two things. Firstly, the things we beg for, and secondly, who do we beg with, who do we go to in our begging, who do we beg to? Why, God, Jesus the Son of the living God, the glorious Son of God and the Son of man at God's right hand. We beg there. My friends, it is at that place we receive our blessings, our mercies, our answers to prayer, and deliverance, and at that place we find peace in our soul.

Let us consider a few things we beg for. We beg for the vital things, first things first in the kingdom of heaven. To be reconciled to God – that is the vital thing – to be reconciled to God, no longer in our sins. It is the gospel of reconciliation through Jesus Christ our Lord. O there are many things in this wonderful ministry of reconciliation which the soul lives on and feeds on, and how the Lord feeds His dear people!

“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.”

Now we beg to be reconciled, for our sins to be forgiven us, and it is by precious faith we beg. We plead to know the love of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost gives real faith and makes Christ precious to us. In such a way we beg. We come empty handed and beg the precious gifts that are found in the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Every grace and every favour  
Comes to us through Jesus’ blood.”

We have to confess our sins in our way of begging for reconciliation, that our sins which are so many may be forgiven us. Our older friends, and those who have reached their seventies like me, still have to confess their sins and beg that they might know more and more of the power of His resurrection and be delivered from all their iniquities. The psalmist desired it. In this we plead that precious blood that God has shed Himself in the slaying of His dear Son. Jesus was commanded to lay down His life. God commanded that He should be taken by wicked hands and crucified. “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (John 10. 17, 18).

The Lord Jesus was the willing Lamb and was taken “as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isa. 53. 7). He shed His blood freely for the beggars that confess their sins and plead that precious blood as they come in their begging. It was “shed for **many**” (Matt. 26. 28) – mark that: *many*. That is the scripture. We do not pry into the fulness; it is hidden from us. “Shed for many for the remission of sins.” We beg an interest. It is precious in our early days. May it be more precious as we journey on. Though we may know much temptation and much guilt, yet we plead that precious blood.

In the ministry of reconciliation, we need the robe of righteousness, a covering for our nakedness. Sometimes we feel so naked before God, but we plead that covering, that glorious robe the Lord Jesus wrought. So it is in our begging to be reconciled to God. He clothes His dear people in Christ their righteousness. He lived for them, He died for them, He rose the third day for their justification. They have a robe “which God imputes, and faith puts on,” says John Kent. My dear friends, He imputes that righteousness to the poor men who are begging, and He encourages them to beg more and more at mercy’s door. How we come as beggars

to be reconciled, to be washed, to be clothed! We come, my dear friends, in all our begging about our life, our responsibilities. O how we have to come and beg for His presence as we journey on in this world of woe and sin and difficulty. Is it not “the Angel of His presence” who saves His dear people? “The Angel of His presence saved them ... and carried them” (Isa. 63. 9). Our poet says this:

“In Thy presence I am happy;  
In Thy presence I’m secure;  
In Thy presence all afflictions  
I can easily endure.”

Now we cannot endure afflictions otherwise. We are humbled to know this.

So we are brought to beg empty-handed, and plead the fulness of Him. We plead His presence. Godly people meet together and plead His presence. Ministers plead for His presence. Trials at work, difficult men, conflict, things in your providence, in your life – do you want His presence to convey and bring you safely through?

But there is a precious promise. I often quote it. It is a parting promise. “And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28. 20). He is always with His people! He may be behind the cloud. They may be in a dark valley. We want to know more of His presence as we journey on. Especially when we come to die, we shall need His presence. O to be a beggar! It comes to our own case. Individually we have our own case. That is the most important thing.

“When *I* tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid *my* anxious fears subside;  
Death of deaths, and hell’s Destruction,  
Land *me* safe on Canaan’s side;  
Songs of praises,  
I will ever give to Thee.”

Won’t it be wonderful to get there and ever give Him songs of praise! O what a change that beggar had!

I must hasten on. We have to pray for the Lord’s work to be revived. Look at the solemn decline. We said to God in prayer this evening, if we could stop it, we would stop it in a moment, but we cannot. But friends, there is a throne of grace. There is the great Head of the church. There is the great Shepherd of the sheep. And it is His work. Therefore we come begging in our assemblies, in our congregations, in our churches, in our families, with our loved ones, and in our own life and in our hearts. We say, “Let Thy work appear” in me, Lord, and my loved ones, and my friends in the congregation; and we beg for the Lord to return with power in the ministry. “Let Thy work appear unto Thy

servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us" (Psa. 90. 16, 17). That is what we need in Zion, and that there may be a savour of Christ with us. "The beauty of the LORD our God be upon us" – in our life, our walk, our congregations. "The work of our hands establish Thou it."

My friends, the way of begging is in emptiness and poverty, pleading Christ. In this there is essentially a believing. May we not confuse faith with assurance. Assurance is the greater degree of the consolation that faith finds in drawing from the wells of salvation. It is a greater degree of it. Some, my friends, are long waiting for the Lord's blessing. Think of the woman with the issue of blood. When she had heard of Jesus, she came (see Mark 5. 27). She came as a believer. She sought the Lord and found Him. She came, and she touched the hem of His garment, and she was healed then. May we wait upon our God. Some receive the sealing early, as the Apostle Paul, and some later in their seeking and believing. We beg for the confirming of our souls. Some are blessed immediately. We have to wait upon the Lord our God, and some have long times and seasons in waiting for the sealing; and there are degrees in this precious faith, but it is the same principle. We call upon the name of the Lord, and we dare not give up and we dare not turn back. Our face is toward Zion's city and Zion's King.

We do beg for our assemblies and for the gospel ministry, for the Lord to revive His "work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Hab. 3. 2). We have to enquire in our begging: Show us the offence, Lord. I am sure many of my dear brethren here know this searching of heart. I do myself. We beg for the Lord to bless us, to be with our dear families and loved ones. Grace does not run in families. Do we not cry for our families and our grandchildren: "Lord, in sovereign love, in sovereign mercy, in sovereign grace, blow upon them; have mercy upon them." As the Lord has had mercy upon us, isn't our God still able to have mercy upon them according to His good will? It is "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush" (Deut. 33. 16).

So we come as beggars with no strength. We may plead that everlasting strength, as we plead the everlasting covenant. Faith believes it; faith pleads it. Do we not beg to be prepared for our dying day? We do need to pray to be well prepared for our dying day. We shall lose *all* our powers in death. When the body winds down, and when our mortal powers of mind and body fail, and we cannot move, and we are sinking into death, we need such a preparation. How we need that wisdom to lay up prayers against that day. This beggar died. "It came to pass, that the beggar died." We shall all die. What a mercy to be a beggar!

Our second point on the life of begging is the Person we plead. This is the vital part of our prayer, pleading the precious, all-prevailing name

of the Person whom we believe to be the true Son of God, God's High Priest, God's Lamb for sinners slain. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, the faithful Friend of publicans and sinners, who cannot lie! We plead the "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Pet. 1. 4). In our begging, we arm ourselves with the Word of God. Lord, Thy Word says; *Thy Word says*. We need Thy blessing, Lord. "Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south" (Psa. 126. 4).

We need the Lord to enlarge us and bless us. The Lord grant it to you and to me more and more as we journey. There is a fulness in Christ for sinners and sinners only. There is no fulness for a man that is righteous, but that fulness in Jesus is for sinners. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1. 19). It is for sinners poor and sinners vile.

"For sinners, Lord, Thou cam'st to bleed;  
And I'm a sinner vile indeed;  
Lord, I believe, Thy grace is free,  
O magnify that grace in me,"

says faith, that begs.

Beggars are poor people. We read concerning the blessed people God speaks of in the Prophecy of Zephaniah, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD" (Zeph. 3. 12). One sacred element of faith is trusting in His Word, trusting in Him, leaving the issue with Him. I will not go away, Lord. Consider the faith of the Syrophenician woman – she would not go away. She would not be put off. Jacob's prayer of faith was so urgent, so vital; his situation was so dangerous. "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Gen. 32. 26). Here is God, a faithful God. A Man appeared and wrestled with him. That Man is in heaven now. It was a pre-incarnation appearance of the Lord, but now He is risen and ascended on high. "I will not let Thee go," says faith. I will take Thy all-prevailing name, Thy finished work, and Thy precious written Word, for Christ is in the written Word from Genesis to Revelation.

I must hasten and come to the end. "Abraham's bosom." When I was a lad, it seemed to perplex me. It means heaven – in Abraham's bosom. I believe the plain and simple teaching is this. As "the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1. 17), the sons of Abraham who have faith, Jew and Gentile, are carried into heaven. They are taken to be with God, to be with Christ. Abraham was the friend of God, and God the Friend of Abraham. So what it really means is this: those who live by precious faith, those who are justified by faith, go to be with Him, "to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23).

He "was carried." The sense there is that the Lord took care of him in life and in death. His soul was sweetly conveyed at that last breath up into glory. He did not take himself there. He was a dying man, but the



Lord took him there. His body was buried in the grave, awaiting the glorious resurrection.

“Abraham’s bosom.” “To be with Christ; which is far better”! There is a place prepared for these poor beggars. What an exchange! The tears, the temptations, the dreadful guilt at times, the torments of Satan, the trials, the sorrows that come into families, and death breaking up all families and loved ones, and breaking up churches. One by one we must pass away. Is there not a cry,

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

“The beggar died.” “These all died in faith” (Heb. 11. 13). Look at the Scriptures where we read of the lives of the godly; they were beggars. They prayed their way along. They had to trust and believe and wait upon God. This is a beautiful work of grace. The work of grace makes us beg, makes us poor, makes us know our need. That same work of grace makes Christ precious. It is the work of the Holy Ghost, a sure, infallible work. That work of the Holy Ghost will bring every vessel of mercy safely home to glory, to go in and “see the King in His beauty” (Isa. 33. 17).

“The beggar died.” He did not die in *his* time; he died in God’s time. Our life is immortal until the appointed hour. But the mortal in the resurrection puts on immortality, gathered safely to be with Christ – no sin. What a state that must be! No sin, not a sinful thought, not a sinful imagination, to be for ever where nothing that maketh a lie or defileth can enter in. Heaven! The church is complete in a precious Christ. The church is the body of Christ, He the Head. What must it be to be without spot?

I had a godly aunt at Gravesend. I went to visit her on her death bed. I said, “I don’t think I will see you again.” “No,” she said. “I hope I shall be with the Lord. O what must it be to be there! No more sin! O my Jesus, do come, do come.” I shall never forget it. O to be taken home to glory – no more sin, and no more death if there is no more sin. Death is past. This beggar passed the valley safely. He got safely through, on the safety of dry ground. Jesus had gone before him and the waves divided, gathered safely to Abraham’s bosom, to be with Christ.

It is the teaching of the Lord Jesus concerning two sorts of people in this earth – one full of this world and the other a poor beggar. How the Lord loved him, cared for him, provided for him, brought him safely home and brought him home to glory! It is all grace, the sovereign work of the Holy Ghost.

I often look at my family and grandchildren, and many other friends and young folks too, and often seek for them at the throne of grace. I try

and pray this: "Lord, breathe upon their souls." They will become beggars then, and they will be brought to a precious Christ. They will be brought to the mercy seat, that blood-sprinkled mercy seat. They will be brought to God's High Priest, to plead His all-prevailing intercession, to plead His finished work. They will value Calvary. They will value the precious truth of the resurrection, because they know the power of the resurrection in their life. I believe in our begging we shall know more of the glorious truth of Him who is our resurrection, and our life.

The Lord make us each beggars, to be brought to that happy, holy place. We have speculation and vain fancies, but what must it be to be there and see God? All is light, no darkness at all, a city where the streets are paved with gold and Christ is All in all. We see God in the lovely Person of the Lord Jesus.

There is something I must just close with, a thought I had this afternoon. As natural beggars receive from the goodwill of men, through bounty, O the free grace that spiritual beggars receive from God, Jesus the Son of God! We have not laid one little mite to our salvation. It is a finished salvation, my friends. This afternoon's subject was the stone being rolled away already. Jesus cried, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. All things are ready. May we beg for those free-grace blessings, things written, things promised, things sealed by the blood of Jesus, to look to Jesus, the living Lamb upon the throne.

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## MORNING PRAYER MEETING

Mr. B.P. Mercer (Pastor, Eastbourne) read Acts 9. 1-20 and spoke as follows:

In much need of the help of God by and through the Holy Spirit, I venture for a few moments this morning to draw your attention and thoughts to a few words in this chapter, Acts chapter 9, at the end of verse 11: "For, behold, he prayeth."

Dear friends, first of all this is the witness of the Holy Spirit. It was the witness of the Holy Spirit. This was not the word of man. It was not the observation of the creature, man. But dear friends, it was the witness of the Holy Spirit, and this was the first thing that the Lord said, apart from the direction where Ananias was to go. O what an emphasis I feel is here, and I venture to speak just one or two things about this witness: "For, behold, he prayeth." Now the Lord had come to Saul and by that which he saw, which the Lord made known, Saul was given a view of the Lord Jesus in heaven, and at the same time, the Holy Spirit quickened his soul. I just mention that he might have been in absolute terror, except the Holy Spirit had quickened him at that very same moment so that he spoke as he did, and very soon, "trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Now it pleased God to bring to pass a remarkable conversion, and much has been said about the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. But I have felt how remarkable is this witness of the Holy Spirit through the vision to Ananias: “For, behold, he prayeth.” First of all, this surely, in this witness of the Holy Spirit, is the witness that He gives of His own work. Here on the Damascus road, and now come into Damascus itself, was a new-born child of God. “For, behold, he prayeth.” And that is indeed an evidence of life, as the cry of a new-born child. How it is so welcomed at birth to hear that cry, and it is such a blessed evidence even of natural life. Now the Lord by the Spirit says to Ananias concerning this man, “For, behold, he prayeth.”

Secondly, here in this witness the Lord speaks of this man, this new-born child of God, in this way (“For, behold, he prayeth”), and in so doing, He speaks of the union between a poor sinner and his Saviour. For especially whilst the Lord Jesus Christ was here below, we have those records, the witness of Scripture, the words of Scripture, and I speak it with reverence: O what a Man of prayer was the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! We have that contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that speaks of Him; it is speaking of Christ, “Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared” (Heb. 5. 7) – margin: “was heard for His piety.” O friends, here then the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh walked this path of prayer as never any before or since have walked it. May we ponder over it, even as the Lord might draw us into the Garden of Gethsemane. O those prayers, the cry of the Saviour! “And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly” (Luke 22. 44).

O now here is one poor sinner brought, quickened into life, and the witness: “For, behold, he prayeth.” And this sets before us an evidence of that union between the Lord Jesus and His dear people, and especially I have felt it like this: the Saviour being a Brother to every blood-bought child of God. I just turn to one verse in Romans chapter 8, and we have these words: “For whom He did foreknow” – this is speaking of the soul of a poor sinner – “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8. 29). Now there was one more sinner, brought on that Damascus road, and the witness of the Holy Spirit: “For, behold, he prayeth.” One now a joint heir, although in the eternal counsels of God always, but now effectually called, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

“Behold, he prayeth.” Again in that regard I felt also I will just mention in the Epistle to the Galatians, and how the dear man in the verses of the chapter I have read, later speaks of this: “But when it

pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1. 15, 16). And it goes on from there. But this witness, then: "For, behold, he prayeth." And with Saul of Tarsus, it was an evidence that he was being conformed to the image of God's dear Son. Then much more could be said.

But thirdly, this witness of the Lord by the Spirit to Ananias: "For, behold, he prayeth," with what was further spoken to Ananias, was used to remove all the doubts and the suspicion that rightly Ananias felt concerning this man who had been such a persecutor of the true church of Christ, and in a few words that went into Ananias' heart: "For, behold, he prayeth." Ananias, you are not to be fearful; but there is this that the Lord has called him to do.

Now the effect of it. When Ananias comes in to Saul in the house of Judas, how he spoke: "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul" (Acts 9. 17). O dear friends, this is the way that the Lord will unite His dear people together, one of the great ways in which He will, and He does. It is through prayer, when there is that witness with our spirit with the prayer of another, it unites us together, in some ways more than anything can do. I know we can hear the Word from preaching, but what a blessing it is to feel a union with the prayers of the Lord's dear people! "Brother Saul." There was no reservation. The Lord had gone before and had given His witness of the Spirit to dear Ananias. "Brother Saul." May there be then amongst us even this morning, and the rest of the day, that the Lord might unite us together and favour us with His presence and His blessing.

"For, behold, he prayeth." May the Lord bless His Word. Amen.

Hymns 394, 24 and 12 were sung during the prayer meeting. The following prayed: Mr. G.W. Hyde (Pastor, Tenterden), Mr. J.J. Wiffen (Sible Hedingham), Mr. T.J. Parish (Pastor, Attleborough), Mr. S.B. Cottingham (Eastbourne), Mr. J.B. Hart (Rotherfield) and Mr. B.E. Izzard (Pastor, Fenstanton). Mr. Mercer closed with prayer and the benediction.

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## BUSINESS MEETING

After the singing of hymn 14, the Chairman of the Society, Mr. G.D. Buss, called on Mr. R.W. Woodhams (Pastor, Haywards Heath) to seek the Lord's blessing on the meeting.

The Chairman then read Luke 18. 18-27.

CHAIRMAN: Three times this incident is recorded in the gospels, and three times the dear Saviour crowned His word on it with this declaration: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Friends, we live with many impossibilities. The rich ruler here did not realise the impossibilities of salvation as far as man was concerned. He had quite a large view of what he could do and had done. He had only an inferior view of the dear Saviour, calling Him "Good Master," and not giving Him the honour due to His holy name as the Son of God. He did not yet know himself as a sinner. But the One with whom all things are possible dealt with the matter, and uncovered that which was wrong at the root of his religion. In his case, it was covetousness, and when it came to the point whether he should follow the dear Saviour or cling to his riches, at that time he clung to his riches. We would hope that perhaps later on he bethought himself and weighed the matter up, and if the Lord had purposes of grace toward him, he certainly would have done, and he would have counted all things but loss for the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The point I want to emphasise just for one moment is that we have many impossibilities. You may be here this afternoon hour and faced with many things – doors that do not open, mountains that do not flow down, valleys that do not seem to be exalted, crooked things that remain crooked. There may be many things, dear friends, in the day in which we live; there are many impossibilities nationally, denominationally and personally and in the churches. But may we never ever forget that with God all things are possible. If we have a large view by faith, as used often to be said: "Faith laughs at impossibilities, and cries, 'It shall be done.'" God-given faith you read of in Hebrews 11. Those worthies of old were given that faith, a large view of what God could do, and God did it, because God was the Author of their faith and crowned it with performing that which He promised to do.

Friends, we have the same God this afternoon hour to go to. He is still able to save to the uttermost. He is still "able to succour them that are tempted." He is still "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." O that we might open our mouth wide and fill it, and be not like poor Philip – and we would not throw stones at Philip in any way – but when the Lord asked him how the five thousand should be fed, instead of remembering who asked the question, the eternal Son of God in our nature, he began to calculate and reason and debate in his own mind what money would be needed and where he would go, and he was completely perplexed and nonplussed. But we read two very precious things in that context. The first was this: we read, "He Himself knew what He would do" (John 6. 6). And the second thing was He took the smallest of means, a lad with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and

took them in His sacred hands, and did what our text says He could do. "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God."

O may we have the faith of that man full of leprosy who came to our Lord outside Jericho. "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (Matt. 8. 2). This precious Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, stretched forth His hand, that holy hand, and touched the untouchable, that poor leper, and He made him clean. Friends, this same Jesus still lives and still He says to poor, needy sinners, "Come now, and let us reason together ... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1. 18). And friend, if He manages *that* matter for you, what else will He, can He, withhold? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" – that is, all His dear sheep – "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8. 32). O that blessed word *freely*; we do not deserve it; we cannot bargain, as that poor ruler tried to do. It is all mercy, as we sang in that precious hymn we closed the prayer meeting with. It is all mercy, sheer mercy, and bless God, the channel of mercy is still open.

"'Twas Jesus, my Friend, when He hung on the tree,  
Who opened the channel of mercy for me."

May God add His blessing on those few scattered remarks on our Lord's omnipotence.

CHAIRMAN: It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Society. We are very pleased to see you here, especially so many young friends. We miss our older friends as the years go on. One by one they are taken from us, those who came and loyally attended these meetings for many years, but now we are thankful to see the younger ones coming along, and out of this rising generation may the Lord raise many who will value the same truths that our forefathers valued so much, when they formed the Society we represent this afternoon.

A resolution was put to the Meeting that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on April 7th, 2017 be approved. This was proposed by Mr. M.D. Ridout (Southampton), seconded by Mr. J.R. Rutt (Pastor, Lamberhurst) and carried *nem con*.

The Secretary, Mr. D.J. Christian, then introduced the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society for the year ended December 31st, 2017.

MR. CHRISTIAN: Chairman, subscribers and friends, preparing for our Annual Meeting, the words of Jacob came to mind: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49. 10), and it is with that desire we meet here today. We seek His presence and help in all parts of the day, and it is with gratitude that we record the Lord's goodness through another year, a year in which we have been able to continue the aims of our forefathers in helping those

in need among our churches. We have also expanded these aims to assist our churches with grants to help pay our ministers and, although our income is insufficient to cover all these grants, over past years we have benefited from legacies and chapel closures and so have been able to maintain the level of grants. Interest rates still remain at a low level compared with a few years ago.

The Aid and Poor Relief fund showed a deficit of £71,169 with expenses totalling £121,779 and income £50,610. The Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund is primarily used to make grants in December, usually to those who do not receive regular grants from the Aid and Poor Relief Fund. Expenditure was £19,425 in 2017 and income £11,229 leaving a deficit of £8,195. The Magazine Fund was helped by a legacy of £7,464 which made the income for the year £56,810. The cost of publication was £52,678 giving a surplus of £4,132. The total value of funds in the Society at the end of 2017 was £2,759,991.

The Word of God also speaks of another “gathering,” and we are conscious as another year passes that some we knew and loved and who met with us on these occasions have passed to their eternal home. These include three of our ministers – mention was made at our last Annual Meeting of Mr. Gordon Seymour, Pastor at Zion, Melbourne, Australia; and then in June Mr. Seth Mercer, formerly Pastor at Grove Road, Eastbourne, passed away; and in August Mr. Philip S. Warren.

We think too of that great day when time will be no more and the Lord will gather all His elect to heaven. May we each pray with the hymnwriter:

“Let me among Thy saints be found  
Whene’er the archangel’s trump shall sound,  
To see Thy smiling face;  
Then loudest of the crown I’ll sing,  
While heaven’s resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of sovereign grace.”

We seek the Lord’s blessing on the new and prospective pastorates and that the Lord would send out more labourers into His vineyard. No ministers were added to the Gospel Standard list during the year, but in January this year the name of Mr. P.C. Tyler was added. We would encourage churches to put forward the names of ministers who are members of our churches and whose ministry is in power and with the Holy Ghost.

It is with sadness we record the closure of three of our chapels – Zoar, Canterbury; Providence, Croydon and Cave Adullam, Haslingden – and many of our congregations are low in numbers. May the Lord yet have mercy upon us and grant that building up in grace and in numbers.

We remember our overseas churches in Australia, Canada and the United States. We think of our ministers, especially our aged friend Mr. Stehouwer at Grand Rapids, and pray that they may be upheld and their labours blessed. We are pleased that some of our ministers are willing to help in Australia.

We record our gratitude to the Lord for His help to our Editors through another year. It is a continual burden month by month, and despite his illness, Mr. Rosier was enabled to continue editing the *Gospel Standard*. It was announced last year that Mr. G.D. Buss was to retire in March 2017 as Editor of the *Friendly Companion* after twenty years, and that Mr. G.L. TenBroeke would take up the position from the April issue, which he has done. Mr. Scott has been

helped through another year as Editor of *Perception*. May the Lord still grant all our Editors His gracious help and continue to bless our magazines to our readers.

The Committee has arranged another prayer meeting for the nation and our churches which will take place, if the Lord will, on Friday, November 23rd here at Clifton and be conducted by Mr. T.J. Rosier. All friends will be welcome to attend.

There has been another small fall in the number of subscribers, owing to the passing of several of our elderly friends. We would encourage those who are members or who regularly attend our churches and who love the truths that we contend for to become subscribers. In the past, there has been some confusion, but being a subscriber to the *Gospel Standard* magazine does not make one a subscriber to the Society. Application forms are available in the lobby or can be obtained from the Secretary.

We thank the friends at Clifton for the use of the chapel and especially thank Mr. Lawson and his helpers who do so much to help the day go smoothly.

The Annual Meeting for 2019 will be held, if the Lord will, on Friday, April 12th.

The members of the Committee meet four times a year and they seek an interest in your prayers for wisdom and grace to be given. There have not been any changes to the Committee since the last Annual Meeting.

“Brethren, pray for us.”

The Chairman thanked Mr. Christian for his report and for all that he does over the year, which is much appreciated. He asked if there were any questions. There were none, and the proposal to approve and adopt the Annual Report and Accounts was put to the Meeting. This was proposed by Mr. R.K. Wheatley (Pastor, Cranbrook), seconded by Mr. F.A. Ince (Hope, Sedgley) and carried *nem con*.

The Secretary announced the result of the election of four members who were retiring at this Meeting and eligible for re-election. 242 papers were sent out, of which 151 were returned. All members received over 95% of the votes cast, so Messrs. A.J. Collins, B.E. Izzard, D.W. Kerley and B.P. Mercer were elected to serve for a period of three years. The Secretary mentioned for clarification that the result of the ballot is expressed as a percentage of the votes cast against the number of papers returned. A blank space against any name is counted as a vote against. Papers that are not returned or are spoiled do not count.

Mr. B.E. Izzard then expressed thanks on behalf of the re-elected members of the Committee.

The Chairman said that we had received greetings from our overseas chapels. Mr. Peter Dekker (Chilliwack) had sent a message wishing the Lord's special blessing on the meetings today and praying that we would continue to know His favour. The Chairman then read a message from Mr. G.L. Tenbroeke (Pastor, Sheboygan) on behalf of the churches in North America, and a note from Mr. H.J. Flitton on behalf of the Australian churches. The Chairman said that we are thankful to remember these “outposts” of our denomination and said the overseas churches have been thankful for those ministers who have travelled such great distances to help them. Mr. M.T. Pickett (Pastor, Choteau) had telephoned personally to send his warm wishes.



The Chairman went on to say that Australia and Grand Rapids are especially in need of our prayers, and some ministers are going out to help. He mentioned the increasing weakness of Mr. Stehouwer, and the concern for the future at Grand Rapids, but said that the great mercy is that “with God all things are possible” and desired that the Lord may raise up for them another under-shepherd.

He spoke of when Mr. Knight came to the end of his pastorate at Grand Rapids, how that in the last month of Mr. Knight’s pastorate, Mr. Stehouwer was raised up to succeed him in a remarkable way.

The Chairman also referred to the twos and the threes who gather in our own land where the practical burden rests very much on one shoulder, and said, “May the Lord be graciously pleased to turn their captivity and help those who are called to labour and to continue under what are such apparently discouraging circumstances. But ‘Thou remainest’ – that is our thankfulness and there is our hope.”

The Chairman said that the collection at the evening service would be for the Gospel Standard Library, and warmly commended that part of our denominational heritage. He mentioned the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Trust, to be held at Uffington Chapel, if the Lord will, on May 19th, the subject being, “The Overruling Hand of God.” Further, he extended warm wishes to Mr. T.J. Rosier and Mr. R.D.G. Field for their impending visits to the U.S.A. and Canada.

He thanked Mr. Peter Hill for starting the singing.

Hymn 966 was then sung.

The 11th Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund then followed.

### **GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND** 11th ANNUAL MEETING

MR. H. MERCER (Chairman, Bethesda Fund): Subscribers and friends, we welcome you to the eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund and present the seventy-third Annual Report and Accounts. There is much to be thankful for as we review last year. The net assets of the Fund have increased by £37,521 as once again the operating deficit for the year has been more than covered by the contribution of the legacies received which amounted to £266,101. Due to higher occupancy, the fees received during the year were £138,477 higher than in 2016, but costs were also £56,266 higher. Donations and legacies were £91,484 more than in 2016, but other income was £8,248 less. The result of this was that whereas the deficit in 2016 was £127,926, there was a surplus in 2017 of £37,521. The financial position of the Fund remains satisfactory, despite the continuing deficiency of income to cover operating expenses, largely due to the legacies received.

The General Manager will refer in his report to the current position on various issues that concern Bethesda and I will confine my remarks to the issues of the consultation process that was begun last year.

The response of subscribers and others interested in Bethesda is much appreciated, and the main issues that arose in the replies received were

summarised and circulated recently. Many helpful comments were made, but no particular points were raised which had not already been discussed by the trustees. Some remarks were made which were critical of the way in which Bethesda is run, and these concerns and criticisms are noted and a response will be made. It is appreciated that our supporters expect the Committee to reply positively to questions that have been asked.

There is no obvious or easy answer to the continuing annual operating deficit, although some respondents thought that one Home in a suitable location would be best. Other respondents said that the three Homes should be continued and that the fees for residential care should be substantially increased to meet the costs of the three Homes. The thought has also been expressed that each Home should be the responsibility of those in the local area.

The Committee understands the impatience expressed in some quarters for answers to outstanding questions, but any decisions made affect the lives and well-being of the residents for whom care is provided. It weighs heavily with the Committee that residents should not be moved from the area and surroundings with which they are familiar and that they should be able to attend a Strict Baptist chapel where there is a living ministry. The responses to the consultation endorsed this view.

Bethesda came into being to provide residential care, and consideration has to be given as to whether any additional type of care is required to provide the service that elderly friends need. This could be the provision of home care within our limitations. Bethesda must be a place where elderly friends wish to come and feel comfortable in their new surroundings. With this in view, the facilities offered must be continually updated by the provision of, for instance, a residents' kitchen with suitable appliances to give some independence if this is required.

The Committee will continue to ensure that the Homes provide suitable accommodation and, with this in mind, a feasibility study has been commissioned to consider whether the Harpenden site could be redeveloped as one of the three Bethesda Homes. We have just received the first report on this, and it will be assessed at the next Committee meeting. One of the unknown issues is what the demand will be for Bethesda in the years to come from our adherents.

The operation of Bethesda is a commercial undertaking, and the Committee seeks to make sound business decisions to fulfil this responsibility. However, there is a denominational aspect to this, because the charity is one of our Societies and Funds. This connection and our determination to adhere to the provisions of our trust deed obviously has a considerable impact on our mode of operation.

We hope that our friends will realise that we are proactive, but at all times seek to know the Lord's will before taking the decisions that have to be made.

The invaluable support of the Homes given by volunteers and by those who take the morning reading is gratefully acknowledged, and much appreciated by the residents.

We ask you to remember the trustees in your prayers, that our way will be directed by the Lord. There are major decisions to be made and much wisdom is needed. At the Committee meeting which is due to be held next Friday, the way forward for Bethesda will be prayerfully considered, taking into account the representations that have been received.

A resolution was then put to the Meeting that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on April 7th, 2017, be approved. The resolution was proposed by Mr. B.E. Izzard (Pastor, Fenstanton), seconded by Mr. J.H. Cottington (Blackboys) and carried *nem con*.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Topping to introduce the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2017.

MR. TOPPING (General Manager): It is not my intention to repeat what has been said in the Bethesda Annual Report and Financial Statements, although I will be making reference to them from time to time. Further copies of the report are available in the entrance lobby.

There have been a number of changes in occupancy since the beginning of the year. Occupancy in the Harpenden Home started the year at twenty-one residents and is now seventeen; the Studley Home started the year at ten residents and is now twelve; and the Brighton Home started the year at seventeen residents and is now sixteen.

Sadly, since the beginning of the year we have lost Mrs. Irene Guest, Mrs. Ruth Hickman and Mr. Norman Hills from the Brighton Home, and Mr. David Relf, Mrs. Pep Warboys, Miss Mary Guest and Mrs. Daphne Barker from the Harpenden Home, and our dear friends will all be greatly missed.

As reported in the Annual Report, there was a successful CQC inspection at the Brighton Home in August, with our overall rating of “Good” being maintained. In January 2018, the Studley Bethesda Home received its CQC inspection. This also went well, and we are pleased to report we have maintained our overall “Good” rating for four of the five key questions, demonstrating that the Home remains safe and caring, and continues to provide effective and responsive care to residents. We were rated “Requires Improvement” under the “Well-led” heading. This was due to, at the time of the inspection, there being no registered manager in place, which meant that there was an automatic cap on the rating that could be achieved, and this is no reflection on the management of the Home which remains strong, which can be demonstrated from the CQC written commentary in the report. We are expecting an inspection of the Harpenden Home imminently, with the last one being over two-and-half years ago.

We are thankful that we continue to maintain a high standard of care and support for our residents, as is evidenced by the very positive comments that we continue to receive. These come from residents, friends, relatives and visiting professionals such as doctors, nurses and mental health specialists.

We have continued to work on developing our dementia care service specialisation, primarily in the Brighton Home. Work has been undertaken to develop both the service itself and improving the interior decorations to enhance the environment of the Home for those living with dementia. (This has also been of benefit to all the other residents). We are now commencing the same process at the Harpenden Home.

After eleven years, Mr. Wells has now retired from the Bethesda Fund Committee, and we wish to take this opportunity to thank him for all he has done over the years.

As was reported in the Annual Report, Rachel Honeysett retired at the end of last year as the Studley Home Manager, and we would reiterate our thanks to

Rachel for her service and dedication to both the residents and the Home. Since the beginning of the year, the Home has been managed, on an interim basis, by Mrs. Trudy Taylor whilst we looked for Rachel's successor. We are pleased to report that the Deputy Home Manager, Samantha O'Dwyer has now been appointed as the Home Manager and will commence her new duties from May 1st. We would acknowledge the hand of the Lord in appearing for us in this appointment and wish to thank Trudy for her help during this past year.

As you will be aware, we recently conducted an exercise to raise awareness of the issues facing Bethesda and to seek the views of Bethesda's subscribers and friends on a range of matters relating to the future of the Homes. There is a great deal for us to think about over the next few months, and we are grateful that so many of you felt able to provide your views, and these will help inform our decision making. We appreciate that there is, in addition to the interim feedback provided, a desire for more detailed information and discussion. The Trustees hope to meet on Friday, April 20th, at their quarterly meeting, to consider how this is best achieved, and will subsequently communicate the plans to share the feedback with subscribers and interested parties.

In analysing the responses received to the consultation exercise, there appeared to be a lack of awareness of the services that we already offer, so we would take this opportunity to restate what these are. In addition to the permanent residential care, respite care and managed accommodation (flatlets) services, with which people are already familiar, we also offer a day care service. This has been in place for around two years. This is a service for people who wish for some care and support, but do not need to stay overnight. It is very flexible and can be tailored to individual requirements subject to prior discussion. It is often a helpful way to supplement care received at home, provide social contact with people of a like mind, or for assisting transition to a longer, or even permanent stay in a Bethesda Home.

We would, however, reiterate that, we are unable to provide in-house nurses for those that need regular nursing care. For this service, we rely on the community care teams, including district nurses, with whom we have a very good working relationship in all three Homes. Whilst it has been possible to support residents with nursing care needs, this is often when someone has already been a resident in the Home for a period of time, and their health has changed over this period. By working with the local community teams, it has been possible to provide a care package for them. Sadly, we are unable to do this for those who come with pre-existing nursing care needs. Consequently, we would encourage individuals to make contact with Bethesda before circumstances prevent us being of help.

We now come to the matter of fees for 2018. After much careful consideration, the decision has been made to increase fees to help cover more fully the cost of providing our services. In recent years, there have been increasing costs arising from upgrading our services, as well as external pressures such as the introduction by the government of the national living wage, together with the future impact of this. We are also very conscious of the need to manage costs and ensure value for money in the services offered.

Consequently, it has been decided that the changes to the fees coming into effect from April 1st, 2018 will be: For the Ordinary Rate – an increase of 7.5%, from £599.90 to £644 per week; for the Intermediate Rate – an increase of 10%,

from £679 to £749 per week; and for the Higher Rate – an increase of 15%, from £773.50 to £889 per week.

These increases will help to ensure that Bethesda can continue to offer high-quality care to our elderly friends. Even after these increases, our research indicates that our fees will continue to compare favourably with those of other care homes in our areas. We are not unmindful, however, of the impact of the increases on residents, and are thankful that we are still able, from the Underfunded Residents' Fund, to provide financial support to people unable to meet the full cost of fees, and we would thank those individuals and congregations who have made donations to this Fund in supporting many of the residents in their continued stay at Bethesda.

Once again, our sincere thanks go to all our staff for the hard work, dedication and care that they give to our friends living in the Homes, and we would also like sincerely to thank the Home Support Groups and other volunteers who give so much to support the people living in the Homes in many different ways. The value of their contribution to the physical and spiritual welfare of the residents cannot be overstated.

We are thankful for the assistance given by all those that take the morning readings in the Homes, and if there are any male members of the churches who feel able to assist in this way, we would appreciate further assistance at the Brighton Home, where there are a number of gaps in the reading rota.

Finally, we are also thankful for the support given to us by our subscribers. We have been pleased to welcome a small number of new subscribers since the last AGM. However, the overall number has continued to decline, and we would encourage more people to consider supporting us in this way.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Topping for his report and for all that he does for Bethesda. He asked if there were any questions, and a question was asked by Mr. G. Cottingham (Heathfield).

Mr. Cottingham thanked the General Manager for his report and supported the increase in fees from April 2018. He asked how the Committee proposed to increase the occupancy of the Homes, otherwise the decline would negate the agreed increase. Would the eligibility for Bethesda be widened to admit others than members and regular attendees at our chapels because the present level is not sustainable?

The Chairman said that the key issue of the level of occupancy is under constant review by the Committee, but as mentioned in his opening remarks, the Committee will adhere to the terms of the trust deed and will seek to promote Bethesda by updating the facilities offered to residents and to maintain the high standard of the service provided.

There were no other questions, and it was proposed by Mr. D.J. Broome (Trowbridge) and seconded by Mr. R.W. Woodhams (Pastor, Haywards Heath), that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund for 2017 be approved and adopted. This was carried *nem con*.

The Chairman then asked Mr. Topping to declare the results of the secret ballot to re-elect the Committee members retiring by rotation. Mr. Topping announced that 211 ballot papers were issued to subscribers, of which 155 were returned, and as a result all of those standing for re-election had received in

excess of 77% of the votes, and therefore Messrs. M.G. Bailey, T.H.W. Scott and M.O. Wiltshire had been re-elected for a further three years.

MR. MERCER: Thank you. These are very difficult times and we appreciate the confidence and prayerful support which you give. The Committee seeks that wisdom and direction may be given faithfully to discharge the responsibilities they carry and that the Lord will continue to bless the provision of the Homes for the benefit of His dear aged people. The Committee seeks a continuing interest in your prayers and continuance of the practical support given so generously to the Homes.

There is no other business, and that concludes the Annual General Meeting. Thank you very much for your attendance.

### BURDENS ROLLED AWAY

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After hymn 1075 was sung, Mr. R.D.G. Field (Pastor, Dicker) addressed the meeting from Mark 16. 3, 4: "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great." He spoke as follows:

The reason I name this word as an address this afternoon was because, when I received the letter inviting me to give the address at this meeting, it gave me much exercise, and immediately these words which we have named dropped into my heart. And when I picked up the *Gospel Standard*, as many of you did, for April, our dear Editor based his remarks at the commencement of the April edition with these words, and so they were really a wonderful confirmation to me to bring this before you.

The first thing I want to set before you is, who spoke these words. They were spoken by three gracious, godly women: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. I want to look at a few things concerning them, as the Lord may help.

Firstly, they truly loved the Lord. They knew what it was to know His love in their souls, and their love to Him was so manifested here as they go up to the sepulchre to anoint His precious body with the ointments and spices that they had prepared. Their love was manifested. The reason they loved Him so, was because He had manifested His love to them. And I want to bring right home to you, and one's own heart, where do we stand in comparison to these dear women? Do we truly love the Lord? Can we say, as the dear hymnwriter did:

"I love the Lord with mind and heart,  
His people and His ways?"

And that love was so manifested, the love of Christ in their souls, by what He had done for them, in this way. Think of dear Mary Magdalene.

He had cast out from her seven devils. You may look in your heart, and I in mine, and you know we have got many devils in us, if we know our own heart. There is self, there is our pride, there is our self-righteousness, there is the worldliness in us. O that devil so often reigns and rules in us, but what a mercy if we know what it is for Him to cast those devils out. And we think of what He did with Legion, the mad Gadarene. There was a legion of devils in the dear man, but the Lord in His love to him cast them all out. And where did He bring him? He brought him to sit at the feet of Jesus. That is where He brought Mary Magdalene.

My great concern in coming here is that we might each know what it is to be brought to His dear feet. If we are brought to His dear feet, if one knows anything of this at all, there is no room for self, there is no room for this world. All we shall want is Jesus only. This is where these dear women were. All they wanted was Christ. It was He that could do them good. It is what we sing in the hymn:

“None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”

They lived ever so near their dear Redeemer. And it has been with me so much, in coming here, how near do you live, and do I live, to a precious Jesus? The more we live closer to Him, the more we shall know sweet communion with Him, fellowship with Him in His sufferings. The closer we live to Him, the more we shall know what it is to be nothing in ourselves. He must have the pre-eminence. Think of what the dear apostle said to the church in Colosse: “That in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1. 18). Look in your life, look in mine, look in our conversation, look at our walk, look at all things that concern us – does He have the pre-eminence? I love that couplet of the hymn:

“May Christ be first, and Christ be last,  
And Christ be All in all.”

Another point that seemed to rest upon me so concerning these dear women was this: they were real seekers of the Lord. They did not just *say* they sought the Lord; they knew what it was from their inmost heart to seek Him. They were real seekers. And you look at the case of dear Mary Magdalene, how earnest her seeking was when she went up to the sepulchre, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome. They were real seekers of the God of heaven, of the dear Lord Jesus. What did the wise man say? “I love them that love Me” – the Lord’s people – “and those that seek Me early shall find Me” (Prov. 8. 17). And you think of these dear women. They were early seekers there on that resurrection morn of the dear Redeemer. We have many people in the denomination who turn up to chapel at the last minute, but you think of these dear women. It

was not the last minute with them; they were there early. They wanted the blessing. And think of dear Mary Magdalene when He made Himself known to her. You read in John's Gospel, she thought to start with He was the gardener, until He revealed Himself to her. He spoke to her one word, and everything was in it: "Mary." And she knew Him. He revealed Himself, the one thing needful to her, the dear Lord Jesus. The more we know and seek Him and love Him, the more we shall hate sin, the more we shall hate ourselves, the more we shall hold the things of time with a loose hand.

There is one further thing concerning them. We read in the chapter previous concerning them, and it says: "Who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him" (Mark 15. 41). They were real followers of a meek and lowly Jesus. How closely do you follow Him, and how closely do I? Well the Lord is the witness. They followed ever so closely to their dear Redeemer. We know, solemnly, we are often like Peter: we follow the Lord afar off (see Luke 22. 54). But may we be like dear Caleb, who followed the Lord fully – not partly, or when he thought he would, but he followed Him fully. May there be many in this dark and solemn day, yet raised up to be real followers of a meek and lowly Jesus, like these dear women were.

To look just briefly at what they said: "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" This important question was in their hearts. "And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great." Now there may be those of you today, that the Lord has given me this word for, and you have some very great stones before you. Let me just name a few. Firstly, the very great stone of sin. It is not a very great stone to the world or the ungodly, is it? But it is a great stone, a very great stone to the child of God. We think of the dear publican who smote upon his breast. He had a very great stone – his sin. He could not remove it. These dear women could not remove this stone, but the Lord removed it. Poor soul, you go to the dear Redeemer. He is able to blot out the very worst of sins, and free the poor sinner from all this stone that troubles him. He can just roll it away.

I think of my late dear grandfather. Sin was a very great stone to him, especially as he came toward the close of his journey here below. He could not sleep because of it. He spent hours wrestling with the Lord to remove that great stone of sin. The Lord wonderfully came, and He spoke to him these words: "Come now, and let us reason together ... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1. 18). He said, "I looked for the sins that were like mountains and the very great stones, but they were all gone; the Lord had rolled them all away." Then we think



of what followed. With him from that very moment, and he was 82, the Lord laid on him the exercise of baptism. He was so blessed, he said to the Lord, "I'll do anything Thou dost tell me," and the Lord laid that exercise on him, and he ventured at that great age. He had got something to tell them – the Lord's people – of what the Lord had done.

You may have got a very great stone today, like these dear women had, and the stone may be the exercise of following the Lord. I know with many godly men a very great stone is that they will be thinking, How will I be able to pray in public? Well, poor soul, the Lord who rolled the stone away for these dear women, can roll it away for you and He can give you a breath of prayer. Like Mr. Gadsby said on one occasion at a prayer meeting: he asked a young man to pray, and he did not get up, and so he asked him again, and eventually he staggered to his feet, and he said, "Lord, Thou knowest I would pray if I could," and sat down. Dear Mr. Gadsby said, "That is one of the best prayers I have ever heard." It came right out of his heart. O beloved friends, may the Lord remove that very great stone that you have in following the Lord. It may be you fear the water; it may be you fear speaking to the church. He that rolled the stone away for these dear women, can roll it away for you. One thinks when one joined the church in 1963, I remember sitting in the vestry and said, "Lord, how ever can I speak? I am poor and helpless." And the Lord spoke these words to me: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psa. 81. 10). And you know, that is all I had to do: open my mouth, and for the Lord to speak. He can give you that in that hour to declare: the answers to prayer, the Lord's love and mercy to you, His compassion. He rolled the stone away for these dear women – it was very great; it was not just an ordinary stone – and He alone can do it today.

Another great stone you may have may be an affliction upon you, and you wonder what the issue will be. The Lord can roll it away. You think of those characters there were that walked this earth that had very great stones. Think of the woman with the issue of blood. No earthly physician, no doctor of the earth could do her good, but the Lord was to roll it away, wasn't He? "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Mark 5. 34). The virtue, heavenly virtue flowed from the dear Redeemer, and it rolled the stone away, and she was set free.

Another great, very great stone you may have will be the arch enemy of your soul, Satan. The Lord can remove him in a moment. O He can. In coming and suffering, bleeding and dying at Calvary, He came to put Satan down, to cast him out, and He can do it today. We so often forget the Lord has the same power to roll away the stones of His dear people today as He did for these dear women. He has all power in heaven and in earth. And they were sweetly to prove it. Satan is a mighty foe.

Look how the Lord rolled the stone away from Daniel, the great stone. Satan was trying to destroy Daniel, casting him into the den of lions. The Lord was to shut the lions' mouths. They could not touch or hurt Daniel. "My God," he said, "hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths" (Dan. 6. 22). Those of you who may be facing a roaring devil today, this very great stone, the Lord can roll it away, poor soul. May we have a grain of faith to look to Him.

There are many very great stones. It may be in your providential pathway; it may be the future, the unknown way. It is a very great stone to you. But then there is the very great stone of death, isn't there? You know, the Lord can roll it away. He can make, and He has with many of His dear children, their dying bed a special place. The Lord rolled the sting of death away, and their souls have been landed safe with God.

But there is another point I want to name here. "And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away." They had to look far further than the stone, to Him that had rolled it away. You think of the children of Israel at the Red Sea. Who was it that was to roll away the stone of the Red Sea? It was the Lord, causing the water to stand on the right hand and on the left that they go through on dry land. And they were told to look. What did the Lord give to Moses to speak to them? "Fear ye not, stand still" – and then listen – "and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will shew to you to day" (Exod. 14. 13). And He did, didn't He? He rolled the enemy away, Pharaoh and all his host. They saw them dead on the sea shore.

"When they looked." Now the lesson is to us, and I speak these things to myself, where are we looking? The hymnwriter said,

"Look to Jesus, kind as strong,  
Mercy joined with power."

These dear women were weak and helpless, but they were given the eye of faith so they knew what it was to look to their dear Redeemer. He alone could roll the stones away. They looked far further than the grave, to Him that had risen and manifested His power. What was it to roll this stone away, and what can roll it away with you, poor soul, today? As you look to Him, it will be the power of His resurrection, that glorious power. What did the apostle say? and may it be our fervent prayer and fervent desire: "That I" – it is personal you see; do not look at somebody else; look at your own heart. "That I may know Him" – may that be the fervent desire of each of us – "and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3. 10). That resurrection power we need so much today, as there are many very great stones before the Gospel Standard Committee. There are many very great stones before the Bethesda Committee. It is easy for people to criticise, say they should do this and do that, instead of looking

to Him that rolls away every very great stone, whatever that stone may be.

And then we think of the very great stones in the denomination: the low state of Zion, the lack of real exercise. May we be graciously exercised for our souls and for our souls' prosperity, and the prosperity of Zion, and ever be looking to the Lord Jesus to roll the stones away. Then you think of the solemn state of our nation, the great stone, the very great stone, leaving the European Union, and so we may go on.

O may our eyes be fixed, as these dear women's, upon the dear Redeemer. What does the hymnwriter say?

“Always keeping Christ in view;  
He will bring us safely through.”

Amen.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Field for his very apposite, encouraging and yet discriminating address, and said, “O that we might have that same faith that those dear women had and saw such wonders wrought on their behalf.”

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## THE LOVE OF GOD THE FATHER

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6 Beaconsfield Villas,  
Preston Park,  
Brighton.  
1885

My dear Friend,

It is indeed an unspeakable mercy to find our happiness in God – Father, Son and Holy Ghost. In this ever-gracious God is all a poor sinner can need. Only our carnality prevents us from being content to find all in Him. What sweet enjoyments, what divine contemplations, what unutterable anticipations does the Father's choice and gift of the soul\* to Christ from eternity afford, as opened and revealed by the Spirit. How satisfying and enriching is the unalterable favour of Jehovah to a worm. What sweet melting sensations, flowing tears, hatred of sin, and unreserved giving up of self are the results of that revelation. No other company, no other voice, no other delights sought nor needed while such a divine entertainment is vouchsafed. The feeling is well expressed by the psalmist: “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage” (Psa. 16. 6). The treasure is in heaven, so is the heart.

In what a stern, forbidding aspect does Satan seek to represent the Father to poor sinners! but as the Spirit reveals Him in His eternal love,

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\* i.e. the souls of His people. Ed.

His gift of Christ to the church, His reconciling her to Himself by Jesus Christ, how benign a face does He wear, how attracted is the sinner to Him, how sweet is the contemplation of Him! (See Eph. 1; John 3. 16; 17. 6; 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19). Now in these respects the Father is distinctly known, loved, and adored, being seen by faith (John 14. 7). We see Paul blessing Him in Ephesians 1 for His predestinating love; in 2 Corinthians 1. 3, 4, we find him blessing Him as the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Surely we may say He is the Father of all mercies in the blessed decree of predestination, for from thence spring all our mercies – life, health, peace and salvation. How ravishing is this view by faith of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: “My Father, and your Father ... My God, and your God,” said Jesus. Thus to approach Him is sweet beyond words to express.

No crafty insinuations of Satan about the Father’s sternness can drive the soul away as faith beholds Him loving, choosing, adopting as His sons vile outcasts, and bestowing upon them every divine good His Fatherly heart can conceive. Nor can the bubbles of this transient world – the shadows of life – draw the heart into dissatisfaction with its lot while the sweetness and power last of these heavenly realities and glories. While thus employed and honoured the soul finds itself “most in company when alone.”

And, then, the Spirit reveals the Father giving the church to Christ. Every divine attribute must be honoured in the sinner’s salvation. Holiness in its eternal beauty must shine forth in God’s communing with sinners. A stain on divine holiness would be the destruction of Deity. Infinite justice must be satisfied in all its righteous demands before it can sanction the opening of the prison to a rebel. Inflexible truth in the threat must not – cannot – abate one jot or tittle. An atonement that does not uphold these attributes in their integrity and glory is no atonement. What wisdom, then, and goodness did the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ display in setting Him up and giving to Him the church to be ransomed and redeemed by Him. And as the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that God gave *us* to Christ, O what love, awe, gratitude, trust and worship go out of our hearts to Him!

But for special ends the Father is in Christ. Yes; and these no less than the displaying of His glory and grace in reconciling the chosen seed to Himself. To break down, slay, remove, from time to time, the hard, bitter enmity of man’s heart to Himself, and make best and fastest friends of His greatest foes is the end of God in Christ. Work worthy of a God! This grand design is accomplished by laying iniquity on His blessed Son, who removed it for ever, making an end of it. And when the set time arrives, the Spirit brings the guilty rebel into court, charges his sin and rebellion upon him, and forces a full confession of all. Then what terrifying thoughts of God will Satan suggest, what enmity will rise up,

what awful rebellion is felt against that sovereignty we cannot deny, and from which, in its universal grasp and sway, there is no escape. But here the devil proves himself a liar, for God the Father reconciles the poor sinner to Himself; He smiles, freely forgives, and comforts. Then the soul finds God is for him – that His tender compassions expressed themselves in the gift of His only Son.

Again, the approach of a guilty soul to Christ is by the Father's drawing: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6. 44).

This is part of the soul's lot, a little of its communion with the Father.... And as we are favoured with nearness to the Father, we feel satisfied, "full with the blessing of the LORD" (Deut. 33. 23). We have a goodly heritage.

The Lord bless thee and keep thee. So prays,  
Yours affectionately in Him,

J.K. Popham

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### THE LORD MAKING A WAY

*Notes of a sermon by Joseph Hatton, Redhill,  
on Tuesday, January 22nd, 1884*

**Text:** "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9. 23).

This chapter begins with an account of the transfiguration. There was the presence of Moses and Elias glorified, and the voice in their presence: "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." What He has to say, the interpretation He puts on the law and the prophets, the mind of Christ in them – that is what we have to hear. For instance, take one in the prophets – "them of old time" (Matt. 5. 21). Jesus says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5. 43, 44). This is His teaching by the gospel, though it was allowed in that law to hate an enemy. Thus there have arisen many mistakes through not knowing the mind of Christ in single expressions of Scripture. We are to "hear **Him**," whatever He says.

The disciples with Him were overpowered with His glorified presence, so as scarcely to know what they did or said. At the same time the other disciples below were in perplexity and doubt, trying to cast a devil out of a man, and he would not go. How often do the Lord's people try to cast out an evil spirit! and it will not go for all they can do.

Then the father brought his son to Jesus, and told Him of the failure; yet though there had been a failure in his case, he was right after all, he had a real case. None come to Jesus with a real case, and are disappointed; never one real need that is not regarded. How many times we come, nine out of ten, and have no point or no meaning to our prayers, feeling no necessity! We know these prayers are not acceptable to Him; therefore He brings us to feel the real need, the true position we are in. This is one of His gifts by the Spirit – to show us our present need, our real position, and bring our prayers to a crisis: “I cannot do without Thee.”

Two things make the earnestness in us. The Lord may hide His face, and we not be troubled much about it. But (1) to feel He is hiding His face, and (2) to have a desire kindled to see His face, these two make a present need; and there is prayer. So it was at first the feeling of being without a God, and the feeling of wanting that God to be ours, was nearly always present; and it was these two that made the earnestness we used to have. Prayer is real need; it may be in few words, or none; but there is the soul’s necessity in it. The conviction that we know very little of the truth, and the desire to know it, make a need. The Holy Spirit gives the knowledge of our present need, and that need never ultimately ends in disappointment. Time after time the soul may be brought to lift up its eyes to the hills whence cometh its help, and may be strengthened again and again; and in this are as many disappointments as helps. But the Lord is drawing the soul on, till it is brought to a crisis; and then, if the thing is done at all, it must be the arm of the Lord that does it. “Lord, save, or I perish.” “Lord, help me.”

When this man came to Him with his son, the Lord seemed still to delay, and already there had been a failure. At last the man said, “If Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.” None can do anything now but Thou; have compassion on us, or there is no hope. And the Lord answered him, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” That is, the failure is not in My blood; there is no question about its power to save to the utmost. There is no failure in the Fountain, in its efficacy to take out the foulest stain. The failure is not there; nor in My righteousness, that it will not make the most spotted, leprous soul pure and spotless; nor in My power, or in the virtue of My word to heal; I need no help from circumstances; all things are at My command. Nothing is too hard for Me. The failure is not in Me. If there is no way, as with Israel at the Red Sea, I will make a way. It shall be said, “The LORD ... hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea” (Exod. 15. 1 and 21). When you come there, when the thing is impossible apart from God, that is the crisis when He will work. None come there and fail. Jesus rebuked the dumb and deaf spirit in the man’s son: “I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.”

None but the Lord's people know the weakness of their faith, and the impossibility of what they believe being done, apart from by God. It was not the leadership of Moses and Aaron, nor anything else, but the Lord alone who made a way in the sea. When you feel this or that is impossible in itself – it has been long coming to that point perhaps, but now it is an impossibility apart from God – that is the time when He works alone. In providence or in grace the Lord will do all He has promised, though you cannot see how. "I will lead the blind." Though they are blind, they shall go the right way, not take one wrong turning; and they shall find at last, He hath led me by the right way, that I might go to a city of habitation (see Psa. 107. 7). He waited before He fulfilled the promise to Abraham, till it became past hope, and naturally impossible, because He does not need any circumstances to help Him.

You are not in that crisis every day, nor every month, nor every year, nor every dozen years of your life; but if the Lord is bringing you there in any trouble, it will surely end in deliverance. The faith is in both God's will and power; God gives it. When He gives it, it is done to faith, if not in deed; and it shall be done in deed. Faith depends only on God. "All things are possible to him that believeth," is the same as saying, "All things are possible to God."

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### A HOLY NATION

*Extract from Abraham Booth (1734-1806)*

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That holiness which the Scripture so expressly requires in order to know the enjoyment of God, is possessed by everyone that is born from above, and in a justified state. For every subject of regenerating grace loves God. Love to God being the grand principle of holiness, and the source of all acceptable obedience, none can enjoy it and not be possessed, in some degree, of real holiness. Nay, we may venture to assert, that whoever loves the infinitely Amiable, is possessed of all that holiness in the principle, that shall at any time flourish and adorn his future conversation, or that shall shine in him to all eternity. Such an one, therefore, must not only have a title to heaven, but also be in a state of preparation for it.

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### NOTICE OF DEATH

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**Norman Peter Hills**, a faithful deacon at Mount Zion Chapel, Leatherhead, for thirty-two years, passed away into eternal rest on Wednesday, April 11th, 2018, aged 88 years. "And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22. 4).

## THE VOICE OF JESUS' BLOOD

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When the wounded spirit hears  
 The voice of Jesus' blood,  
 How the message stops the tears  
 Which else in vain had flowed:  
 Pardon, grace and peace proclaimed,  
 And the sinner called a child;  
 Then the stubborn heart is tamed,  
 Renewed and reconciled.

O! 'twas grace indeed, to spare  
 And save a wretch like me!  
 Men or angels could not bear  
 What I have offered Thee;  
 Were Thy bolts at their command,  
 Hell ere now had been my place;  
 Thou alone couldst silent stand,  
 And wait to show Thy grace.

If in one created mind  
 The tenderness and love  
 Of Thy saints on earth were joined  
 With all the hosts above;  
 Still that love were weak and poor.  
 If compared, my Lord, with Thine;  
 Far too scanty to endure  
 A heart so vile as mine.

Wondrous mercy I have found,  
 But, ah! how faint my praise!  
 Must I be a cumber-ground,  
 Unfruitful all my days?  
 Do I in Thy garden grow,  
 Yet produce Thee only leaves!  
 Lord, forbid it should be so;  
 The thought my spirit grieves.

Heavy charges Satan brings  
 To fill me with distress;  
 Let me hide beneath Thy wings,  
 And plead Thy righteousness;  
 Lord, to Thee for help I call,  
 'Tis Thy promise bids me come;  
 Tell him Thou hast paid for all,  
 And that shall strike him dumb.

John Newton (1725-1807)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JULY 2018

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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 ALTOGETHER LOVELY**

*Sermon preached by John William Walder at Galeed Chapel,  
Brighton, on Wednesday, February 3rd, 1988*

**Text:** “His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely” (Song 5. 16).

What a very high opinion and estimation the bride of Christ had of her best Beloved, as is recorded in this wonderful Book of mutual love and communion between Christ and the church and the church and Christ. His estimation of her, and hers of Him, as set forth, is that which is found in some measure in the heart of everyone who is taught of the Spirit even to this day.

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

She had but a very low, an exceedingly low opinion of herself, for she calls herself “black, but comely,” for she cannot find words sufficient to set forth the beauty, loveliness, attractiveness and glory of Christ. Truly the substance of some of the things expressed is the same as that which is spoken of by the hymnwriter:

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

Well, it is an infinite mercy if the Holy Spirit by His gracious teaching and effectual revelation has made the discovery of those two things to us – our need and Christ’s sufficiency – and if this blessed Person should be revealed to us personally and the glorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ should shine more and more gloriously in the eye of faith, as that is revealed in all its blessed sufficiency and suitability to meet our case. As we may try to notice more closely presently, there are no two persons so suitable to each other, there are no two characters who can walk in such close and sweet communion and love together, as Christ and a sensible and saved sinner – a sinner who is truly and really brought to know and feel his want, and to see, in this blessed Person, everything that can fit and suit and abundantly satisfy that need. A felt need of

salvation is the reason for an earnest and longing desire after Him before there is a possession of Him.

So great is the attraction, loveliness and desirability of Christ, that there is none to be compared to Him, both in the want of Him and in the possession of Him. This very matter is set before us in the Word of God as being a standard by which we may calculate our state and standing, and the present condition and health of the soul. The reality of the possession of a work of grace in the soul is proved by the one point: "What think ye of Christ?" Who is He? "Whose Son is He?"

It is a question that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself asked: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" There were many opinions, there were many things that were spoken in regard to this Person who is the Chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One to the church of God and to the church of God only. Some said one thing and some said another, but Jesus said, "But whom say ye that I am?" What is *your* opinion of me? What are *your* thoughts concerning me? "Whom say ye that I am?" A straight, searching, separating, discriminating and sanctifying question! Well, my friends, what response can we give in our hearts to this? Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16. 16, 17).

"He is despised and rejected of men ... He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isa. 53. 3). Indeed, yes, it is solemnly true that until and unless the Spirit quickens us into divine life, gives us grace, opens our blind eyes, gives us to know our need of salvation, we shall despise Him, we shall think Him nothing worth. But has God the Spirit been pleased to make Him something very different to us now than He was at one time? So that we see in Him what the church saw in Him, that is everything that is attractive, such a sweet disposition, such a glorious and blessed Person in every consideration of His character, His offices and His blessed work, so that she cannot find words sufficient to set Him forth as He is worthy to be set forth? "The Chiefest among ten thousand," the "altogether lovely" One.

The psalmist felt the same, for he said, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul" (Psa. 94. 19). There was none to be compared to Christ, this blessed Person. I believe this is indeed one part of the description of what it is to be a real Christian. To be a real Christian is to be a partaker of Christ, to have union to Him and to know what it is to enjoy, in our measure, some close, sacred and sweet communion with Him.

I will attempt to look at the latter part of our text first and the former part later wherein we have set before us the communion which goes on between Christ and His church: "His mouth is most sweet."

1. We will look *first* at this word of the church, "He is altogether lovely." If our religion is a right one, being truly of the Holy Spirit, if we form a part of the church of God and make up that people who are His bride, surely it must be concluded, safely concluded, that our feelings will be the same in our measure. Though we may feel to come very, very short in regard to it, yet there must be some likeness, surely. There must be some compatibility between our feelings and those expressed by the church of God if we truly belong to it. There will be times indeed when it is impossible for us to set forth sufficiently what we see in regard to this blessed Person.

"Living tongues are dumb at best;  
We must die to speak of Christ."

O what a wonderful thing if that verse should be true of us!

"But when this lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave,  
Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing Thy power to save."

Let us look a little at what the church saw in her Beloved. She uses figurative language to set forth His beauty and glory, and concludes, truly and rightly, that there is everything good and nothing bad; just simply nothing whatsoever to mar or spoil His altogether lovely Person and disposition. "He is altogether lovely." There is not a single thing to mar Him or to spoil Him in regard to every part and particle of His thoughts and words, ways and character, and everything that He had to communicate to her heart and do for her in the purposes of His grace. "He is altogether lovely."

Consider Him in comparison to all other things. Where can we find anything apart from this blessed Person, anywhere, that is not marred, spoiled, ruined, that has not its deficiencies, its deformities, its faults and failings? Everything is spoiled and marred. The best of creatures are but creatures at best. "The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge" (Mic. 7. 4). There are none that are good or perfect among the whole of the fallen race of men and women, but here is One who is "altogether lovely."

It is a wonderful mercy if He be endeared to our hearts and if the Holy Spirit causes Him to be more and more needful in the feelings, more and more attractive, sufficient and suitable in the realisation of His glory, as we may comprehend the glory of Christ. It is the very trials, temptations and a sense of our own state and condition in the world, our circumstances and heart feelings, which may be sanctified to this end. I suppose that none have spoken more highly or enlarged more sweetly upon the beauty, sweetness and loveliness of Christ than good

Rutherford. And where did he taste the sweetness, where did he see the glory, where did he behold His worth, where was it that Christ was made everything to him and became to him such a glorious and altogether lovely Person? Why, in the prison house! The prison which was turned into such a heavenly spot that he calls that prison *Christ's palace*. O how much close, sacred, sweet and blessed communion Rutherford enjoyed in that prison cell with his best Beloved! It was heaven to him! Why? Because he had Christ. Therefore he had happiness, therefore he had heaven, therefore he had joy and peace, and everything that he could have really. What is anything without Christ? Christ is everything without anything else. Here is the fulness; it is all in Him. Nothing can make us really happy, nothing can make us really blessed, nothing can satisfy, without Him. "He is the altogether lovely One."

We must look very, very briefly at some of the things which constitute Him to be so lovely, so altogether lovely. First, in His divine Person. This is His infinite sufficiency to be to us poor sinners all that we need for time and eternity. Who is He? A question, maybe often asked, but so vitally important and so little really believed, comprehended, understood and enjoyed. Who is He? He is the Son of God, God the Son, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the very essence of all that is glorious, holy, righteous and good, the very essence of kindness, love, greatness and glory, and that to the infinite perfection of it. Here is no limit. O the loveliness of the Person of Christ as God's eternal Son! His glory cannot possibly, and never will be, comprehended by us. We are but poor, fickle, feeble, finite creatures, and He is the infinite God who is glorious, perfect and lovely beyond comprehension and understanding. The eternal, almighty, gracious, faithful, kind and glorious Son of God is an all-sufficient Friend and Saviour.

But what is it that makes Him so suitable? Why, the altogether lovely human nature of the Son of God. He became incarnate and He is lovely in that condescension and adorable nature – beautiful in it. He took upon Himself our nature, without sin. It was holy, harmless, undefiled; the essence of pity, compassion, condescension, humility, meekness and the fulness of communicable grace and mercy; altogether lovely. O the intrinsic glory of the Person of Christ in His human nature united with the glory of His Person! He has two natures, distinguishable natures, that are perfect – divine and human – but they are united in one blessed Person to make this Jesus. He is lovely, attractive and wonderful beyond knowledge and understanding, but He may be known. My friends, I am sure if we know Him and are blessed and favoured to be brought to the knowledge of Him, we shall love Him, adore Him, worship Him, admire Him and, at the same time, we shall do as the church did and lay ourselves very low, loathe ourselves, and abhor

ourselves. These two things go so sweetly together. The more we adore Him, the more we shall abhor ourselves; the more we love Him, the more we shall loathe ourselves; the more He is endeared to us, the more we shall be ashamed of ourselves. The church said, "I am black"; Christ said, "Thou art ... comely" (Song 6. 4); she said He was beautiful, perfect and lovely.

Now, a little further. "He is altogether lovely." Lovely in His glorious work for sinners. How admirable, how altogether lovely He is in His life, suffering temptation for His people that He might be a compassionate High Priest, fulfilling perfectly the holy law for them that He might bring in a suitable, everlasting righteousness to be imputed to them! How lovely and adorable He is in the whole of His conduct in His sojourn here below toward His disciples, toward the world and toward false professors! How lovely in His wisdom, in His condescension and in His conduct; how tender! How kind, how gracious, how sympathetic, how pitying, how pitiful! Why, there is everything to admire in regard to all that He suffered and did in His holy life and substitutionary work. There is nothing to spoil Him. "He is altogether lovely." O the sweetness of His disposition, the sweetness of His words, the wonder of His mercy, the blessedness of His knowledge and understanding! "He is altogether lovely"!

How lovely He is in His death, His awful death, a substitutionary death which He died for sinners! O that one glorious sacrifice, that wonderful oblation that was offered upon the ignominious tree! How can we possibly understand or set forth the glory and wonder and loveliness of the substitutionary death of Christ?

And moreover, His willingness to die, His delight in suffering for His people. O the loveliness of the love that was manifest! This indeed is the pledge and the measure of divine love. What a wonderful mercy if we see the beauty of it for ourselves: the loveliness of Christ, the Son of God, in His dying willingly for sinners. It is a blessed truth. O that we might be given to realise it more sweetly, deeply and personally.

"What He endured no tongue can tell,  
To save our souls from death and hell."

But the altogether loveliness of Christ is also in His blessed offices. O His glory as the High Priest of the church! He, being touched with the feeling of our infirmities, always kind, always sympathetic, never unkind, never a harsh word, never an unkind dealing, altogether lovely and exceedingly sweet in every part of His blessed work in fulfilling the suitable office of High Priest. Then He is altogether lovely as the Good Shepherd, as a never-failing and ever-present Friend, and above and beyond all in the closest, sweetest and most blessed relationship of the Husband to the church. This is so sacred, so holy, so blessed and so

close, but also absolutely vital. My friends, that is a big question – “Have I union to the church’s living Head?” What if we have not? A solemn question! But how blessed if we have and if Christ is pleased to attract and draw and allure our poor hearts to Himself by the manifestation of His love in His sufficiency and suitability. For only as we are drawn can we go forth unto Him; only as we are drawn are we found venturing to His footstool; only as we are drawn are we found coming to Him. What a wonderful thing when our hearts are attracted by His love in the peculiar and sweet sense of it and our desperate need of Him!

“What a precious, needful thing,  
Is the Lord and Saviour!”

Without Him we must perish, but if He is ours we shall be saved with an everlasting salvation.

How altogether lovely in His Person and in His disposition is Christ in His close, sweet and blessed relationships to the church. There have never been two persons anywhere, at any time, that have got on so well together as Christ and the sinner, a sinner and Christ. They are exactly suited to one another – I mean a sensible sinner. We often talk about Christ being a suitable Saviour for sinners, but O it is a great thing to find a suitable sinner for the Saviour, that is, in a sensibly suitable condition for Him. What is it that will cause Him to become more and more attractive to us in our hearts’ feelings but that needful and sweet teaching of the Holy Spirit in an ever deepening discovery of our need of Christ? There is the initial work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart which, being accompanied with light and life and understanding, will cause us to see those two things – our want and His sufficiency: our sin and His sin-atoning blood, our unrighteousness and His sufficient and imputable righteousness. So there will be that view of Him, maybe at a distance at first, yea, maybe far off, but nevertheless a blessed glimpse of Christ in all His loveliness, sufficiency and suitability, so that the heart goes out after Him.

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

“Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

Of this I am sure: if there is a beginning the Holy Spirit will continue. He will never leave nor forsake His own work in the soul – and the purpose and the end of the Spirit’s work, yea, the glory of it, is just this: to exalt Christ in a sinner’s heart. That is the purpose of the

work of the Spirit. He does not speak of Himself: He speaks of Christ and He reveals Christ to the soul and He will do, more and more, and over and over again. It is a good thing if we are so growing in grace that Christ is more needful to us, feelingly, now than ever. If we begin to see, though dimly perhaps to our feelings, just a little more of the wonder and glory of the Person of Christ, which is an inexhaustible subject, and if He is becoming a little more dear, needful, attractive and lovely to our hearts' feelings, then our desires and cries become more and more urgent.

"Give me Christ, or else I die!"

"Less than Thyself will not suffice  
My comfort to restore."

Let me just ask the question, before going a little further. My friends, can we humbly appeal unto Him, out of the felt desire of our hearts and say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee"? (John 21. 17). There is that deep down in my heart that goes out in longing desire, earnest desire after Thy visitations, after a manifestation of Thyself. "I love Thee in the want of Thee." How blessed if we can say it! "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19) are the words of God, not the words of man. Love to Him and an attraction to Him is the effect and not the cause of our interest in Him; it is His favour toward us. Well, the church here exclaimed in regard to His beauty, "My Beloved is ... the Chiefest among ten thousand" (verse 10); "yea, He is altogether lovely."

2. We will now look at the former part of our text. This is closely connected with that which we have attempted to notice, and contains the sweet conclusion in regard to that vital part of experience – communion with Christ. His mouth, the words of His mouth, the kisses of His mouth: "His mouth is most sweet."

O the sweet, needful, personal, close, intimate communion of the soul with Christ! This is the very substance, the very life of real religion – that which goes on between the soul and Jesus, Jesus and the soul. He speaks; the heart responds. There are many ways in which He is pleased to communicate; not necessarily, and not only, by direct words that are spoken with power and influence to the heart, but also the many ways in which He is pleased to manifest Himself to the soul. His voice is to be heard. He is always speaking, had we ears to hear and hearts to understand, but alas, we are dull of hearing, very dull of hearing. O that the Holy Spirit might be pleased so to affect our hearts as to cause us to be attentive. As the hymnwriter says: "Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee."

What a wonderful mercy if He does speak from time to time and we find that "His mouth is most sweet" in both aspects of the subject – the words that He speaks, the gracious words that proceed from His lips as

they were declared while here below, and the kisses of His mouth, those sure, felt, certain, blessed and comfortable tokens of His love, the feeling of His love. O do we know what it is to long sometimes for another kiss and that He would assure us of His love? That He would give us another sweet token, make us feel it, and cause our hearts to respond to it in love in return, "His mouth is most sweet." "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine" (Song 1. 2). May I ask the question – when did we feel that we last received such a token of His love to our poor soul, a kiss, that which we felt? It communicated to our souls the power and sweetness and confidence, the blessed fact that He has loved us and, having loved us, will love us to the end.

But now there is the sweetness of His mouth: "His mouth is most sweet," in the communication of His mind, His will and His thoughts toward us. In this there are two things I want very briefly to notice. "His mouth is most sweet" in regard to His words to the soul as a blessed Mediator; also His words that are spoken for and on the account of His bride, in His ever-prevailing, most sweet and blessed intercession at the right hand of God. Let us look a little at those two things using an illustration. Sometimes when a person is in dire need, has a difficult case, has an alarming and most dreadful matter to burden and oppress him, there may be recommended a person who is able and willing to grant assistance. The person who recommends that wealthy and able character may say, "Now you take your case to that person and when you go, mention my name; tell him I sent you." This is just exactly what Jesus says to His burdened people. He says, "Mention My name; tell the Father I sent you; ask in My name, and ye shall receive." Now, how sweet those words are to a poor, needy sinner, one who feels himself so totally unworthy and hell deserving, has such an awful case, such a dreadful condition, and Jesus says as the Mediator, "Mention My name!" If you and I are enabled to mention the name of Jesus at the footstool of mercy, and mention that name believingly, and plead, and in truth say, "For Christ's sake," that will prevail.

"I can no denial take,  
When I plead for Jesus' sake."

O how sweet those words when spoken to the soul! Mention My name. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive" (John 16. 24).

Now, how sweet is His mouth. "His mouth is most sweet" in the intercession which He Himself exercises as the interceding Advocate at God's right hand. The substance of this is contained in the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel – and how sweet the words are if we are given to feel an interest in them. There is no doubt whatsoever but that those



petitions of Christ will be granted. A wonderful thing if we are included in those words: "I pray for them" (John 17. 9). O my friends, if Jesus prays for us it must be well. His petition is heard.

"But with authority He asks,  
Enthroned in glory now."

"For all that come to God by Him,  
Salvation He demands."

Yes, He points to, and shows the evidences of His meritorious sufferings, pleads what He has done for poor sinners, and the Father hears and will answer. "His mouth is most sweet."

Now let us consider the words He speaks to His people as the sweet and blessed Friend of sinners, as that blessed Saviour, who is full of love and pity, mercy, tenderness and compassion. There are a number of ways in which He is pleased to speak. "His mouth is most sweet."

O how sweet when He speaks in a way of gracious and kind invitation: "Come!" Ah, it may be that He has spoken but one word to us at times – and that is a wonderful thing; just one word, "Come!" Where is there one anywhere who may forbid such a character to venture to Christ just as they are? Our suitability to come to Him for help, what is it? Sensible and felt hardness, coldness, death, guilt, condemnation, ruin, darkness, temptation – that is our fitness. You cannot come too filthy, you cannot come too bad, you cannot come too wretched: this is the very experienced fitness to come to Him. The more cold, the more wretched, the more unfeeling, the more prayerless – the more fit to come.

"All the fitness He requireth,  
Is to feel your need of Him."

It is for these characters that He came into the world, and it is to them that He extends an unreserved and blessed and unconditional invitation, "Come!" Now, how sweet His mouth when He thus speaks!

How sweet His mouth when He speaks, "Fear not," with gracious and divine power. A number of times thus He spoke to His disciples. In their distresses, in their danger, in their difficulties, in their fears, He said, "Fear not." How sweet it is when He speaks a word of comfort, pardon and peace into the soul. How sweet was His mouth to such characters as Mary, the Syrophenician woman, the dying thief, the leper, the impotent man and so many others that we read of in the gospels. O what sweet, gracious words proceeded from His lips! There is no doubt but that those who received these blessed things could truly say from experience, "His mouth is most sweet."

Finally, we may stand in need of counsel, direction and help, deeply in need of it. We may wait a long time not knowing what to do, or what

way to take, or what is the right thing to do. After much prayer and waiting and longing and suing and begging, He will hear our cry and grant a word of counsel and direction. O when He is pleased to speak by circumstances, by a word, by the influence of His good Spirit, how sweet it is! “Go on; lo! here’s the way.” Now if He speaks, power must accompany it. O the waiting characters! They that wait upon Christ to hear His voice will not presume; they will not take words to themselves, nay, they will wait for Him to speak mightily and powerfully in their hearts, and how sweet that is. May we know His voice, may communion much increase, may there be many things going on between our souls and Christ in secret. O may He be pleased to endear Himself to our souls more and more and fulfil that desire sometimes expressed:

“Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me  
A living, bright reality.”

Not to know about Him, *but to know Him*, to become more and more acquainted with Him. You know, it is a common expression among men, you must live with a person to know them. To live with Christ, to walk with Christ, to commune with Christ will bring us to a knowledge of Him, and I am sure that the more that we know of Him, the more we shall be brought to agree heartily with the church: “He is altogether lovely.” We shall never find a fault in Him; we shall never find anything to mar His sweet disposition; we shall never find anything to grieve us in regard to the words that proceed out of His blessed lips. O, “He is altogether lovely”!

Well, may we be caused and enabled truly to adore Him and to worship Him in truth and in deed. He is worthy of our highest praise, as the hymnwriter says:

“Let all the ransomed of the Lord  
Exalt His love with one accord,  
And hallelujah sing;  
Adore the dying Friend of man,  
And bless Him highly as you can;  
He is your God and King.”

The Lord add His blessing. Amen.

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It is certain in experience that with a poor and slender faith, it may be, at the first, many a soul hath cast anchor within the vail blindfold, and yet in the end hath found a firm and sure holdfast in the heart of God and grace of Christ to hang upon with the whole weight of their souls, the weight of their sins hanging upon them also with all their pondus [oppressive burden – Ed.].

*Thomas Goodwin*

## THE GLORY OF THE WISE

*An extract from William Huntington (1745-1813)*

The next noble branch of spiritual wisdom lies in taking the gospel lamp in the hand of faith, and oil in the vessel to feed the flame. The foolish virgins which took their lamps took no oil with them. The best account of the saints' lamp is as follows: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isa. 62. 1). Zion and Jerusalem here are the elect of God, and the covenant of grace, which God has made with Christ in their behalf (see Heb. 12. 22, 23).

There are two things in this text that go forth hand in hand, and they always come to the heart of poor sinners together: the one is righteousness, the other is salvation. A divine radiance attends the one, and a flaming fire attends the other. Righteousness goes forth as brightness, and salvation as a lamp that burneth. This, this is the wise virgins' lamp.

But, then, what is salvation? It is the forgiveness of sins, and the knowledge of it; as it is written, "To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1. 77-79). The fire that attends this salvation is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost; for the fullest discovery and sweetest enjoyment of divine love are made known to the soul at the time of pardon and forgiveness, and this overflowing of divine love in us inflames the whole soul with love to God again, or, to speak more evangelically, the Holy Spirit filling us with God's love through Christ, His love is reflected back again, attended with the renewed affections of the pardoned sinner. Hence it is said, Where much is forgiven, the same loveth much; and where little is forgiven, the same loveth little (see Luke 7. 47).

Sin is removed by faith in a Saviour's blood. This heals the conscience, and brings health and cure, while love binds up the broken heart, and fills it with joy and peace. This is salvation, and the burning flame that attends it; and justification always goes with it, for the same faith that purifies the heart puts on the wedding garment; the fatted calf and the best robe are brought forth together (see Luke 15. 22, 23). The prophet ascribes fire to salvation, and brightness to righteousness, and no wonder, for when God accepts us in His Son as clean, and in His righteousness as just, He reveals His dear Son in us, with all His saving benefits, and with all His fulness: and this is called the Sun of

righteousness rising upon us with healing in His *beams*, attended with “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4. 6).

Pardon removes sin, and righteousness removes the curse, and all condemnation. In this work we are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (see Luke 3. 16); with God the Father’s love, through Christ; for this “is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 5. 5). Hence the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of burning” (Isa. 4. 4). The Word of life, in the love of it, is a live coal from the altar (see Isa. 6. 6). And joy in the heart is the flame that blazes forth from this lamp, and is expressly called light: the light of the righteous rejoiceth when the lamp of the wicked is put out (see Prov. 13. 9). This lamp of salvation will afford a blaze of joy, when all joy raised by moving the passions will be put out. A consciousness of sin, and the expectation of wrath, are sure to extinguish it.

The ground and foundation of this joy in my text is, first, the forgiveness of sins. And such worshippers, once purged, shall have no more conscience of sins (see Heb. 10. 2). Thus “Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation” (Isa. 45. 17). The believer puts on an everlasting righteousness (see Dan. 9. 24). This, says the prophet, goes forth as brightness, as being the righteousness of God, and in which “the righteous” shall “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13. 43). And both the atonement and the best robe are brought nigh, and applied by the Holy Spirit of God; for we “are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6. 11), which most holy and blessed Spirit is a Comforter that abides with us for ever.

Thus salvation is attended with the fire of love, and righteousness with the brightest flames of heavenly joy, as it is written, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness ... as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isa. 61. 10). Here is the wise virgin, made wise to salvation, going forth to meet her great Redeemer, who hath washed her from her sins in His own blood. She is going to meet her dearly Beloved with His love shed abroad in her heart. She sets out in her wedding robe to meet her Bridegroom; she goes to meet her Head of influence, under the influence of His Spirit; and she rejoices in hope of an endless enjoyment of her own Husband. Nor is she in any danger of her lamp going out, for she has the promise of returning to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon her head (see Isa. 51. 11). And so far is she from being shut out of the marriage-chamber, that it is with gladness and rejoicing she shall be

brought, and shall enter into the king's palace (see Psa. 45. 15). So much for the wisdom of the wise.

Now for the glory; "the wise shall inherit glory" (Prov. 3. 35). There is a glory already put upon the wise, and it begins with the first entrance of the Spirit of God into the heart. Under His first operations, the poor sinner begins to separate himself from the world. This brings the odium of the world upon him: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Pet. 4. 14).

The glory of the light of God's countenance, in which our secret sins appear (see Psa. 90); "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5. 13); and which shines upon the sure word of prophecy till the day dawn, and day star arise in the heart (see 2 Pet. 1. 19); even this is no less than glory, yea, and the glory of God too. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. 60. 1, 2).

There is a wonderful display of divine glory in the creation and formation of the new man. God shining upon the soul, and giving us a discovery of His own glory in the face of Christ, reflects the image of God upon us; and under this glorious rising and shining is the new man formed, and the divine image imprinted on the soul. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3. 18). The love that fills the soul at this time, and the unutterable joy that springs from love, has, according to Peter, a fulness of glory in it. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1. 8). Glory, as mentioned in the Scriptures in the general, means light; "I could not see," says Paul, "for the glory of that light" (Acts 22. 11), and again, "The LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isa. 60. 19); and again, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60. 1).

The word *light* in Scripture signifies various things.

1. It signifies the light of faith. By faith Moses saw Him that is invisible. The patriarchs saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them. And again, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8. 12).

2. Sometimes it means love. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his

brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 John 2. 9, 10).

3. It signifies enlightening the understanding to discern spiritual things. "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions" (Heb. 10. 32). Again, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1. 18).

4. It signifies joy and gladness of heart. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psa. 97. 11). Again, "The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out" (Prov. 13. 9).

5. Wonderful deliverances, and prosperity upon it, are called light. When Haman was caught in his own trap, and God turned his violent dealings upon his own pate, it is said that "the Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour" (Esth. 8. 16). So much for the wise man's begun glory, even in this life. We read also of a glory that is to be put upon the bodies of the saints at the resurrection of the dead; that Christ shall change our vile bodies, and shall fashion them like unto His own glorious body. We read also of a crown of glory that fadeth not away. And I believe I may, in a few words, set forth both the glory of Christ, and the glory of the saints. The glory of Christ is His church: "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God" (Isa. 62. 3).

The crown of the saints follows: "In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people" (Isa. 28. 5). This is the glory of the wise, and the wise man's crown of glory; and he that can find out God unto perfection, he may describe it; as for me, I cannot. But thus much I may say, that whatever in the Word of God is called a crown, may, in the highest sense, be referred to Christ Jesus. For instance: "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16. 31). Christ is the "Ancient of days," "and the hair of His head like the pure wool" (Dan. 7. 9). "The prudent are crowned with knowledge" (Prov. 14. 18). Christ is made of God unto us wisdom; and to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, is life eternal.

We read of a crown of righteousness laid up for all that love His appearing (see 2 Tim. 4. 8). Jehovah-tsidkenu, Christ is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (see Jer. 23. 6). "The crown of the wise is their riches" (Prov. 14. 24). The Lord is the Portion of our souls. We read of being crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies (see Psa. 103. 4). Christ is love, He is kindness, and all the sure mercies of David are in Him. There is such a thing as "the crown of life" (Jas. 1. 12). Christ is

our life; and “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3. 4). Again: “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5. 4).

But this text that follows includes and contains the substance of all the above: “In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people” (Isa. 28. 5). This is our cap of state, our joy, the crown of our rejoicing, the glory of our head, and our eternal honour, dignity and majesty.

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## EXHORTATION TO BACKSLIDERS TO RETURN TO GOD

*An extract from Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)*

Looking at the case of the backsliding church of Ephesus, we find the nature of her sin, and the mode of her recovery, thus set forth: “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works” (Rev. 2. 4, 5). The first exhortation addressed to her was, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.” She was first called to solemn reflection upon her former state of prosperity.

Let the backsliding believer be brought to this first step. **“Remember** therefore from whence thou art fallen” – revert to thy past history, thy former spiritual state; remember thy first sorrow for sin, the first joy of its pardon; remember the spring-tide of thy first love – how precious Jesus was, how glorious was His Person, how sweet was His cross, how fragrant was His name, how rich was His grace; remember how dear to you was the throne of grace, how frequently you resorted to it, regarding it of all spots on earth the most blessed; remember how, under the anointings of adopting love, you walked with God as with a Father – how filial, how close, how holy was your communion with Him; remember the seasons of refreshing in the sanctuary, in the social meeting, in the closet, how your soul did seem to dwell on the sunny sides of glory, and you longed for the wings of a dove that you might fly to your Lord; remember how, publicly and before many witnesses, you put off sin and put on Christ, and turning your back upon the world, took your place among the followers of the Lamb; remember how holy, and circumspect, and spotless was your walk, how tender was your conscience, how guileless was your spirit, how humble and lowly your whole deportment.

But what and where are you now? O remember from whence you are fallen! Think from what a high profession, from what an elevated

walk, from what holy employments, from what hallowed joys, from what sweet delights, and from what pleasant ways have you declined? May you not truly enquire with the sweet poet of Olney:

“Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view  
Of Jesus and His Word?

“What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,  
How sweet their memory still!  
But now I find an aching void  
The world can never fill.

“Return, O holy Dove! return,  
Sweet Messenger of rest!  
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,  
And drove Thee from my breast.”

In the exhortation given to the backsliding church at Ephesus, there is yet another instruction equally applicable to the case of all wanderers from the Lord: “Repent, and do the first works.” How can a departing soul return without repentance? By what other avenue can the prodigal reach his Father’s heart? Repentance implies the existence and conviction of sin. Ah! is it no sin, beloved reader, to have turned thy back upon God? Is it no sin to have lost thy first love, to have backslidden from Jesus, to have transferred thy affections from Him to the world, or to the creature, or to thyself? Is it no sin to go no more with the Shepherd, and to follow no more the footsteps of the flock, and to feed no more in the green pastures, or repose by the side of the still waters? O yes! it is a sin of peculiar magnitude; it is a sin against God in the character of a loving Father, against Jesus in the character of a tender Redeemer, against the Holy Spirit in the character of a faithful Indweller and a Sanctifier; it is a sin against the most precious experience of His grace, against the most melting exhibitions of His love, and against the most tender proofs of His covenant faithfulness.

*Repent*, then, with weeping heart, of this thy sin. Think how thou hast wounded Jesus afresh, and *repent*; think how thou hast requited thy Father’s love, and *repent*; think how thou hast grieved the Spirit, and *repent*. Humble thyself in dust and ashes before the cross, and, through that cross, look up again to thy forgiving God and Father. The sweet promise is, “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zech. 12. 10). This leads us to touch upon one more point of vast moment in the way of a soul’s return to God. It is this:

*All real return of a backsliding soul is through Jesus.* Jesus is God’s great Door of approach to His throne. No other entrance will



conduct us to the golden sceptre; no other will bring us into the holy of holies. Thus has the Holy Ghost unfolded this truth: "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" (Heb. 10. 19-22). O blessed Door of return for a poor, backsliding, heartbroken believer! – a crucified Saviour, in whom God is well pleased, and for whose sake He can receive the sinner, and put away his sin, can welcome the backslider, and heal his backsliding.

Nor must we overlook the gracious *work of the Spirit* in the restoring of a backsliding soul; but for Him, not a step in the way of return would be taken on the part of the believer. The first solemn reflection, the first wistful glance of the eye towards the Father's home, the first sigh that heaves the heart, the first tear that starts from the fountain of grief, the first step bent towards a forsaken God, is the effect of His blessed operation, of His unchangeable love and covenant faithfulness. What debtors are we to the blessed and Eternal Spirit! What reverential views should we entertain of His Person, and what tender thoughts should we cherish of His work!

The *encouragements* to return to the Lord are many and great: in the first place, we have *the gracious invitations of God Himself*. How numerous and touching are these! Where is the heart, deeply conscious of its backsliding, that can resist the power of language like this: "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever" (Jer. 3. 12). Here is a warrant for your return – God's own free invitation! You want no more. What if Satan discourages, what if your sins plead against you, what if guilt and unbelief and shame combine to impede your way? If God says, "Return!" – that is sufficient for thee. Thou dost want no more; if He is willing to receive you back, to pardon your sins, to forget your base ingratitude, to heal your backslidings, and restore your soul, you have the broad warrant to return, in the face of all opposition and discouragement. Yet again the cheering invitation runs: "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God" (verse 13); "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you" (verse 14). "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings" (verse 22). "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him" (Hos. 14. 4).

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## WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO A YOUNG MINISTER

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December 9th, 1768

*To John Fraser, Kiltarlity*

My dear John,

I am pleased to find you are exercised as to your call to the ministry, because the effect of this, in consequence of your laying the matter seriously before the Lord, will be your further establishment and comfort. Moses and Jeremiah had their "Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child" (Jer. 1. 6) – I am not qualified for the office. Now the effect of this address to the Lord was, "But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child" (unqualified): "for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth" (Jer. 1. 7-9). On which words observe,

1. His call and commission given him: "I send thee."

2. His furniture [spiritual gift and knowledge]: "Behold" – take notice of it, for He sends none a warfare on his own charge – "Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth," "and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak" – as in Ezekiel 3. 10: "Son of man, all My words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears, and go."

3. His security and safety: "I am with thee to deliver thee." How confirming, establishing, and comfortable is the answer. Go you and do likewise.

Groan before the Lord your want of qualifications, grace, gifts – "Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." Wait on Him, and you will find the truth of His word, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8). The same this day that He was yesterday to Jeremiah, and will be the same for ever – to answer the prayers, remove the difficulties, to establish and confirm His poor, needy ones.

My dear John, the specimen I saw of your discourses is to me an evidence that the Lord is with you, and is your Teacher; it is my prayer that He may make all grace to abound towards you.

I recommend you to the grace of our great God and blessed Redeemer and Saviour, and am, my dear John, yours very affectionately,

Hector M'Phail

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## PRACTICAL FRUIT OF FAITH

*An extract from John Newton (1725-1807)*

By the same principle of faith, a believer's conduct is regulated towards his fellow creatures; and in the discharge of the several duties and relations of life, his great aim is to please God, and to let his light shine in the world. He believes and feels his own weakness and unworthiness, and lives upon the grace and pardoning love of his Lord. This gives him an habitual tenderness and gentleness of spirit. Humbled under a sense of much forgiveness to himself, he finds it easy to forgive others, if he has aught against any. A due sense of what he is in the sight of the Lord, preserves him from giving way to anger, positiveness [self-confidence, presumption] and resentment: he is not easily provoked, but is "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"; and if offended, easy to be intreated, and disposed not only to yield to a reconciliation, but to seek it.

As Jesus is his life, and righteousness, and strength, so He is his pattern. By faith he contemplates and studies this great Exemplar of philanthropy. With a holy ambition he treads in the footsteps of his Lord and Master, and learns of Him to be meek and lowly, to requite injuries with kindness, and to overcome evil with good. From the same views, by faith he derives a benevolent spirit, and, according to his sphere and ability, he endeavours to promote the welfare of all around him. The law of love being thus written in his heart, and his soul set at liberty from the low and narrow dictates of a selfish spirit, his language will be truth, and his dealings equity. His promise may be depended on, without the interposition of oath, bond or witness; and the feelings of his own heart under the direction of an enlightened conscience, and the precepts of Scripture, prompt him to do unto others as he would desire they, in the like circumstances, should do unto him.

If he is a master, he is gentle and compassionate; if a servant, he is faithful and obedient; for in either relation he acts by faith, under the eye of his Master in heaven. If he is a trader, he neither dares nor wishes to take advantage either of the ignorance or the necessities of those with whom he deals. And the same principle of love influences his whole conversation. A sense of his own infirmities makes him candid to those of others. He will not readily believe reports to their prejudice, without sufficient proof; and even then he will not repeat them, unless he is lawfully called to it. He believes that the precept, "Speak evil of no man," is founded upon the same authority with those which forbid committing adultery or murder; and therefore he keeps his tongue as with a bridle.

Lastly, faith is of daily use as a preservative from a compliance with the corrupt customs and maxims of the world. The believer, though *in* the world, is not *of* it. By faith he triumphs over its smiles and enticements; he sees that all that is in the world, suited to gratify the desires of the flesh or the eye, is not only to be avoided as sinful, but as incompatible with his best pleasures. He will mix with the world so far as is necessary, in the discharge of the duties of that station of life in which the providence of God has placed him, but no further. His leisure and inclinations are engaged in a different pursuit. They who fear the Lord are his chosen companions; and the blessings he derives from the Word, and throne, and ordinances of grace, make him look upon the poor pleasures and amusements of those who live without God in the world with a mixture of disdain and pity; and by faith he is proof against its frowns. He will obey God rather than man; he will “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5. 11). And if, upon this account, he should be despised and injuriously treated, whatever loss he suffers in such a cause, he accounts his gain, and esteems such disgrace his glory.

I am not aiming to draw a perfect character, but to show the proper effects of that faith which justifies, which purifies the heart, worketh by love, and overcomes the world.

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### CHRIST’S OFFERING FOR ALL HIS CHURCH

*An extract from John Flavel (1628-1691)*

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*Doctrine.* That the oblation made unto God by Jesus Christ, is of unspeakable value, and everlasting efficacy, to perfect all them that are, or shall be sanctified, to the end of the world.

Out of this fountain flow all the blessings that believers either have, or hope for. Had it not been for this, there had been no such things as justification, adoption, salvation and peace with God and hopes of glory, pardon of sin, and divine acceptance: these and all other our best mercies, had been but so many mere conceits. A man, as one saith, might have happily imagined such things as these, but they could never have had any real existence, had not Christ offered up Himself a sacrifice to God for us. It is “the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,” that purges the “conscience from dead works” (Heb. 9. 14), that is, from the sentence of condemnation and death, as it is reflected by conscience, for our works’ sake.

His appearing before God as our Priest, with such an offering for us, is that which removes our guilt and fear together: "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9. 26). Now, forasmuch as the point before us is of so great weight in itself, and so fundamental to our safety and comfort, I shall endeavour to give you as distinct and clear an account of it, as can consist with that brevity which I must necessarily use. And therefore, reader, apply thy mind attentively to the consideration of this excellent *Priest* that appears before God; the *sacrifices* He offers, with the properties and adjuncts [accompaniments or attributes] thereof; the *Person* before whom He brings, and to whom He offers it; the *persons for whom* He offers; and the *end for which* this oblation is made.

*First*, The *Priest* that appears before God with an oblation for us, is Jesus Christ, God-Man, the dignity of whose Person gave an inestimable worth to the offering He made. There were many priests before Him, but none like unto Him, either for the purity of His Person, or the perpetuity of His priesthood. They were sinful men, and offered for their own sins, as well as the sins of the people (see Heb. 5. 3), but He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7. 26). He could stand before God, even in the eye of His justice, as a lamb without spot. Though He made "His soul an offering for sin," "because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth" (Isa. 53. 9, 10); and indeed His offering had done us no good, if the least taint of sin had been found on Him. They were mortal men, that continued not by reason of death (see Heb. 7. 23), but Christ is "a Priest for ever" (Psa. 110. 4).

*Secondly*, The *oblation* or offering He made, was not the blood of beasts, "but by His own blood" (Heb. 9. 12). And herein He transcended all other priests, that He had something of His own to offer; He had a body given Him to be at His own disposal, to this use and purpose, He offered up His own body (see Heb. 10. 10); yea, not only His body, but His soul was made an offering for sin (see Isa. 53. 10). We had made a forfeiture of our souls and bodies by sin, and it was necessary the sacrifice of Christ should be answerable to the debt we owed. And when Christ came to offer His sacrifice, He stood not only in the capacity of a Priest, but also in that of a Surety; and so His soul stood in the stead of ours, and His body in the stead of our bodies. Now the excellency of this oblation will appear in the following adjuncts and properties of it. This oblation being, for the matter of it, the soul and body of Jesus Christ, is therefore,

1. *Invaluably precious*. So the apostle styles it, Ye were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1. 19), and such it behoved Him to offer. For it being offered as an expiatory sacrifice, it ought to be equivalent, in its own intrinsic value, to all the souls and bodies that

were to be redeemed by it. And so it was, and more also; for there was a redundancy of value, an overplus of merit, which went to make a purchase for the redeemed, as will be opened in its place. So that, as one rich diamond is more worth than a thousand pebbles, one piece of gold than many counters, so the soul and body of one Christ are much more excellent than all the souls and bodies in the world.

But surely as none but God can estimate the weight and evil of sin, so none but He can comprehend the worth and preciousness of the blood of Christ, shed to expiate it. And being so infinitely precious a thing which was offered up to God, it must,

2. Needs be a most complete and all-sufficient oblation, fully to expiate [pay the penalty for] the sins of all for whom it was offered, in all ages of the world. The virtue of this sacrifice reacheth backward as far as Adam, and reacheth forward to the last person of the elect springing from him. That the efficacy of it thus reacheth back to Adam, is plain: for, on the account thereof, He is styled, “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13. 8).

And to the same sense a judicious expositor understands those words of Christ, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8. 58). And, look, as the sun at midday extends his light and influence, not only forward towards the *west*, but also backward towards the *east*, where he arose, so did this most efficacious sacrifice reach all the elect in the virtue of it, who died before Christ came in the flesh.

And the virtue of this oblation not only reaches those believers that lived and died before Christ’s day, but it extends itself forward to the end of the world. Hence Christ is said to be “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13. 8).

To the same sense are those words rightly paraphrased: “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11. 40). God hath appointed the accomplishment of the promise of sending the Messiah, to be in the last times, that they (*viz.* that lived before Christ) should not be perfected, that is, justified and saved by anything done in their time, but by looking to our time, and Christ’s satisfaction made therein; whereby they and we are perfected together. No tract of time can wear out the virtue of this eternal sacrifice. It is as fresh, vigorous and potent now, as the first hour it was offered. And though He *actually* offer it no more, yet He *virtually* continues it by His intercession now in heaven; for there He is still a Priest. And therefore, about sixty years after His ascension, when He gave the Revelation to John, He appears to him in His priestly garment: “Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle” (Rev. 1. 13), in allusion to the priestly ephod, and curious girdle.

And as the virtue of this oblation reaches backward and forward, to all ages, and to all believers, so to all the sins of all believers, which are

fully purged and expiated by it. This no other oblation could do. The legal sacrifices were no real expiations, but rather remembrances of sins (see Heb. 9. 9, 12; 10. 3). And all the virtue they had, consisted in their typical relation to this sacrifice (see Gal. 3. 23; Heb. 9. 13). And, separate from it, were altogether weak, unprofitable and insignificant things (see Heb. 7. 18). But this blood cleanseth from all sins (see 1 John 1. 7). It expiates all fully, without exception, and finally, without revocation. So that by His being made sin for us, we are made not only righteous, but "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

3. And *lastly*, to name no more: being so precious in itself, and so efficacious to expiate sin, it must needs be a most grateful oblation to the Lord, highly pleasing and delightful in His eyes. And so indeed it is said, He "hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5. 2). Not that God took any delight or content in the bitter sufferings of Christ, simply and in themselves considered, but with relation to the end for which He was offered, even our redemption and salvation.

Hence arose the delight and pleasure God had in it; this made Him take pleasure in bruising Him (see Isa. 53. 10). God smelled a savour of rest in this sacrifice. The meaning is, that as men are offended with a stench, and on the contrary delighted with sweet odours and fragrances, so the blessed God speaking after the manner of man, is offended, and filled with loathing and abhorrence by our sins, but infinitely pleased and delighted in the offering of Christ for them, which came up as an odour of sweet-smelling savour to Him, whereof the costly perfumes under the law were types and shadows. This was the oblation.

*Thirdly*, This oblation He brings before God, and to Him He offers it up. So speaks the apostle: "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9. 14). As Christ sustained the capacity of a surety, so God of a creditor, who exacted satisfaction from Him; that is, He required from Him, as our Surety, the penalty due to us for our sin. And so Christ had to do immediately with God, yea, with a God infinitely wronged, and incensed by sin against us. To this incensed Majesty, Christ our High Priest approached, as to a devouring fire, with the sacrifice.

*Fourthly*, The persons for whom, and in whose stead He offered Himself to God, was the whole number of God's elect, which were given Him of the Father, neither more nor less. So speak the Scriptures. He laid down His life for the *sheep* (see John 10. 15), for the *church* (see Acts 20. 28), for the *children of God* (see John 11. 50-52).

*Fifthly*, The design and end of this oblation was to atone, pacify and reconcile God, by giving Him a full and adequate compensation or

satisfaction for the sins of these His elect. So speaks the apostle: “And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col. 1. 20). So, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5. 19). Reconciliation is the making up of that breach caused by sin, between us and God, and restoring us again to His favour and friendship. For this end Christ offered up Himself to God; I say, not for this end only, but more especially; hence it is called a propitiation.

But here I would not be mistaken, as though the reconciliation were made only between us and God the Father, by the blood of the cross; for we were reconciled by it to the whole Trinity. Every sin being made against the divine Majesty, it must needs follow, that the three Persons, having the same divine essence, must be all offended by the commission, and so all reconciled by the expiation and remission of the same. But reconciliation is said to be with the Father, because, though the works of the Trinity be undivided, and what One doth, all do; and what is done to One, is done to all; yet by this form and manner of expression, the Scriptures point out the proper office of each Person. The Father receives us into favour; the Son mediates, and gives the ransom which procures it; the Spirit applies and seals this to the persons and hearts of believers. However, being reconciled to the Father, we are also reconciled to the Son and Spirit, as they are one God in three Persons.

*Inference 1.* Hence it follows, *that actual believers are fully freed from the guilt of their sins, and shall never more come under condemnation.*

The obligation\* of sin is perfectly abolished by the virtue of this sacrifice. When Christ became our sacrifice, He both bare, and bare away our sins. They were laid upon Him, then expiated by Him. So much is imported in that word, “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9. 28). *To bear*, the word is a full and emphatical word, signifying not only to bear, but to bear away. So John 1. 29: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” not only *declaratively*, or by way of manifestation to the conscience, but *really*, making a purgation of sin, as it is in Hebrews 1. 3, word for word, *a purgation being made*, and not declared only. Now, how great a mercy is this, “and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13. 39).

What shall we call this grace? Surely, we should do somewhat more than admire it, and faint under the sense of such a mercy. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psa. 32. 1), or, O the blessedness or felicities of him that is pardoned! Who can express

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\* Legal penalty for sin, is punishment by death (see Gen. 2. 17). Ed.



the mercies, comforts, happiness, of such a state as this? Reader, let me beg thee, if thou be one of this pardoned number, to look over the cancelled bonds, and see what vast sums are remitted to thee. Remember what thou wast in thy natural state: possibly thou wast in that black bill (see 1 Cor. 6. 9-11). What, and yet pardoned! fully and finally pardoned, and that freely, as to any hand that thou hadst in the procurement of it! What canst thou do less, than fall down at the feet of free grace, and kiss those feet that moved so freely towards so vile a sinner? It is not long since thy iniquities were upon thee, and thou pinedst away in them. Their guilt could by no creature-power be separated from thy soul. Now they are removed from thee, as far as the *east* from the *west* (see Psa. 103. 12). So that, when the east and west, which are the two opposite points of heaven, meet, then thy soul and its guilt may meet again together.

O the unspeakable efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, which extends to all sins! "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7), sins past and present, without exception. And some divines of good note affirm, all sins to come also; for original sin, in which all future sins are, as fruits in the root, is pardoned; and if these were not pardoned, they would void and invalidate former pardons. And lastly, it would derogate from the most plenary [entire, absolute] satisfaction of Christ. O let these things slide sweetly to thy melting heart.

*Inference 2.* From this oblation Christ made of Himself to God for our sins, we infer the *inflexible severity of divine Justice, which could be no other way diverted from us, and appeased, but by the blood of Christ.* If Christ had not presented Himself to God for us, Justice would not have spared us: and if He do appear before God as our Surety, it will not spare Him. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8. 32). If forbearance might have been expected from any, surely it might from God, who "is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. 5. 11); yet God in this case spared not. If one might have expected sparing mercy from any, surely Christ might most of all expect it from His own Father; yet you hear, God spared not *His own Son*. Sparing mercy is the lowest degree of mercy, yet it was denied to Christ: He abated Him not a minute of the time appointed for His suffering, nor one degree of wrath He was to bear; nay, though in the garden Christ fell upon the ground, and sweat great drops of blood, and in that unparalleled agony cried, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass," and though He brake out upon the cross in that heart-rending complaint, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" yet no abatement; Justice will not bend in the least; but having to do with Him on this account, resolves upon satisfaction from His blood.

If this be so, what is the case of thy soul, reader, if thou be a man or woman that hast no interest in this sacrifice? For if these things be done in (Christ) the green tree, what will be done to (thee) the dry tree? (see Luke 23. 31). That is, if God so deal with Me, that I am not only innocent, but like a green and fruitful tree, full of all delectable fruits of holiness; yet if the fire of His indignation thus seize upon Me, what will be your condition, that are both barren and guilty, void of all good fruit, and full of all unrighteousness, and so like dry, seary [withered] wood, fitted as fuel to the fire? Consider with thyself, man, how canst thou imagine thou canst support that infinite wrath that Christ bore in the room of God's elect! He had the strength of Deity to support Him. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold" (Isa. 42. 1). He had the fulness of His Spirit to prepare Him (see Isa. 61). He had the ministry of an angel, who came post from heaven to relieve Him in His agony (see Luke 22. 43). He had the ear of His Father to hear Him, for He cried, "and was heard in that He feared" (Heb. 5. 7). He was assured of the victory, before the combat; He knew He should be justified (see Isa. 50. 8), and yet for all this He was sore amazed, and sorrowful even to death (see Matt. 26. 38, Mark 14. 33), and His heart was melted like wax in the midst of His bowels (see Psa. 22. 14).

If the case stood thus with Christ, notwithstanding all these advantages He had to bear the wrath of God for a little time; how dost thou think, a poor worm as thou art, to dwell with everlasting burnings, or contend with devouring fire? Luther saw ground enough for what he said, when he cried out, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God," i.e., with a God out of Christ: for, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10. 31). Woe and alas for evermore to that man who meets a just and righteous God without a Mediator!

Whoever thou art that readest these lines, I beseech thee, by the mercies of God, by all the regard and love thou hast to thy own soul, neglect not time, but make quick and sure work of it. Get an interest in this sacrifice quickly; what else will be thy state when vast eternity opens to swallow thee up? What wilt thou do, man, when thine eye-strings and heart-strings are breaking? O what a fearful shriek will thy conscience give, when thou art presented before the dreadful God, and no Christ to screen thee from His indignation! Happy is that man who can say in a dying hour, as one did (Mr. William Lyford), who being desired, a little before his dissolution, to give his friends a little taste of his present hopes, and the grounds of them, cheerfully answered, "I will let you know how it is with me"; then stretching forth his hand, said, "Here is the grave, the wrath of God, and devouring flame, the just punishment of sin, on the one side; and here am I, a poor, sinful soul, on the other side.

But this is my comfort, the covenant of grace, which is established upon so many sure promises, hath saved all. There is an act of oblivion [all put away and forgotten] passed in heaven: *'I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more.'* This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, among whom I am one." O it is sweet at all times, especially at such a time, to see the reconciled face of God, through Jesus Christ, and hear the voice of peace through the blood of the cross.

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### LETTER TO A DYING SON

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23 Southwark Bridge Road,  
London S.E.,  
June 3rd, 1895

My own dear Jamie,

O when I think of what the Lord has done for you in a little over a fortnight, I can only stand still and wonder.

"A foe received a favourite,  
An alien made a child."

Only a little while ago, you dreaded me coming, for fear I might speak to you about your precious soul, and now you are almost jealous if you do not hear from me by letter. Good, quaint old John Berridge says, "When I went to Jesus Christ I hadn't a good coat to go in, and when I tried to get a respectable garment, He looked upon it as filthy rags, and I had to go quite naked, without a shirt, and then I was as black as a devil; and as I stood before Him, He said, 'Well, prodigal Jack, what do you think you deserve?'" and as He said that, I caught a glimpse of His Person, and I directly fell in love with Him, so that nothing would do now but a marriage; and then He washed me in His blood, and when I was washed I was quite white. Then He clothed me with a beautiful garment that covered me from head to foot, and then He said, 'Now, prodigal Jack, you are fit for the marriage. Take this robe, and shame an angel. Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee.'" Dr. Watts says,

"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."

O it did me good when you said,

"I stand upon His merit,  
I know no other stand."

O my dear, dying boy, this, for a poor, dying soul, is solid Rock. You will never get sweeter food for your soul, either here, or through eternity, than that which comes through the death of Christ. Dear Rutherford says, "O for a soul, a poor, helpless, guilty soul, to be laid upon the open wounds of Jesus Christ." Another writes,

"To live upon His precious death  
Is faith's divine repast;  
The language of His dying breath,  
See how she holds it fast!"

O Jamie, I wish you every hour of the day and night, awake or asleep, continually, fresh views of this precious blood. I don't know if you realise as much for yourself as I do for you. But I have not the shadow of a doubt left, as regards the everlasting salvation of your soul. Huntington used to put "S.S." at the end of his name, "a sinner saved." Surely you can too.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

James Burn

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### JESUS, THE PRECIOUS CORNER STONE

*An extract from Henry Fowler (1779-1838)*

That Zion might dwell in everlasting safety, that she might feel her security and bid defiance to all her foes, her God saw fit to lay her a firm foundation, even the precious corner stone; and "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 11). A rock is a figure of stability, and, therefore, made use of by the Lord to convey to our apprehension the solidity of our standing. The Godhead, power, faithfulness, love and grace of Jesus Christ, are a firm foundation for poor, sensible, miserable sinners, to build upon and trust in. He who ventures his eternal concerns in the hands of Christ, sinful and polluted as he may be, shall never perish. "He that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end" (see 1 Pet. 2. 6 and Isa. 45. 17). In Him is everlasting strength, or as some read it, He is "the Rock of Ages." Moses smote the rock and "the waters gushed out" (Psa. 78. 20); Jesus Christ was smitten for us. "For the transgression of My people was He stricken" (Isa. 53. 8). It is here the Holy Ghost directs the sinner who feels himself stricken with guilt, and who is "ready to perish" (Isa. 27. 13). "With His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5).

God will never suffer a sinner who belongs to Him to die without an application of the atonement to his conscience. Unto the blood of

sprinkling he shall come; and he shall find it to cleanse him from all his sins. Faith draws life out of Christ's death, and it is by this our conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God. "Purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15. 9).

"O Rock of all ages in Thee I'll confide,  
And hide me secure in the clift of Thy side."

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## SIN SUBDUED AND COMMUNION WITH GOD

*Extract from Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)*

Only, therefore, as this covenant with death and agreement with hell, that is, this sensual communion, is broken to pieces, can there be spiritual communion with the Lord of life and glory. Now, in this, God's people are distinguished from all others on the face of the earth, in that they are seeking communion with the Son of God, fellowship with Jesus in the knowledge and enjoyment of Him in their hearts. This distinguishes a work of grace upon the heart from all fleshly counterfeits. Now as the Lord breaks up this sensual communion, He goes on to fulfil His own eternal purpose, which is, to bring a soul into communion with His dear Son.

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## THE MEMORY OF THE JUST

*Notice of death of William Thomas, of Maidstone, written by  
J.K. Popham, together with an account of his last days by his widow,  
Rhoda Thomas, followed by an account of Rhoda Thomas,  
by J.H. Gosden*

William Thomas, of Loose, Maidstone, died on July 8th, 1916, aged 69. He laboured in word and doctrine among our churches for many years, and his ministry was much valued by many, and he will be much missed. But what is loss to the saints, which his removal involves, is to himself unspeakable and everlasting gain. He died in the full assurance of faith, in the embrace of everlasting love, under the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Many sweet and gracious words fell from his lips as he lay a patient sufferer, only one of which I here record. As I sat by his side on July 4th, he said to me, "*My conscience is as if it had never had a sin on it.*" The awful, blessed weight and unction of those words I hope never to forget. Of him who uttered them it may well be written: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith

the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14. 13).

*Account by his widow*

My dear husband, William Thomas, of Loose, Maidstone, was born September 27th, 1846, at Ulcombe, Kent. At the present time I have no account of his early days, but only of the last few months of his life.

He was never really well after the year 1916 had begun; he had a very bad cough and cold and I much wished him to see a doctor, but he thought it unnecessary, and would say, if the Lord spared him and brought him through another Sabbath, and he was then no better, he would have advice. The Lord, however, so favoured him in his own soul while preaching that he felt he wished to go and speak in His dear name while he had the strength to stand. For months before he was laid aside he was much favoured, both in private and in public, in reading and prayer. Sometimes he felt the Lord was preparing him for something better, and he would talk as though he had no wish to live; he told me he had never before felt so emptied of everything relating to this life, so that he realised the Lord was weaning him from this world – everything was losing its hold, and he did not seem to take interest in anything, but would bless the Lord again and again for the way in which He made Himself so precious.

My husband preached his last sermon on April 4th, at Matfield Green, and got through in much weakness. I shall not forget how ill he was when he returned home. On the Tuesday I sent for the doctor, who said he was suffering from bronchitis and inflammation of the lungs. For three weeks he was very ill, but he recovered sufficiently to conduct the ordinance of the Lord’s supper on the first Sunday in May. When he returned home from the service he said how much disappointed he was, for he had hoped by that day to have been in the heavenly courts rather than the earthly.

After this he revived again, and told me how he had been able to commit his dear ones into God’s gracious hand, and that he felt so full of submission that he could say,

“’Tis sweet to lie passive in His hands,  
And know no will but His.”

He was kept very quiet throughout his illness; not once was the enemy permitted to harass him. When alone with me he would talk much of the great goodness of God towards him, and often enjoyed hearing the Bible read; many hymns were very sweet to him, especially numbers 476, 158 and 352.

When the Sabbath day came, he often spoke of the blessed times he had had in preaching, and though he could no longer speak in public

about the Saviour he loved, he realised that He spoke to him, and with the tears running down his cheeks he would tell me of the precious support he felt.

He often spoke of the sad state the churches were in, and of the solemn times he felt were coming.

On the last Sunday he spent on earth he said to me: "This is the Sabbath, and what a number of my dear friends are now around the throne, singing the everlasting song. O how grand it will be to hear that song when we get there!" I said to him, "Yes, it will be blessed for you to be at home, but what about me? I shall be left alone again." He looked up with a sweet smile, and said, "No, my dear, you will not be alone; the Lord will be with you, but perhaps it will not be for long."

As the days passed on, he continued to be very happy, often speaking of the goodness of God to him, but always longing to be gone. Some days we could not understand all he said, but he prayed long and earnestly for all the churches without pastors, and for all his dear friends and children.

Towards the end he became very quiet, and about one o'clock on Saturday morning, July 8th, he passed away to his eternal home. We have lost a loving husband and father, and we shall all miss his gracious prayers. Our earnest prayer is that our last end may be like his.

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Rhoda Thomas (widow of W. Thomas, minister of the gospel), died in the Lord on June 12th, 1945, aged 83. Formerly a member of the church at Zoar, London, she transferred to Priory, Maidstone, in 1925. Our dear friend was an exceptionally gracious character, and enjoyed much sacred intercourse with the Lord. Her beginning was clear and her deliverance not less so. Being well schooled in the experience of conviction, adversity and affliction, she was established in the truths of the gospel wherein the creature is laid low and the great Redeemer exalted in the sinner's salvation. The gospel was her food, and often she was able to speak of receiving instruction, comfort or confirmation through the appointed means of grace, where her attendance was consistently regular to the very end. Quite recently she wrote, "I have had just a glimpse of His bitter death, so that my poor soul almost sank under the weight of it. I believe I knew a little of what John felt when he fell at His feet as dead. I am unfit to speak of such sufferings as the precious Lamb of God endured in the garden and on the cross. How thankful I have felt at times that He has no more to suffer for my sins! How I long to live to His glory the few remaining days of my life here, and then crown Him at last and be with Him for ever...."

Mrs. Thomas was truly a "mother in Israel," tenderly watching with prayerful concern those whom she hoped were seeking a portion for their

souls. The things of God were very weighty to her; she was loyal to the truth, and could not dissemble or trifle with souls. The young have lost a faithful friend. The church at Priory is very much poorer by her removal. The pastor found her in reality a labourer with him in the gospel (see Phil. 4. 3), by her prayers and example. The funeral service was in the chapel on June 18th, and the burial at Lenham where her husband's body also lies, awaiting the resurrection of the just.

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**CHRIST LIGHTLY ESTEEMED.**

*"He forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (Deut. 32. 15).*

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Few in very deed they are,  
Who for Jesus truly care;  
Few, I venture to aver,  
Christ to silver now prefer.

Few who know the plague within;  
Few who feel the state they're in;  
Few who know and feel they're lost;  
Few who are much tried and tossed;

Few who have a heart to pray;  
Few who nothing have to pay;  
Few who after Christ enquire;  
Few who heavenly things desire;

Few who hate their sinful heart;  
Few who do from sin depart;  
Few who choose the fear of God;  
Few who love His chastening rod;

Few who pleasures here forego;  
Few who hunger Christ to know;  
Few who from destruction flee;  
Few who Christ the Refuge see.

Gracious Lord, of Thee I'd sue,  
Make me one, however few,  
Who the dear Redeemer prize  
More than all beneath the skies.

Alfred

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We cannot begin to lead a holy life till we first look to Christ for pardon of sin.  
*Thomas Cole*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
AUGUST 2018

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

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HEZEKIAH'S UNTHANKFULNESS

"But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up" (2 Chron. 32. 25).

King Hezekiah was one of the godly kings of Judah, who brought about a reformation in Judah by reinstating the true worship of God, according to the statutes and judgments made by God in the law of Moses.

We read of the sickness of Hezekiah, and also of the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, together with Rabshakeh's blasphemy, in this chapter and also in Isaiah chapters 36 to 39. In Isaiah's prophecy, we read the record of Hezekiah's humble supplication and his acknowledgement of the Lord's goodness (chapter 38). However, when the King of Babylon sent a letter and presents to Hezekiah after his recovery from sickness and deliverance, we read that Hezekiah's heart was lifted up and he did not glorify God as he should. It may seem an innocuous thing to show the visitors his treasures, which, no doubt, was a traditional practice of kings, yet the Lord read his heart, which was lifted up in self-admiration and self-sufficiency.

God reads the heart and weighs up all its thoughts and purposes with the full penetration of His omniscient eye. We read in Exodus, "I the LORD thy God am a jealous God," and, "for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (chapter 20. 5 and 34. 14). Therefore the Lord Jesus who has done so much, yea, everything for His people, is jealous of their affection, and the honour and homage that they render unto Him.

How easy it is for pilgrims, left to their own spirit, to slip into an unthankful frame of mind, or for their hearts to be lifted up with pride.

Unthankfulness is a common sin of fallen man, as the apostle declares, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, **neither were thankful**" (Rom. 1. 21). Sadly, this is a frame of mind that even the Lord's dear people can fall into, especially when things are not according to their wishes; for we can so easily complain, and are so slow to count our blessings and mercies. We read of Israel in the song of Moses, "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee" (Deut. 32. 18). We read of Jacob in Isaiah, "Thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength" (chapter 17. 10). Nehemiah

complaints of Israel, “Neither were mindful of Thy wonders that Thou didst among them” (chapter 9. 17). Unthankfulness can so easily lead to forgetfulness of former mercies, and then into rebellion and unbelief. Good King Hezekiah did not render the praise and glory due to God for the benefit done unto him. May the Lord save us from falling into such a spirit. We need to be kept in a thankful frame, mindful of the tender mercies of the most high God to us. Even in perplexity and trial it is good to own of God that “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (Psa. 103. 10). The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy (and to us!), “But godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6. 6). May we each know more of the spiritual frame of mind that David was in when he penned, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD” (Psa. 116. 12, 13).

“Give me a calm, a thankful heart,  
From every murmur free;  
The blessings of Thy grace impart,  
And make me live to Thee.”

Good King Hezekiah did not only not render unto the Lord as he should have done, but his heart was lifted up in pride. Pride so often troubles the people of God. No man can claim that he has no pride, for we are children of pride by nature. The Lord in His gracious way makes His dear people to realise it, so that they mourn over it, and confess it. The sweet psalmist of Israel, David, troubled Israel by pride when he numbered the people. Seventy thousand men fell by the pestilence which God sent, because David numbered the people. Yet the Lord showed mercy and spared. Another good king who reigned in Judah was Uzziah. We read of him, that “he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction” (2 Chron. 26. 15, 16). He presumed to burn incense which pertained to the priesthood, and God smote him with leprosy.

Pride is a very subtle sin. Such is its wily nature, that oftentimes even the Lord’s dear people can hardly detect it within, and yet so easily see it in others. The Word of God states, “Only by pride cometh contention” (Prov. 13. 10).

How we so much need the rich grace of humility, to be saved from the “pride of life,” and also truly to value the good hand of God, as we consider His good hand in all His tender mercies toward us. If we are among the humble who trust in God, it is all by His grace to us. The Apostle Paul owned, “But by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15. 10). So the dear saints are humbled to own before God and man, that all that they are, and all that they possess, and all that they hope to possess hereafter, is in a precious Christ, and is all by the rich grace of the Lord Jesus. All comes from God! David said, “For all things come

of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chron. 29. 14). May we therefore "be clothed with humility," and humble ourselves "under the mighty hand of God," as we cast all our care upon Him (see 1 Pet. 5. 5-7).

Joseph Hart, penning poetry on pride in his skilful and descriptive way, says:

"Against its influence pray,  
It mingles with the prayer;  
Against it preach, it prompts the speech;  
Be silent, still 'tis there.

"In every outward act,  
In every thought within,  
The heart it draws to seek applause,  
And mixes all with sin.

"Thou meek and lowly Lamb,  
This haughty tyrant kill,  
That wounded Thee, though Thou wast free,  
And grieves Thy Spirit still.

"Our condescending God,  
(To whom else shall we go?)  
Remove our pride, whate'er betide,  
And lay and keep us low.

"Thy garden is the place  
Where pride cannot intrude;  
For should it dare to enter there,  
'Twould soon be drowned in blood."

May the Lord so mercifully bring us down to His dear feet that we may be favoured to know that all our unthankfulness, pride and sin is washed away in the blood of the Lord Jesus.

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### ARISE AND FOLLOW

*Sermon preached by Clement Arthur Wood at Salem Chapel,  
Carshalton, on Lord's day afternoon, July 17th, 1983*

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**Text:** "Arise, let us go hence" (John 14. 31).

These are the words of Jesus Himself, words that, in their literal meaning, can be simply understood. Jesus was now about to leave the upper room to go forth with His disciples into the garden, on the way to Calvary's cross. "Arise, let us go hence." May the Holy Spirit lead us into a spiritual meditation upon these words, so simple, that conclude this chapter.

“Arise.” God’s dear children sometimes, oftentimes, are in a very low place, burdened with their sin and in much darkness. How precious is such a word as this when it is spoken with divine power into the heart of a fearing, trembling, feelingly-guilty sinner! O beloved, does Satan tempt you to give up? Are your sins so great, such a burden, that you are ready to despair and beginning to faint? May the Lord Himself draw near and speak a word to comfort you and lift you up, to encourage you. O what a mercy it is if the language we have just sung (hymn 385), is found as a prayer in our hearts, the language of a poor, guilty sinner seeking mercy! “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18. 13). What comfort there is in the Word of God for downcast sinners, burdened sinners, restless sinners! “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11. 28). Poor sinner, art thou pondering much on thyself? It is right and so very needful that we should be well taught of our sinnership, but, “Arise.”

The serpent-bitten Israelite could find no healing, no life for death, by looking at the wounds made by the serpent, beholding the venom passing through his veins. He was bidden to look to God’s provision, to the brazen serpent set on high; and he that looked, lived. “Arise.” You poor thing, that cannot lift up so much as your eyes to heaven, being so burdened, the Lord help you to look to Jesus, to Calvary, to the dear Saviour, to His precious blood, to that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. O what blessed encouragements there are in the gospel! “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). Think of that blind beggar outside Jericho. How he cried when he heard that it was Jesus passing by! Have you cried out? Are you crying now? What is your prayer? It is summed up in this: “Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” Jesus heard that cry, and commanded that the beggar be brought to Him. “And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus” (Mark 10. 47, 49, 50).

“Arise.” I do not wish to take this word out of its setting, but I believe there is rich, spiritual teaching here; and I would speak of this word now to those of God’s dear children who may be in a lukewarm state, “neither hot nor cold.” O how we need awakening, reviving, and stirring up! O that the Lord, in His mercy, may deliver us from indifference and unconcern, from going to sleep on enchanted ground. This is a very dangerous place, my friends.

“Arise.” O this is a word of encouragement! As we have said, you may be ready to give up; your faith is weak and Satan is active. You have many burdens, and have put up many prayers, to which as yet there

seems no answer. You are waiting, as it were, at Bethesda's pool. But your Jesus will come in His time and in His way.

There is also this thought: what favoured moments were those that were spent in communion between Jesus and the eleven! "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 1-3). Blessed as that season of communion was, yet there was to be a going forth even from that upper room; there was to be the path of suffering, to the cross at Calvary. Even here on earth there are sacred seasons, times of blessing, but it is only for a season. The fulness of blessing will be in eternity, to be with Christ for ever and ever, to have unbroken communion, there to see Him as He is and to be like Him. At the close of the Lord's day you may wish that you could live in God's house; yet on Monday you have to think of going back into the world in your lawful occupations. There is a going forth, but our mercy is that Jesus has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 20).

"Arise, let us." These words were spoken to His dear disciples; Judas Iscariot was not amongst them. Do you fear that you are a Judas? Which Judas are you? I say that in all tenderness. You say, What do you mean? There was Judas Iscariot, the betrayer: "He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night" (John 13. 30). I shall never forget the solemnity of that word: "He went out." *Out.* O friend, no place in the upper room, no place in the Saviour's prayers or in His finished work on the cross. But there was another Judas, of whom we read in this chapter. "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot" (John 14. 22). Now where do we stand? This dear Judas said, "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (verses 22, 23).

"Let us." Further, as the Lord and the eleven went forth, we read that the Lord Jesus lifted up His eyes and prayed to His Father in heaven. I have felt that of all portions in the Word of God, that is so very sacred; that ever my sinful eyes should be permitted to read and my ears to hear, the very words that Jesus prayed to His Father! Then the exercise is this: Did He pray for me? Am I in that prayer? Jesus, in that prayer, did not pray for all mankind. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world" (John 17. 9). Where do we stand? Again, Jesus later said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word" (John 17. 20). Are we among those thus spoken of by the Lord

Jesus as “them also”? His prayer was for all His dear people. “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17. 24).

“Arise, let us go hence.” I wish to speak now, as the Lord may be pleased to help me, of this word “hence”; to speak of what it was to Jesus Christ and what it means to us. Following that prayer to His Father, we read that Jesus “went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples” (John 18. 1). “Let us go hence.” What does this garden scene mean to us? The Lord Jesus Christ went a stone’s cast from His disciples, and prayed: “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matt. 26. 39). That cup that He was to drink was the wrath of God against sin. Jesus, the Holy One, the Saviour, the Lamb of God; He was “sorrowful, even unto death.” O the mysterious conflict! O the sinless humanity of the Saviour, and the submission to His Father’s will! O the love that filled His heart! Christ prayed; “And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22. 44). What a sacred, solemn scene is this!

“Let us.” Peter, James and John had fallen asleep. “What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?” (Matt. 26. 40). How we need the Lord to arouse us, to awaken us, to stir us up from lethargy, sleepiness, indifference and unconcern. One of our hymns sets it forth, and I feel to come in with it:

“Here’s my claim, and here alone;  
None a Saviour more can need;  
Deeds of righteousness I’ve none;  
No, not one good work to plead;  
Not a glimpse of hope for me,  
Only in Gethsemane.”

O the triumph of the garden! How the dear Saviour went forth!

“Arise, let us go hence.” There was then the kiss of the betrayer. It is easy just in word to say that we love Jesus, but how solemn if it is the kiss of the betrayer! What we would pray is: “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth” (Song 1. 2).

“O that my soul could love and praise Him more,  
His beauties trace, His majesty adore;  
Live near His heart, upon His bosom lean;  
Obey His voice, and all His will esteem.”

The Lord Jesus said, “I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way” (John 18. 8).

“Arise, let us go hence.” Peter said that he would go with his Lord, and suffer with Him. Where do we stand? Do we stand sometimes with Peter, in wrong company, ashamed of Jesus, hiding, as it were, that we are Christians, denying our Lord? O think of that prayer of the Saviour: “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: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22. 31, 32). As I speak these words, may it be a word of comfort to someone who is perhaps now passing through a time of cowardice, failure and weakness. “He restoreth my soul” (Psa. 23. 3). As the cock was crowing, “The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly” (Luke 22. 61, 62). Such was the power of that look. It was not a look to consume; it was a look of sorrow and pain, and yet it was a look of love. I believe it was a look of forgiveness, and it broke the dear man’s heart. Friend, as I look at these words: “Arise, let us go hence,” I would that my heart might be broken, that I might be humbled before Him, that I might know more of the spirit of repentance and godly sorrow, that I might not be ashamed of Him whom my soul loveth.

“Arise, let us go hence.” Let us take a few more steps, as we may be enabled. Jesus was taken to the high priest, to the religious leaders of the land. They had no time for Him; they set Him at nought; they buffeted Him and smote Him. O think of it! This is so today in so many circles, religious circles. Many have no time for the precious blood of Christ. They believe on Him as an example, and rightly so, but they know not themselves as sinners; they know not their need of the cleansing blood of Jesus, the Saviour. He is set at nought, and His blood trampled under foot. Jesus was led to Pilate, and falsely accused. O the hatred of the Jews! “We will not have this Man to reign over us” (Luke 19. 14); “Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas” (Luke 23. 18); “Crucify Him, crucify Him” (Luke 23. 21). Yes, the language of one’s natural heart, untouched by grace, is, I join with the crowd, and will not seek this Jesus. But now, as one so sweetly sings:

“Yet now, subdued by sovereign grace,  
My spirit longs for Thy embrace!”

He was crowned with thorns, buffeted and spat upon, scourged and set at nought. Shame on me that I speak of it with a dry eye. Friends, we need the power of the Holy Spirit, yet the Lord knows that we would speak of this so reverently and feelingly. O where is the love in our heart to Jesus Christ when we can be so hard? Yet we would be led forth by the Spirit to view the sacred scene. Pilate said, “Behold the Man!” (John

19. 5); “Behold your King!” (John 19. 14). Have you ever observed that they called the whole band of soldiers? (see Matt. 27. 27). Jew and Gentile were alike in their rejection of Jesus Christ. His sufferings were so great before He came to Calvary. Then He was led forth, bearing His cross, to the place that is called Calvary. “There they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left” (Luke 23. 33).

“Arise, let us go hence.” What is the lesson here? As they crucified Jesus, He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23. 34). There is a word for us here. “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4. 32). “How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18. 21, 22). Are we ready to forgive?

“Arise, let us go hence.” As we stand in meditation at the cross, had we been there and heard the two thieves reviling the Saviour, we would have felt that both would have died without mercy. But O my soul, behold a trophy of God’s grace, look at His mighty work! As we meditate upon the sufferings of Christ, we behold the glorious work of love and mercy. The eyes of one were opened to behold himself as a sinner, and he was led to seek the Saviour. O that coming to Jesus and that prayer of faith! What a sight the dear man had, in such a dark scene, in the agony of his body, yet he saw that the One who hung on the centre cross was the Lord Himself, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Beyond the cross, he saw the crown; beyond Calvary, glory. “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom” (Luke 23. 42). Do we know something of that prayer? “Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation” (Psa. 106. 4). “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation” (Psa. 35. 3). Can there be mercy for me? Will this Jesus receive such a vile wretch? “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23. 43). “Arise, let us go hence.”

“The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day.”

And may we be led there from time to time!

“And there have I, as vile as he,  
Washed all my sins away.”

Is there a going forth in your soul, in desire, faith, love and humility, confession and repentance, to this sacred place that is called Calvary?

“Arise, let us go hence.” Let us now view the sacred scene; darkness was over the face of the earth; and let us hear His cry: “My



God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27. 46). He was made to be sin, He who knew no sin (see 2 Cor. 5. 21). Divine justice was poured on the Saviour; He, the dear Redeemer, drank the cup of wrath to satisfy divine justice. Was it for me, was it for you? "For God hath not appointed us to wrath." That wrath was appointed to Him for His dear children. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us" (1 Thess. 5. 9, 10). Here, friend, is the mystery of the cross. Here is that scene of wonder.

"Behold a scene of matchless grace,  
'Tis Jesus in the sinner's place."

"The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 6). "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psa. 103. 10).

"Arise, let us go hence." Lastly, there is the mystery of the cross, and there is the triumph of grace. With that cry of victory, "It is finished," the work was done, salvation was gained, justice was satisfied, the law's demands were fully met. The streams of mercy now flow, the fountain is opened for sin and for uncleanness; it is a full, free salvation.

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

"Arise, let us go hence." Are we, by grace, enabled to say:

"Upon a life I did not live,  
Upon a death I did not die,  
Another's life, Another's death,  
I stake my whole eternity?"

"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20).

"Arise, let us go hence."

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Amen.

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The less our weight be upon our own feeble legs, and the more on Christ, the strong Rock, the better for us. It is good for us that ever Christ took the cumber [burden] of us; it is our heaven to lay many weights and burdens upon Christ, and to make Him all we have, root and top, beginning and ending of our salvation.

*Samuel Rutherford*

## REJOICING IN HOPE OF THE PROSPECT OF HEAVEN

*An extract from Thomas Vincent (1634-1678)*

The forethoughts of this matter are of exceeding great comfort.

1. Believers, consider the greatness of the happiness of heaven. It will be full. You will be filled therewith unto your utmost capacity; yea, beyond what here you are capable of. Consider these particulars in your happiness of heaven:

Think what bodies you will have; they will be most beautiful and glorious bodies.\* They will be most healthy, strong and immortal bodies. You will then bear the image of the heavenly Adam, with regard to your bodies, as well as with regard to your souls.

Rejoice then, believers, rejoice! What if some of you have crooked and deformed bodies now? What if some of you are blind, lame, maimed, or have your bodies filled with irksome pains and weakened with long sickness? What if you live in expectation of death, and those bodies, whatever their mould and shape is, must ere long be carried to the cold, stinking grave, and be turned into putrefaction? Yet rejoice, you that are believers, because your bodies will be made so glorious in the resurrection when all blemishes of nature will be healed, and all sickness and pain shall be removed; because they will be raised in incorruption and freed from any more dominion of death forever.

Think what souls you will have. You will be glorious without; your bodies will shine, but you will be far more glorious within. Your souls will shine much more; then your souls shall be washed clean from all the remainders of sin so that they shall not have the least spot or stain. Then you shall be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and arrive unto perfection of holiness; then the seeds of grace will be grown up into flowers of glory, and O what a fragrant garden will your souls be! When the rough draft, as it were, of Christ here on your hearts shall be finished and perfected by God's pencil, and your spirits shall be made perfectly like unto your glorious Lord, O how beautiful will they be in the eyes of God!

Rejoice then, believers, rejoice! It grieves you when you look within you and perceive so much remaining defilement, when you feel such strong oppositions of the flesh against the spirit, and you find yourselves sometimes soiled thereby. Your weakness and infirmities trouble you, but rejoice, believers, because in heaven you will be perfectly freed from sin. You will never be soiled nor defiled with it any more, but you will be made perfectly holy and perfectly happy.

Think what a habitation you shall have; you shall have mansions in the Father's house (see John 14. 2), a building of God, "an house not

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\* i.e. through Christ's comeliness (see Ezek. 16. 14). Ed.

made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1). Your persons and your habitation shall be glorious.

Rejoice then, believers, rejoice! What if some of you live in poor and mean cottages? Then you shall live in the glorious palace of the King of kings. What if your houses have been burned with fire, and some of you have nowhere to lay your head, and none of you have a certain dwelling place which you can secure to yourselves? Yet rejoice, because there are mansions provided for you out of which it will be impossible for you to be burned, or turned out forever. The city which is above has foundations which cannot be overturned, and the building of God, which is not made with hands, cannot be destroyed by hands, neither is exposed to flames of fire, which may demolish the fairest city in the world.

Think what company you shall have. You shall have the presence of the Father; you shall dwell with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of God will dwell in you forever; you shall have the company of holy angels and all the glorified saints. All your companions will be most lovely and glorious.

Rejoice then, believers, rejoice! What if wicked men separate you from their company and think you unworthy of their fellowship? God will not think you unworthy of His fellowship, nor separate you from His presence. What if some of you are forced to dwell in Meshech, and are linked in near relations to some ungodly persons, and are every day vexed with their ungodly conversation? Rejoice, for in heaven you shall be freed from such company; no wicked person will be permitted to come into that place.

Think what treasures you shall have. You shall have treasures which cannot be corrupted by moth, nor stolen by thieves; your riches will be durable and unsearchable.

Rejoice then, believers, rejoice! What if you are poor in the world? You are rich in faith and hope. What if you have no inheritance on earth? Yet you are heirs of the kingdom of heaven; you shall have an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled. What if you endure such hardship in your journey through the world? When you come home to your Father's house, you shall be freed from all want, and have such treasures to spend which can never be exhausted.

Think what honour you shall have. The meanest of you will be exalted unto higher dignity than the greatest monarch that ever lived; you will be crowned with immortal glory; you will be honoured by God and the angels. You will not only have honour, but you will be made most honourable.

Rejoice then, believers, and take comfort, though you are scorned by some, and accounted as the offscourings of the earth. You are reproached and vilified by men here, but all your reproaches, especially

those which you have borne for the sake of Jesus Christ, will be wreathed into a crown and make you the more glorious in heaven. There you shall not have the least disgrace cast upon you any more, and you shall be kept from any unbecoming actions, to blot and sully you in the least; but you shall shine like so many stars or glorious suns in the kingdom of your Father.

Think what peace and rest you shall have. You shall have a most sweet peace and tranquility of mind; no enemy without to disturb and molest you; no devil to tempt and assault you; no lusts within or distempered passions to disquiet you. Then you shall have perfect peace; then you shall rest from all wearisome employments and take up your repose forever.

Rejoice then, believers, and let this cheer your hearts in your passages through the tempestuous sea of this world; ere long you shall come to the haven where there shall be no waves or winds. Sometimes now you are troubled on every side and have no rest in your spirits; without are fightings, within are fears; but in heaven you shall be freed perfectly from all disturbance and molestation.

Think what joys and pleasures you shall have. You shall have fulness of joy (see Psa. 16. 11); you shall drink of the river of pleasures (see Psa. 36. 8). O the delights which you shall have in the immediate view of God's face, in the sense of God's love, in the high actings of your love, in the employment which you shall have in heaven.

Rejoice then, believers, rejoice in hopes of these joys! Now you mourn and weep for your sins and, because of the eclipses of the light of God's countenance, it troubles your hearts that you can see and enjoy so little of God; that your love is so low and inconstant; that your highest services are but mean and diverted, many times, by little trifling business in the world, from conversation with God. In heaven, all tears and all sorrow will be wiped away from your eyes, and all the grounds thereof will be removed. You will come with singing into the new Jerusalem; you will enter and live in the vision and fruition of, in the love and joy of, and spend an eternity in the presence of the Lord.

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### THE LORD'S TEACHING

*Extract from William Gadsby (1773-1844)*

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When the Lord the Spirit gives a poor sinner faith in His great work, this immortal work of the Lord Jesus Christ, He presents to God a perfect righteousness. Thus the apostle says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3. 31). Under the teaching of the blessed Spirit, we find the Lord Jesus magnified it, made it honourable, and brought in an everlasting

righteousness. When the Lord the Spirit gives us faith to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, then we are swallowed up in Christ, and can appear before a heart-searching God without blame. Christ has completed, by His blessed obedience, dying and rising, this salvation. He hath redeemed us from all iniquity. It is said, He hath redeemed us from destruction, redeemed us from death, redeemed us from the curse of the law and all iniquity. He hath put an end to sin, finished transgression, and by one offering He hath for ever perfected them who are sanctified, or set apart (see Heb. 10. 14). Then, to close the business, He hath blessedly redeemed us from sin, redeemed us from our foes, redeemed us to God. This takes in the eternal world, and this redemption being eternal, it cannot be lost in time. Blessed be God for this salvation.

“Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation” (Psa. 35. 3). Do you think the Lord Jesus Christ gave His life, His honour and His blood for an uncertainty? Now, mind what He says: “The ransomed of the LORD shall ... come to Zion” (Isa. 35. 10). It does not say they shall have a chance of coming, but, “The ransomed of the LORD **shall** come.” Unbelief says they shall not, their carnal hearts and fleshly appetites say they cannot come at present; flesh wants a little more pleasure. But when the Lord’s time comes, when “*Shall come*” gets hold of them, He conquers them by His constraining power, and says they shall come. “The ransomed of the LORD **shall** come.” When the Lord’s “*Shall come*” gets hold of the conscience, it not only says, “They shall come,” but assures the poor souls that everlasting joy shall rest on their heads, “and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Thus our blessed Christ has accomplished this great salvation.

What hand hath the Spirit in this? Christ says, “He shall glorify Me” (John 16. 14). The Lord Jesus Christ says to the Father, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me ... with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John 17. 5). The Spirit takes His stand on Christ; Christ says, “He shall glorify Me.” How shall He do this? He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the poor soul, those things revealed in the Bible. We are such poor, blind creatures, we cannot see them till the Lord the Spirit reveals them to the conscience; but when He reveals them, we can see and feel them, and bless God for this rich salvation. As the Holy Ghost lays our hearts open, and the heart of the Lord Jesus being open, what a blessed thing when these two meet! Our heart loses nothing but sin, and the heart of Christ brings nothing but blood and love, which is sweetly brought into ours by the Spirit. So we see this is the way the Lord healeth us. Well may we say, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation” (Psa. 35. 3). Thus the Spirit of the Lord commends the blessings of the gospel to the conscience, and brings us to feel a sweet measure of the love, life and power of it in our hearts.

## COUNSEL TO A YOUNG FRIEND

*Letter addressed to a young person residing at Luton, Bedfordshire*

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Liverpool  
July 11th, 1772

Truly, my dear friend, I need the pity, and prayers too, of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. I am still in the wilderness, and, God knows, often in danger, from a corrupt, vain, blind, proud, unbelieving heart – a nest of vermin – a cage of unclean birds indeed! O for grace, and more grace to sanctify gifts! Men see but my outside, and often, I fear, are ready to think too highly. I see, I hope my dear Lord doth know, that I would desire to have my heart in the dust at His footstool, and Him on the throne, and all the crowns on His blessed, His divine, His lovely head forever! Truly, I can say, I see more occasion, more reason than ever, to love and exalt Him; He is “the Chiefest among ten thousand,” and “altogether lovely.” O may I, living, dying, and for ever, be enabled to exalt Him, and rejoice in Him, and spend my heart and life in recommending Him to poor, hopeless mortals! Solemn and awful as the work is, yet it is sweet when Jesus is with His poor servant in it.

I hope and pray, this small token of my best love in the Lord Jesus, may meet you, my dear young friend, in the happy enjoyment of the sweet shinings of His most gracious and comfortable presence with your soul; helping you to come up from this waste howling wilderness, living, and so leaning, by faith, on Jesus, as your Beloved and your Friend, on whose faithfulness, power and love, you cannot too much depend. Blessed be the Lord Jesus, whose loveliness has, I hope, sweetly and powerfully attracted the love of your soul in the days of your youth; that when youthful vanity, folly, sin, and sinful and worldly pleasures put in their claim for your heart, you may be helped to say, through rich grace, that your heart is gifted away to another, even Jesus; and therefore, looking to Him, may you be enabled to answer all men with Peter’s words, “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6. 68).

As you value the presence of God with your soul, or desire to make progress in the ways of God, be much in secret prayer, and this will prepare your heart for ejaculatory prayer when you are in the house and in the world, in the ways of your calling. God help you, and me also, to look to it, that the blood of Christ be at the bottom of all our professions, gifts and experiences also: nothing but this will, or can, make sound work in your soul. If He is All and in all, it is well. Temptations, trials, conflicts, you must expect by the way; for this honour have all His saints. But this will not last always. The end will crown all: “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10. 37). O

may your heart and mine also, my dear young friend, be inclined to echo, and say: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

My best love to your dear Mamma, and to dear Mr. Pilley.\* Deliver a message from me to your two dear sisters. Tell them, as from God, for it is His truth, that a day is coming, when nothing can stand them in any stead, but Jesus Christ. There is no laughing off death, judgment, or eternity; and that day is at hand, though, maybe, their youth and gaiety would put it far off from them. Should their sun set before noon, and, awful thought, it may do so – and they die without Christ, inconceivably dreadful, this! Tell them, I wish they would look on, and may God Himself set home to themselves that awful passage in Genesis 19. 12-17 – and may God make it an alarming and encouraging word to them. Grace, grace, be ever with you.

I remain,

Your affectionate friend,

Samuel Medley

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### FAITH AND ITS MARKS

*An extract from Thomas Hooker (1586-1647). Thomas Hooker was born at Marfield, Leicestershire, and settled at Chelmsford. He took refuge in The Netherlands in 1629 and then shortly afterwards sailed to the United States of America. He became pastor at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and later moved south into the Connecticut River area and founded the colony of Hartford, where he pastored a flock. Hartford is now the state capital of Connecticut.*

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Faith is a work of the Spirit whereby we are enabled to apply to the promises made in Christ for our reconciliation with God. It is a work of the Spirit of God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2. 8). We are enabled. Our wills are lifted up above their natural condition and ability by a special infusion of grace; for howsoever faith be begun in the understanding, yet the perfection of it is from the will; this is apparent from the object of saving faith, which is not only truth, but also good, and good to us. Thomas shows himself to be a believer, when he saith, "My Lord and my God" (John 20. 28). "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). The promises made in Christ are the matter whereabouts our faith is exercised. "And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. 4. 21). Abraham's assurance was settled upon the promise. Our reconciliation with God is the benefit of it. "And not only so, but we

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\* Thomas Pilley was the pastor at the Particular Baptist chapel, Luton, from 1769 to 1801

also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom. 5. 11).

What is the least measure of saving faith?

*Answer.* It is a constant, earnest desire for the pardon of sin flowing from a humble heart, joined with a conscionable [conscientious] use of the means. I say constant, to difference this desire from the moody passions that are in natural men, to whom God disclosing the fearfulness of the vengeance to come, they do for the instant desire a removal of their sins. I say earnest, with respect to the sluggish wishes that are in the unregenerate; as also to that fervency of desire which experience shows of the godly. “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psa. 42. 2). I say further, that it is set on work by a humbled soul, a soul touched with his own miseries, a wounded spirit, a broken heart (see Psa. 10. 17). “Thou hast heard the desire,” but it is the desire of a humbled soul, of the poor in spirit.

Last of all, this desire expresseth itself in a careful and diligent use of the means, whereby it may be increased, as prayer, hearing the Word, receiving the emblems of the Lord’s supper. This is that faith which is termed by the smoking flax and bruised reed (see Matt. 12. 20), which promise of Christ is, not to break the one, nor quench the other. God satisfies this hungering desire with everlasting life. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5. 6). “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (John 7. 37). “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” (Isa. 55. 1).

Secondly, for such desires for grace are grace itself; for if a desire unto sin be the sin itself before God (see Matt. 5. 28), he that looketh upon a woman and lusts after her hath committed adultery with her; why shall not much more an earnest desire of the pardon of sin be an obtaining of it? an earnest desire to believe be accepted for belief itself?

Thirdly, wherever the Spirit of God is working saving grace in the heart, there must needs be faith; but wherever such a desire so qualified is, there must needs be the Spirit of God; for these desires not being the fruits of the flesh, must necessarily come from the Spirit. And doubtless they are sent as an earnest penny and pledge of everlasting life: yea, look, as a desire to live cannot come from a dead man, no more can the desire of the life of grace in us proceed from us, as we are natural men dead in sin. Thus we see what is the least measure of saving faith; less than which if we have, we are not believers, and consequently, not in the state of grace.

What be the marks whereby this saving faith is discerned from the mock faith that is in the world: the voice of God’s Spirit witnessing to us,



and with us touching the pardon of sin, (as distinguished) from Satanical delusions, or natural presumptions?

The marks of true faith are first, that faith does purify the heart (see Acts 15. 9). The heart of man by nature is a sink of abominations, the very imaginations evil, and that continually: it breathes forth nothing but uncleanness, hatred, self-love, worldliness, with whole swarms of evil thoughts. It is evil, and wholly evil, even in all the corners of the will, understanding, memory, affections, full of corruption, overspread with the leprosy of sin. Now the office of faith is by virtue of strength from Christ, and grace from His fulness, as also in consideration of those promises whereunto it helps the believer, to sweep the nasty corners of the soul. So faith enlightens the understanding, that was nothing but darkness, makes the will to incline and follow after righteousness, whereunto it was before most rebellious, sanctifies the affections; sorrow, fear, anger, etc., and draws them from earth to heaven; infuses into the memory a retentive faculty of that which is good, in respect whereof it was before a riven [rent, torn] dish. Would you then know whether your faith be such as will abide the touchstone? Weigh with yourself what strength it gives you to purge and cleanse your soul; if none at all, then there is no truth nor soundness in it.

Second mark. That true faith wherever it takes place, it sends up strong cries and unspeakable groans unto the throne of grace, for the filling of the heart with saving grace. "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8. 26). It is an infallible mark of the Spirit, and consequently of faith, when our sighs and groans in the feeling of the want of grace, are such as fill heaven and earth, and are unutterable, and we wish for more than we can expect. Now then, as we would be assured of the truth of our faith, let us consider whether the Spirit of God hath taught us thus sensibly and feelingly to pray, to call God Abba, Father, to have recourse with boldness to the throne of grace, hoping to find mercy in time of need. If we lack this spirit of prayer, it is an argument of our need of faith; for how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?

Third mark. That true faith follows in order after the sight of sin, humiliation for the same, hungering and thirsting after mercy, so in those converts, they were pricked in their consciences, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2). So in Acts 16, the jailor, his faith follows his humiliation; he came in trembling before them, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" These legal humiliations are the harbingers of the faith as the needle goes before the thread, and the wind, fire and earthquake went before the still small voice, when the Lord spake to Elias; so the Lord rends the heart with the mighty wind and purging fire of His Word, causeth an earthquake in the soul, and then He speaks peace to it, visits it with the light of His countenance,

apprehended by faith. As we would therefore find comfort in our faith, let us carefully consider the order how it is descended into our hearts; if it has sprung up from a secure, untroubled, quiet spirit, that has continually cried, "Peace, peace," we may at no hand dare to rely upon it. The spirit of grace and saving faith is, as a calm after a boisterous storm, an honour that follows humility.

Fourth mark. That only is true faith that wrestles with doubting; is assaulted with fear within and terrors without: where Satan is continually laying siege, seeking how he may extinguish the same, casting into the soul many fiery darts of distrust and atheism. A faith thus assaulted, thus annoyed, may gather assurance by these conflicts it hath with the devil, that it is from the Spirit of God, not from any devilish or natural suggestion; for Satan does not oppose that faith that is of his own, or the flesh's hatching. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation" (Matt. 12. 25), and, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" (Luke 11. 21). This combat therefore betwixt believing and distrust must needs grow from two contrary principles, namely the Spirit and the flesh.

Fifth mark. That only is true faith wrought by the finger of the Spirit, which comes into the heart, and accordingly receives strength and growth by the conscionable use of the ministry of the Word, and ordinances; that is, when a man hath witness from his heart that he receiving the Word with a good and honest heart, hath thereby gotten this assurance of his salvation, by waiting daily at the gates of wisdom; by taking heed to his feet, when he enters into God's house, by a serious examination and preparing of himself to God's ordinances; if by that means his faith hath been bred and conceived in him. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10. 17). "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1. 13). "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word" (Acts 10. 44).

Sixth mark. That true faith brings forth contentment in all estates: the believer is, as it were, four-square, turn him which way you please, he falls even; no outward want or misery can unsettle his contented mind; he is as a man that having obtained his desired purpose, neglected all in comparison of that he enjoys; he so rejoices in things spiritual, that the want of outward comforts does not much trouble him. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Psa. 4. 7). "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5. 3-5). "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both

how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4. 11-13), that is, while He lets me see the love of God towards me in the pardon of my sins.

To discover the faith of our ordinary protestants to be no faith, but a mere natural presumption; for what else can we conceive of that faith whereby men profess they believe in Christ, hope to be saved as well as the best, and yet their hearts and lives overspread with worldly and fleshly lusts? They are not washed from their uncleanness; they send forth nothing but noisome and damnable corruptions. Shall we conceive that the day star of salvation hath risen in their hearts, who are nothing but darkness in their understanding, having to be reformed in their will and affections, their whole lives a running with greediness to the excess of riot? Is not this a counterfeit faith that works no more glorious fruits of reformation of heart and life?

As also that assurance of God's favour which many of unhumbled and insensible hearts, not groaning under their own miserable condition, do brag of; may we not reject it as a deceitful staff, that will in the end deceive them that lean thereon? So likewise that faith which never doubted, which is not encumbered with distrustful thoughts; that faith which hath crept into men's hearts, which is constrained to feel all its contentment from the base and transitory things of this life, that hath no contentment without them, that is best at ease in the hunting after them; all these kinds of faith we may by this doctrine discover as unsound, hypocritical, and only a seeming faith.

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## A WORD OF COUNSEL

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A lady, who had been in deep distress about the state of her soul for several months, wrote: "I feel my case an awful one, and believe there never was one like it. I implore your prayers and counsel. I get no abiding peace. I try to cast myself as I can on the blood of Christ many times a day, but neither rest nor contrition follows. My heart is as adamant. If you ever met with a case so hopeless, or can give me advice, a few lines from you would be a great favour."

Glasgow  
July 16th, 1845

My dear Friend,

I could at once and easily answer your question, and assure you that I have met with cases a great deal worse than yours, but what good could this do to you? For it is not the opinions of men upon your case, nor

your perceiving a resemblance to your own in the case of others, that will bring you relief. The point of difficulty lies in its being taken up or rejected by the great and good Physician. If He take it in hand, it cannot but succeed, but if He reject it, who then can be of the least possible benefit to you? Now, let us enquire who He is. "The only begotten of the Father, full of grace," and therefore able and ready to save the worthless and miserable; and "full of ... truth" (John 1. 14), worthy to be depended upon in all He says and in all He promises.

Let us further enquire, in what attitude He appears to sinners. You remember, it was cast upon Him as a reproach, "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15. 2). But what in the eyes of His enemies was a reproach was in reality His glory. Now, is not this the very attitude in which He is revealed in the gospel? The language in which He usually speaks is: "Look unto Me," "Come unto Me," "Why will ye die?" "And ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life." To this add the fact, that He has never been known to reject any who came to Him. We do not read of a single instance in which He refused to heal those that came or were brought to Him in the days of His flesh. We have, however, what is still better, for He hath magnified His Word above all His name (see Psalms 138. 2). We have His own Word to assure us, that "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." In the light of these truths, I must say, that if you perish, it will be because of your unbelief in refusing to regard as sufficient for you Him who is all-sufficient – in refusing\* to come to Him who invites all that labour and are heavy laden. Be it that you are guilty, He has righteousness, even an everlasting righteousness, for the justification of the ungodly. Be it that your heart is hard, He can give a heart of flesh, for He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins (see Acts 5. 31). Be it that you are prayerless, He has the Spirit of grace and supplications. Be it that you are dead, He is the Resurrection and the Life. You ought, therefore, to say, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth" (Psalms 121. 1, 2). And if you say, "But I have no eyes to lift," I answer in the words of the prophet: "Look, ye blind" (Isaiah 42. 18).

The Lord give you understanding in all things,

Yours very sincerely,

Jonathan Ranken Anderson

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\* We are reminded of that solemn word of the apostle in the Word of God, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven" (Hebrews 12. 25). Ed.

## SOME EFFECTS OF GRACE

*Extract from John Rusk (1771-1834)*

Another blessed effect of grace is *pardon*, or what John calls cleansing us from all sin (see 1 John 1. 7), which is first discovering to us what sinners we are, and letting us feel the burden long, and then fully pardoning us all we have committed, and all we shall commit. We receive the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of His grace. Then trace it up to glory, and we find that they “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne” (Rev. 7. 14, 15).

Another blessed effect is *raising us to hope*. By nature we are without God, and have no hope in this world; but now, having life, and being pardoned, says Paul, He hath given us a “good hope through grace” (2 Thess. 2. 16). It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1. 27).

Another blessed effect is *salvation*; salvation from the wrath to come, from our sin, from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; as Paul says, “By grace are ye saved” (Eph. 2. 8). Then trace it up, and their song in heaven is, “Salvation to God and the Lamb” (see Rev. 7. 10).

Another blessed effect is, *being a partaker of the Holy Ghost*, agreeable to the promise, “I will pour upon the house of David” – what was David’s house? Why, Christ Jesus; and so David says, for he calls Him a House of Defence to save him (see Psa. 31. 2), and the Spirit was on Christ without measure – “and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Zech. 12. 10) – Jerusalem is the covenant of grace, and the inhabitants are God’s elect in that covenant. Well then, on Christ and His elect is poured the Spirit of grace and supplication. Grace was poured into His lips, and we are to have grace to help in time of need, which is having the Spirit, for He is to help our infirmities.

Now trace this up to glory, and in doing this, compare these two texts: “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (John 7. 37); and, “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (verse 38) (then mind where this water comes from); “But this spake He of the Spirit” (verse 39). Then trace it up, and “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne ... shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7. 17).

The next thing I shall mention, or blessed effect of grace, is the *love of God*, which is understood by us in two things: in chastening us for our sins – “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3. 19) – and in shedding His love abroad in our hearts. Abroad signifies influencing the whole soul, so as to say with Paul, “The love of Christ constraineth me, that I am ready to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (see

2 Cor. 5. 14, Acts 21.13). Now, says the apostle, “the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1. 14). Then trace this love up, and we are without blame before Him in love (see Eph. 1. 4); or, to be more plain, we are “without fault before the throne” (Rev. 14. 5). This grace is to influence our conversation while we live: “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4. 6). It is opposed to all dead works, or all service in the oldness of the letter. If it be of grace, “then is it no more of works” (Rom. 11. 6), for it is a free gift: “The LORD will give grace and glory” (Psa. 84. 11).

If we go astray ten thousand times, grace brings us back: “I will receive them graciously,” and the completing work in finishing the building of living stones will be this, namely, to bring the last soul to the foundation, which is Christ, and then to endless glory: “He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings” – or acclamations of joy – “crying, Grace, grace unto it” (Zech. 4. 7).

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### CONFLICT IN PRAYER

*An extract from a letter by Mrs. Anne Brine (d. 1745).*

*Anne Brine was the wife of John Brine (1703-1765)*

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It is matter of great concern to me, at times, to see the decays there are amongst the professors in this our age, as well as to feel the declining in my own soul. And I am sometimes ready to say, what will become of God’s great name? But this may be our strong consolation, that there is no limiting of His power, nor searching of His understanding. He knows how to restore in a moment the desolation of many generations. He can, if He pleases, revive His children, and make them to rejoice in Him, and cause them to flourish in the courts of their God. The Lord help us to live by faith, and to rejoice in the hope of His glory, knowing that none ever trusted in Him and were confounded.

You desire to hear how it fares with me, as to the present frame of my soul. I have not time to give you a particular account thereof. I could wish that it was with me as in days past; but alas, it is quite otherwise! I find a great deal of coldness and indifference attending me, and abundance of sin mixed, even with the best of my performances. I seldom can go to God in the exercise of prayer, but my heart is roving after vain things. O the thousands of thoughts that will even at such seasons crowd in, to interrupt, and disturb me in my supplications to the Most High! Neither do I find my heart so drawn out to the Lord, nor do I enjoy that nearness to, and communion with Him as I was wont to do. Yet I am not left to give up all hopes. At some times the thoughts and

consideration of the frames I am too often in, is very distressing to me; at other times, I am wholly careless, and unconcerned about it.

One day, not long since, as I was thinking how I have been in times past, how much of the sensible presence of God I then enjoyed, and how pleasant and delightful it was, I had a great desire to participate of the same favour once more, and to that end, I resolved to betake myself to the privilege of holy meditation. I retired to my room for that purpose, but when I came there, I found my thoughts much confused and rambling, and could not come at one serious thought of God, or His works, for a considerable time. I then thought with myself, I came here to think, and contemplate upon divine things, and not to have my thoughts thus vainly carried away. I then reflected again, that if I was to watch my thoughts but one hour, I might observe a multitude of sinful ones, but find it hard to have one serious thought of God, or for Him, so that I thought I had reason to stand and wonder that God did not cut me off, and cast me among the damned. But whilst I was thus thinking, my thoughts were still wandering, so that I saw I had not power over one thought.

Under a sense of this I went to God, desiring that He would direct my thoughts and assist me. He was pleased graciously to answer my request. I was for a few hours very comfortable, but alas, it abode not long! O I long to feel more of the kindly power of Christ in subduing my will, and bringing every thought in subjection to His law!

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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We receive a variety of books to review. Some are unsuitable for reviewing. Others we cannot review as the Scripture quotations are not from the King James Authorised Version. Also where the text is modernised, sometimes there is a watering down of the truth. All our contributors to the book reviews in this magazine fully support the use of the King James Authorised Version as opposed to all subsequent translations or revisions. Ed.

**Particular Redemption**, by John Hurron; paperback; 168 pages; price £5.75; published by The Banner of Truth Trust and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

This book is a reprint of part of the *Lime Street Lectures*. These lectures were given in 1730/1 by ministers such as John Gill, Robert Bragge and Thomas Bradbury, during a time of division in the English nonconformist community.

The controversy commenced in the 1600s through the teaching of Richard Baxter (1615-1691). While Baxter wrote much that was good (such as his *Reformed Pastor*), he propounded serious error concerning the atonement and justification. Baxter believed that Christ made atonement for sin in general, rather than for particular sinners, and that there was a sufficiency in the offering

of Christ to save all men if only they would believe. Baxter was a neonomian – believing we are justified by our obedience to the gospel, or by our new covenant duties of faith and repentance. He taught it is our faith, and not the obedience of Christ, which is imputed to us in justification – effectively making faith a work.

In England, Neonomianism produced a split within nonconformity; the majority of the English Presbyterian church embraced Baxterianism, while the Congregational and Independent churches stood against it. One error bred another, and by the 1730s the English Presbyterian church was sinking into a slough of Arminianism, Unitarianism and a denial of the authority of Scripture. Aghast at this, godly ministers convened these lectures as a means to strengthen the things that remained.

John Hurrión (c. 1675-1731), minister at Denton, Norfolk, later at Hare Court Chapel, London, delivered four lectures about particular redemption. Irenical\* in spirit, they simply state Scripture truth. They focus on the very nature of the atonement: did Christ die for all people generally, or some people particularly?

In the first two lectures, Hurrión proves in twelve distinct ways from Scripture why we believe Christ died only for His people. In the third and fourth sermons he explains texts which are commonly used in argument against this position. The book finishes with twelve sweet points of gospel application.

These lectures proved to be the dying words of this godly minister, and the fourth lecture was not edited by him for publication before his death. We have to say, we appreciated lecture four the least. It appears in parts (regarding man's duty to repent and believe) to contradict the clearer teaching of sermon two. We might wish that Hurrión himself had been spared to edit it.

The book has a valuable introduction by Mr. Iain H. Murray, in which he explains and denounces Baxterianism, and its later manifestation in Wesleyanism. He rightly points out that Baxterianism is again on the rise, and therefore the publication of this book is timely.

Given that our Articles of Faith contain the only explicit denouncement of Baxterianism (Article 28) we have ever located in a confession of faith, it would be good if all our readers obtained and read this book for themselves. For those who can, we encourage the procurement of the full *Lime Street Lectures* – they are a veritable body of divinity – and wish the publishers might yet consider reprinting the whole work.

Matthew J. Hyde, Maidstone

**Revivals in the Highlands**, by Angus McGillivray; paperback, 65 pages; price £5.88; published by Reformation Press and obtainable from their web site [www.reformationpress.co.uk](http://www.reformationpress.co.uk).

Angus McGillivray (1805-1873) was a minister in the Church of Scotland who left at the disruption of 1843 and continued in the Free Church until his death. From 1828 to 1841 he was minister at Strathlyon on the north coast of Sutherland, where he became acquainted with the stories of the godly lives and witness of his forebears in Easter Ross and Sutherland, especially during the mid to later eighteenth century (i.e. about the same time as the Evangelical Revival in England). This book was first published in 1859, and gives a gracious account of the Lord's mighty works in those days of true revival.

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\* Conciliatory. Ed.



It is impossible to go into details of the accounts of God's powerful work in those days, but we just mention one or two. William MacKenzie was ordained the minister of Tongue in 1769, but for four years his ministry seemed to produce no impression. The increasing carelessness of the young people deeply troubled him, until one day he gathered them together and weeping declared that he trusted the Lord would remove him to some other place where he would not be utterly useless. But this was the turning point, for from that day onward there was a blessed outpouring of the Spirit of God and for years afterwards he never preached on the Lord's day but some of his people were brought under conviction of sin.

John Sutherland was minister at Golspie, but when he began to preach there, the old Christians felt there was a defect in his preaching; that it lacked something and did not have that gracious authority they looked for. Instead of deserting his ministry, a few godly men and women met weekly at the house of the catechist to pray for their minister. One Saturday, Mr. Sutherland himself came to the door on business, and hearing the voice of prayer, stopped to listen. He went away, but on the Monday asked for an explanation from the catechist, who freely told him all. Mr. Sutherland simply said, "Will you allow me to come to your meeting and join you in that prayer?" It was not long afterwards before the change in their pastor's preaching proved that the prayers had been abundantly answered, and in due time the fruit followed.

This short book gives an account of days when thousands of men and women became humble followers of the Lord Jesus, and the effect on their communities was transforming. We would that others might read of these times and be constrained under the same gracious influence of the Spirit of God to pray that the Lord would return even in these days and restore unto us "the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar and the palmerworm" (Joel 2. 25).

John A. Kingham, Luton

**The Christian Remembrancer**, Short Reflections upon the Faith, Life and Conduct of a Real Christian, by Ambrose Serle; hardback; 294 pages; price £13 plus £2.90 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Harpenden bookroom and agents.

Ambrose Serle (1742-1812), a lifelong friend of the renowned William Romaine (1714-1795), was a Church of England layman who held senior posts in the Civil Service. He was the author of several spiritual works, and *The Christian Remembrancer* was first published before he had reached his fortieth birthday. This present edition, published by the Gospel Standard Trust, has a useful introduction which contains a biographical sketch of Serle's life and writings, and includes a profitable extract from his writings written a few days before he died.

The book, as the title suggests, is a series of short, spiritual reflections and is divided into three parts; Part 1: The Word and Work of God in Man's Redemption by Jesus Christ; Part 2: The Inward and Practical Experience of Redemption in the Heart of the Believer; Part 3: The Believer's Outward Conversation and Conduct with Others.

The reviewer found each of the three sections profitable, but more particularly the second part concerning the experience of redemption in the heart,

which contains much excellent and profitable material. This is by far the largest section in the book and consists of forty-six meditations upon diverse subjects such as, *How Have I Received Christ?* and *On Prayer*, through to subjects entitled, *On self-seeking*, and *Luxury Indecent for Christians*. There is much sifting of the wheat from the chaff in these pages, and whilst the crucifixion of the flesh is a painful and solemn matter, yet it is most needful, especially considering that we are shortly to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Nevertheless, the true Christian finds a peculiar joy and heavenly liberty when he begins to die to himself and ventures to live by faith upon, and desiring to submit entirely unto, the good word and will of Him who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." This conflict between the power of faith and the native power of unbelief, between the believer's flesh and the life of the blessed Spirit, is described in this book in a gracious way. The author constantly reminds his readers that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from above, and that we are saved only by grace. Thus, he strives to glory only in the God of all grace. Rightly considered, all such glorying, in Spirit and in truth, is the beginning of heavenly praise.

Whilst Serle was an Anglican churchman, yet his meditations are based upon spiritual principles and addressed and applicable to all true believers regardless of denominational standing. Thus, on the subject of *How a Real Christian should Conduct himself towards the Church of God*, he writes, "Let him that useth ceremonies, be candid to him that useth them not; and let him that will not observe times, days and rituals, pray for, rather than revile, those who do. The love of Christ preaches this lesson, which the apostle of Christ, almost in so many words, enforces and confirms." And again, he writes, "The true distinction of a believer in Jesus is not to rise over all and to set up himself as a great somebody, but to be the servant of all, showing all meekness, patience, gentleness and truth. The infirmities of others he must not magnify, but pity and pray over, knowing that he himself is also in the flesh. The attainments of others he must not envy, because these are the free gift of God, which if a man can allow himself to envy, it is only because he doth not know this gift aright.... In fine, whether he be a public servant or a private member in the visible church, he will pray ... that he may be an example of godliness, humility, faith, resignation and charity, to all about him. This surely, is far better than any nickname; for this is the true life and essence of the best name – a Christian."

We do feel that this book is very profitable; and the division of its pages into short meditations means that it can be read as a daily portion book, thus rendering its excellent content accessible to many.

Stephen P. Rosier, Maidstone

**From Marine to Minister**, Biography and Sermons of Geoffrey Shaw (pastor at Hope Chapel, Nottingham); hardback; 355 pages; price £15 plus £3.50 postage; obtainable from Nicholas Shaw, 17 Hathaway Road, Sutton Coldfield, B75 5HY; email nt.shaw@btinternet.com; tel: 0121 308 4409; cheques payable to Mrs. P. Shaw.

God in His wisdom raises up such a variety of men to preach the everlasting gospel, and endows them with diversity of spiritual gifts. Every minister's preaching is unique to himself according to the spiritual gift. It is the dew from heaven, and the unction of the Holy One, that is so vital for the success of the

gospel ministry and for the bringing forth of fruit to the glory of God. Geoffrey Shaw was clearly anointed by the Holy Ghost to preach. We can verify the truth of the comment in a paragraph on page 32, that he “was affectionately known as ‘Mr. Old Testament’ by some of his friends.” In our travels to preach, we heard favourable comment from brethren, both at Providence, Haydock, and Jireh, Attleborough, that he had preached on “The Red Heifer” (see Num. 19. 2). So Geoffrey Shaw faithfully preached the preaching God bade him, in his day and generation, and has now entered into “the joy of his Lord.”

There is a short but gracious foreword by Mr. Gerald D. Buss, followed by a short introduction by Mr. Nicholas Shaw. A concise but interesting biography follows from pages 8 to 42. His wartime experience as a marine makes interesting reading. This is followed by a gracious and profitable account of his call by grace and to the gospel ministry, and subsequent exercises and leadings throughout his earthly course. He was the much-loved pastor at Hope Chapel, Nottingham, from January 1989 until November 1997, when he passed away. The ministry of Geoffrey Shaw was made a help and blessing to three other churches over the years, although he was not their pastor. We have heard personal testimony to this, and it is also recorded in the biography. These were The Coppice Chapel, Coseley, Ebenezer Chapel, Luton, and Jireh Chapel, Attleborough.

The main body of the book consists of sound, experimental sermons preached over the years from a variety of texts. We feel that the closing part of a sentence in the penultimate paragraph on page 230 should have been, “in all the fulness of everlasting glory,” and not “millennial glory.” There are two addresses given at the Gospel Standard Societies meetings, the first at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester, and the second at Shaftesbury Avenue, London. Geoffrey Shaw was a valuable member of the Gospel Standard Societies Committee for just under ten years until health problems prevented him from undertaking the long journey to London. He also served on the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund Committee. Two letters written by Geoffrey Shaw close the book.

We can recommend this book as profitable to the church of God.

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## OBITUARY

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**Margaret Mercy Barnard**, a member for over forty years successively at, Sedgley (Arcal Street), Blackboys and East Peckham Strict Baptist chapels, passed away to her eternal rest on September 27th, 2017, aged 82.

Although Margaret was a church member at these three churches, sadly her testimony regarding her call by grace was not recorded in any of the various church records. The following is gleaned from the family, and memories and contributions from others who knew and loved Margaret for the savour of her conversation.

Margaret was born on September 17th, 1935, at Sedgley, in the West Midlands. Her parents, William and Lydia Caddick, were godly

people, and her father (known as Bill) was the deacon at Arcal Street Chapel, Sedgley, for many years.

Margaret's childhood was one of sickness. She suffered from convulsions, and on one occasion when she turned blue whilst having a fit, her father resorted to plunging her in a bath of cold water to shock her out of the fit. Many times her parents must have despaired of her life, but where the Lord has a purpose of grace, sparing mercies will be known until the work of grace is completed. So, Margaret must live and not die, that she might be manifest as an heir of grace and be enabled to "declare the works of the LORD." In many ways, Margaret's subsequent testimony is contained in the verses that follow: "The LORD hath chastened me sore: but He hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD" (Psalm 118:17-19)

When Margaret was about four years old she was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the hip and was placed in plaster from her neck right down her body and one leg for eighteen months. During this deep affliction she was pushed to the chapel in a spinal carriage (a cross between a wheeled stretcher and a large pram) and lay in the vestry with her mother for the services. Margaret thought she was going to die, and on one occasion looked at her hands and said to her parents, "I'm going to die." It would seem this was when the Lord began the work of grace in her heart.

It would appear that the work of grace progressed slowly but steadily, line upon line, precept upon precept, as the years passed. At what stage, and how much, gospel liberty was enjoyed we cannot be sure. Her early years were spent under the ministry of her grandfather, Joseph Field, and subsequently of her uncle, Joseph E. Field. In later life Margaret spoke of the discriminating character of her uncle's ministry, and her shame at her lack of profit and the paucity of fruit in her soul from it.

Margaret often reminisced of the dark years of the Second World War. Being an industrial area, with a large number of aircraft and ammunition factories, the West Midlands were badly affected by the German bombing raids. On one particular occasion, the Lord caused a huge fog to rise and sit over the whole area for days. This meant that the bombers could not see their target from the air. Margaret said that as she looked at that fog with her father and Mr. Clement Dobell, from the top of Sedgley Beacon, she was deeply impressed by the protecting power of the Lord over them all.

When Margaret left school, she started work at a shoe shop in Sedgley, moving on to work for Clark's, in the children's department, at the Wolverhampton and Walsall branches, for over thirty years. Many

people remember Margaret for her kindness as she was able to help her friends and family, who needed shoes and could not afford them. My mother recalls Margaret providing shoes for her and her brothers, when as children, their parents were brought into severe financial straits. Where the Lord works grace in the heart, there will be an effect in every part of our lives. The apostle says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14). Margaret clearly evidenced the work of grace in her practical godliness, and especially in her love to the brethren. She was never wealthy, but of the little that she had, she did what she could (see Mark 14. 8) to assist the Lord's poor people.

It is certainly true of all real disciples of Jesus, that, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5. 14). Grace looses the tongue to speak of the blessing the heart has received. Margaret was never showy about her religion in public, but she spoke quietly and with conviction concerning the things of God. As a consequence, at work Margaret was well known as being a Strict Baptist, and willingly took her colleagues from work to services at Arcal Street Chapel and subscribed to the *Friendly Companion* magazine for them. As a young boy, this was one of the things that struck me most forcibly about Margaret: she was never ashamed of Jesus. She was as much at ease speaking on a packed train carriage about the Lord's dealings with her, as she was in the quiet retreat of her lounge. Yet there was never anything ostentatious about her witness. That is grace in exercise.

We do know that the sudden death of Margaret's mother Lydia (known as Lil) just before Christmas 1968, appears to have been used to deepen the work of grace. In later years, during the few days before Christmas, Margaret often reminded her family that her mother had died suddenly and the need for us all to be prepared. She was acutely aware of the only source of true preparation: "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD" (Prov. 16. 1).

In 1976, her father Bill became terminally ill, and his death in the June of that year left Margaret alone (she was an only child). As her father was dying, the Lord appeared for Margaret, richly favouring her in her soul. She told us, "It felt as if the Lord put His arms around me." She could say God was her Father, and she could,

"Give the Saviour, without grudge,  
The purchase of His pain."

Her father died on June 8th, 1976. His funeral address, given by Mr. Leonard Broome, was published in the *Friendly Companion* (1976 page 148).

Subsequently, Margaret came before the church at Arcal Street and was baptized by her pastor, with two other people, in June 1976.

Mr. Field gave her this text at her baptizing: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33. 25). He commented to her, "With a word like this, you won't get to heaven in carpet slippers." So she had to prove only tried faith is worth anything.

Following quickly after this time of favour, Margaret entered a period of deep depression, and after being on holiday, she felt unable to return home to an empty house, so she stayed for several months with the family of Mrs. Beryl Randalls (then Miss Beryl Rayner) and attended Edmonton Strict Baptist Chapel. The Lord kindly provided her with a few gracious friends who cared for Margaret during this difficult period of her life. They were the Lord's provision, and Margaret often remarked on the Lord's goodness to her in this way, at this time.

Being alone and without family, Margaret moved to Tunbridge Wells, taking a post at the Bethesda Home there. Mrs. Lois Dobell, the Matron, was a great help to her, taking her under her wing, training and supporting her. Margaret often said, when speaking of the residents she had nursed at Bethesda, "I wish I was as sure about myself, as I am of them," and named certain ones to us. She also spoke of her time at Hanover as a period of spiritual profit, although she mentioned no particulars other than how she could come in with Mr. E. Holmwood, the gracious deacon, in his prayers.

Margaret made Bethesda her home, until she married Peter Barnard, in January 1978. They set up home in Essex, where they attended Braintree Strict Baptist Chapel, and were subsequently blessed with a baby girl in May 1979. Peter and Margaret moved in providence to East Sussex in September 1982, attending Blackboys Strict Baptist Chapel, under the pastorate of Mr. Reginald Jupp, whom they loved dearly for the truth's sake.

At home, Margaret was always first up and last to bed, allowing her to start and finish each day with Bible reading and prayer. Her prayers extended to many, many friends and family. When any in the family were in trouble or had problems or needed help, she would often add a vocal prayer to grace at mealtimes, or simply pray out loud for them while sitting in her chair or about her jobs. Not many days before she died, she told her family of something which she had lost and that she had asked the Lord to find it for her. "You can ask Him even to do that," she said. When the item was found, she told them, "I said, Thank you, Lord" – childlike faith in exercise. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18. 3).

Margaret regularly kept a daily diary. Having been favoured with a sight of these, one is struck by how frequently she wrote, "Much to be thankful for," "The Lord is good," or "I fix my All." Her diary also gives testimony to the trials of her faith. We mention one in particular.

Her daughter passed her driving test the day before close family friends lost their son in a road accident. Margaret was sorely tempted that Sarah would be killed in a car accident, and she recorded nearly every day in her diary: "All home safe."

On Lord's day, September 17th, 2017, it was Margaret's birthday. In the afternoon she asked her family and friends if she could choose a hymn for them to sing, and chose, "Thus far my God has led me on." She told them it was her favourite, and they sang it together with her.

Latterly, Margaret was very often heard to say when future arrangements were being made: "I might not be here then." The Lord was evidently preparing her for death. Her end came suddenly, and most unexpectedly, while sitting in the chair at home on September 27th. The preparation for death is of grace, and therefore, though we may not always be able to see it, it must be perfect. Margaret was ready, and though she left no explicit dying testimony, we are sure she was most willing to depart – "to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23). The minuteness of the preparation for Margaret's death was seen in that in the minutes before she departed (when evidently, she did not know what was about to happen) she was enabled to put her house in order and thank those who had so kindly cared for her.

Margaret's funeral was taken at Ebenezer Strict Baptist Chapel, Broad Oak, by her pastor, Mr. John F. Ashby. She was laid to rest in the adjoining burial ground by Mr. Andrew G. Randalls, to await the glorious resurrection.

"Earthly cavern, to thy keeping  
We commit our sister's dust;  
Keep it safely, softly sleeping,  
Till our Lord demand thy trust.  
Sweetly sleep, dear saint, in Jesus."

The family and the cause of Christ have lost a praying member; we are the poorer. May Margaret's humble, lived testimony to grace continue to bring forth fruit to the glory of her Saviour. May the deep loss made by her death be sanctified to the good of our souls. May we, like her, be ready if death should come as suddenly to us.

Matthew J. Hyde by request of the family

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## NOTICE OF DEATH

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**Peter James Green**, a faithful deacon at Ebenezer Chapel, Haynes, for fourteen years, suddenly passed away into eternal rest on Monday, July 9th, 2018, aged 62 years. "With Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23).

## GLORY AND SAFETY OF THE CHURCH

*(See Isa. 33. 20, 21)*

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Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
 Zion, city of our God!  
 He, whose word cannot be broken,  
 Formed thee for His own abode:  
 On the Rock of Ages founded,  
 What can shake thy sure repose?  
 With salvation's walls surrounded  
 Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See! the streams of living waters,  
 Springing from eternal love;  
 Well supply thy sons and daughters,  
 And all fear of want remove:  
 Who can faint while such a river  
 Ever flows their thirst to assuage?  
 Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,  
 Never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hovering,  
 See the cloud and fire appear!  
 For a glory and a covering,  
 Showing that the Lord is near:  
 Thus deriving from their banner,  
 Light by night and shade by day;  
 Safe they feed upon the manna  
 Which He gives them when they pray.

Blest inhabitants of Zion,  
 Washed in the Redeemer's blood!  
 Jesus, whom their souls rely on,  
 Makes them kings and priests to God:  
 'Tis His love His people raises  
 Over self to reign as kings;  
 And as priests, His solemn praises  
 Each for a thank-offering brings.

Saviour, if of Zion's city  
 I through grace a member am;  
 Let the world deride or pity,  
 I will glory in Thy name.  
 Fading is the worldling's pleasure,  
 All his boasted pomp and show;  
 Solid joys and lasting treasure,  
 None but Zion's children know.

John Newton (1725-1807)



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**SEPTEMBER 2018**

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

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**FRUITFUL SEASONS**

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“Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14. 17).

Paul and Barnabas, when preaching the gospel to the heathen at Lystra, pointed out to them that the weather and the fruitful seasons are the gift of the most high God. We live in an age when the majority of men barely acknowledge the goodness of God in giving us rain and sunshine, and “fruitful seasons.” While we live in a land of plenty, acknowledging with thanksgiving the good hand of God in this provision is sadly a scarcity among the majority of the populace. May it not be so among the dear people of God.

Harvest time is a lovely time of the year. The ingathering from the fruitful fields and from the fruitful trees is the faithful provision from a very merciful God, both to sinful men and to the beasts of the earth. We read in Genesis 9. 12 of the promise of the seasons being made to man and beast, “which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you.” David acknowledged this goodness of God when he penned and sang, “O LORD, Thou preservest man and beast” (Psa. 36. 6). In spite of all the base ingratitude of mankind on the earth, the Lord is faithful to His covenant promise.

As our short lives are lengthened out by the good hand of God, and we are favoured to see the changing seasons of “seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night,” may we often be filled with gratitude to our merciful and faithful God. It is a pleasure to see the fresh green film-like covering on the fields as the shoots appear. God’s watchful eye over the growing season is according to His wisdom, and as He sees fit He sends a variety of weathers that the promise might be fulfilled. Sometimes the harvest is greater, and sometimes lesser, but each year yields a harvest for which we should be truly thankful. So how good it is to see the cereals beginning to turn golden and then whiten, and also the foliage of the root crops browning and withering, telling us it is harvest time. The fruit-laden boughs in the orchards give as pleasing a sight as the beautiful blossoms of the spring flowering.

We realise that there are failures of harvest at times in areas of the earth, but it is observable that there is often an abundance elsewhere. So Almighty God sends mercy and judgment with the promise of the seasons. We have often stood in awe of the Lord God, that in spite of the rejection of the Word of God in our land, He still mercifully sends the harvest. Is it not incumbent upon us who truly value the Lord's great mercies, to give heartfelt thanks and praise unto Him for the ingathering year by year? We are so very favoured in these moderate climes, and live on a well-watered island. At the time of writing, we are experiencing heat and much dryness. We can only pray that the Lord will in His kindness send goodly rains once again in His time.

As we so quickly slip through our days upon earth and witness many fruitful seasons, may it become an increasingly great exercise with us to be made ready for our own harvest. "Be ye therefore ready also" (Luke 12. 40). We read in the parable of the ten virgins (five were wise and five were foolish), that when "the bridegroom came" the five that were wise and "were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matt. 25. 10). How vital it is to be made truly ready, and also willing, to leave all that is here below in this world, and to enter in.

Only the Lord Jesus, who is "the Lord of the harvest," can truly make us ready to enter in. He said to Israel of old, "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hos. 14. 8). As the earth bringeth forth plentifully from the rain and the sunshine, so it is spiritually in a man's soul. It is by the seasons the Lord sends in His gracious government over him, that he begins to bring forth fruit.

In a pilgrim's life, there is solemn reproof in his soul for his sins, and at times some particular sin. It is the Holy Ghost that sends gracious reproof. There are the seasons of providential trials which work for the good of the soul. There is the trying of faith, whereby the Lord's dealings seem so contrary to the blessing and promise received by faith. Jacob felt this when he said, "All these things are against me." Jacob had to yield to the hand of God, and let Benjamin go down into Egypt, although he feared his gray hairs would go "with sorrow to the grave." Yet he proved in covenant faithfulness that this was among the "all things" that "work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8. 28). There are the seasons of the chastening hand of God in fatherly correction, which are not "joyous, but grievous," yet they afterward yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12. 11). The Scriptures are plain in this chapter, that if we "be without chastisement, whereof **all** are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." There are seasons of affliction of soul, body and circumstance, which the dear saints are not exempt from. As God sanctifies these things

to us, it makes us weary of the earthly scenes of this world of sin and sorrow.

In all these appointed seasons of trial and sorrow, we are made to realise that there is nothing really worth having outside a precious Christ. In Him, and in Him alone, is solid substance of joy and happiness. It is in His appointed seasons that the Lord is pleased to arise with healing power and mercy. "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4. 2). He performs the promise in His Word to His troubled people and restores to them "the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2. 25). It is in these seasons of sweet relief and deliverance to the soul, together with the sorrowful seasons, that the Lord weans His dear people from all the vanity of this earthly scene. David said, "He restoreth my soul." It is those visits, or a precious sight by faith of Jesus in all His glory and beauty, that kill off the love of earthly things. The warfare continues, but the pilgrim fights "the good fight of faith," that he might "win Christ," and enter in at last.

We remember, years ago now, being told by a grandson of a godly man (Arthur William Pither), that after the Lord Jesus had visited his grandfather in his closing years, with a precious sight of Himself, he lost all desire to see or read the daily newspaper. O really to come in as a shock of corn fully ripe. We often have to pray as the hymn expresses:

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

Jesus said, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15. 8). May the Lord so fit and prepare us each in the riches of His grace, that when He calls us from earth away, we may be ready to enter in.

"Then let me mount and soar away  
To the bright world of endless day,  
And sing with rapture and surprise,  
His lovingkindness in the skies."

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Doubtings are your sins, but they are Christ's drugs and ingredients that the Physician maketh use of for the curing of your pride.... It is meet you should know by experience, that faith is not nature's ill-gotten bastard, but your Lord's free gift, that lay in the womb of God's free grace.

*Samuel Rutherford*

## SUFFICIENCY OF GRACE

*Sermon preached by Mr. Clifford Woodhouse, pastor of Bethel, South Chard, at Blunsdon Hill, on Lord's day morning, October 18th, 1987*

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**Text:** "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12. 9).

In this well-known Scripture we have the apostle speaking of that which he had experienced, for no doubt it is him, himself, of whom he speaks when he says, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago" (verse 2). Yea, this which he had kept in his own heart and pondered in his own heart no doubt many times over those years, he now found it in his heart as taught and inspired of the Holy Spirit to speak of it. So he speaks of these visions and revelations of the Lord. He speaks of that wherein he had that experience when he knew not whether he was "in the body, or out of the body."

He says, "Such an one caught up to the third heaven." The first heaven was where the birds flew; it was that air around the earth. The second heaven was that in which the stars shone in outer space. The third heaven was that paradise of God. It was that place where God dwells, that place where he hoped to dwell when called from time into eternity. A little experience of heaven in our souls is that which sometimes the Lord gives us. O to have some precious fellowship with the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the in-shining of His love into our hearts, when we are lifted above the things of time and sense!

I remember an old lady speaking to me some years ago at Haydock, and she spoke of the time when the Lord delivered her from all her fears. Having walked in the deep conviction of sin for seven years, she was brought into the sweet liberty of the sons of God, and she said for six weeks she knew not whether she was "in the body, or out of the body." Such was the blessedness of the communion with the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But it appears here that there were those things that this dear man of God heard which were "not lawful for a man to utter." I believe John heard the voice of those seven thunders and he was commanded not to write them down (see Rev. 10. 4), those things that belong to God. We are not indeed to be curious regarding those things which he heard; be it sufficient to know that he heard them, and they were such words which indeed filled his heart with rich faith and love, that joy unspeakable.

Then Paul goes on to say, "Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” And so the Lord’s people “know the balancings of the clouds” (Job 37. 16). Yea, there is much ballast needed. There is much ballast given to the Lord’s people to keep them in that right place, to keep them at a throne of grace, to keep them dependent on the Lord their God.

What this “thorn in the flesh” was we know not. We know a thorn in the flesh is very painful. It is naturally considered, and so whatever this was which the apostle speaks of, it was very, very trying to the flesh, to flesh and sense. It was that which brought him low, that which brought him to a throne of grace. For he says, “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.” O he wanted to get rid of it because it was such a trial to him! It may be that there are those here today, with me, that know something of a “thorn in the flesh.” Yes, that about which we would ever pray, and there is nothing to forbid us praying, that the Lord might remove it, if it be His will, those things which do so try us. He says, “The messenger of Satan to buffet me.”

Ah, but you see the Lord answers that prayer in the words of our text, and so the words of our text are indeed the words of the Lord. Yes, in answer to his petition in thrice praying for the removal of this “thorn in the flesh,” he received that answer. “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” So that was the answer he received.

A blessed answer it was, and we do pray that it may be an answer even this day to the Lord’s people gathered, and that they might receive such a word in their hearts which will bring them to that wherein the apostle could say, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

This indeed will be a paradox to the world. The world would never understand the language and the experience of this dear man of God, and neither will you unless you have known what it is to prove the all-sufficiency of the grace of God to His people. I was greatly encouraged this morning in that opening hymn, which spoke of our coming to a throne of grace. What wonderful grace that is, that grace of faith which God gives to His people! It is His gift, and if you are one of the Lord’s people, you know in these times of trial there are times when things seem to go against you. You know, the first intimation of the Lord being gracious to you and giving you that which will be sufficient to bring you through, is the grace of faith.

What a precious grace that is! I love the way the dear poet in one of our hymns, speaking of the grace of faith, says,

“Faith! ’tis a precious grace,  
Where’er it is bestowed;  
It boasts of a celestial birth,  
And is the gift of God.”

And it works in this way, you see; it says, “To Him” – to the Lord Jesus –

“To Him it leads the soul,  
When filled with deep distress;  
Flies to the fountain of His blood,  
And trusts His righteousness.”

The apostle says, “Therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4. 16). We sang together that hymn 382, and how it spoke of the wondrous grace and mercy of our God to His people:

“His tender pity and His love  
Our every fear will chase;  
And all our help, we then shall prove,  
Comes from the throne of grace.”

O how wondrous is that which comes from a throne of grace! How the Lord hears the prayers of His people. How the Lord supplies their every need, and how the Lord out of their weakness makes them strong. “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.” In thy case, in thy trouble, in thy sorrow, in thy circumstance, this grace is all-sufficient. O the grace of faith! Yea, that which the dear man of God, Isaiah, speaks of, when he speaks of that help given to “worm Jacob.” He speaks of the worm threshing the mountains. He said, “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. 15). What cannot that faith do? What can it not effect in the experience of a child of God? Again, I love these precious hymns which set before us this wondrous grace and strength of our God. Dear Cowper says,

“O! I have seen the day,  
When, with a single word,  
God helping me to say,  
‘My trust is in the Lord,’  
My soul has quelled a thousand foes,  
Fearless of all that could oppose.”

O what a precious grace, I say, is the grace of faith – that which looks to God, that which leads to Him in times of deep distress! Yes, I know

some of you have been brought into deep distress by circumstances. But you know, your Helper still is God. O your Helper still is God! Yes, He is able indeed to “deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven.” His grace is all-sufficient as He puts that precious faith in your heart to look to Him. You know, they looked to Him and were lightened, says the psalmist. “They looked unto Him, and were lightened.” Yes, their burdens were lightened. “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psa. 55. 22). What a wonderful God we have; He is the God of all grace. He is the God of all grace, and His grace is sufficient for His people in every circumstance and in every trial. “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.” O it has indeed proved an all-sufficiency, I say, for the people of God!

My thoughts went to that woman that sent to the prophet Elisha and she spoke of her great trouble. It is recorded in chapter 4 in the second Book of Kings. Remember, she came to Elisha and said, “Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house?” And the dear woman said, “Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.”

Now there is the grace of God set before us. All-sufficient, those empty vessels. Some of us know what it is to have these great needs set before us, these trials, these tribulations, these crosses, these losses, these great difficulties, these times when our hearts have been full of fear and dread, and yet you see, as we look back over life’s pathway, those vessels have all been filled. Up to this present moment in time, they have all been filled. They have all been set apart. Cannot you look back over your life, especially some of you older ones? You look back over your life and remember those times when the Lord gave more grace.

Now the thing is, you see, if we have the grace of God, if we are gracious characters, we have not this grace as a pocket full or a storehouse of it in ourselves. You know it is daily grace. The storehouse is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Grace is poured into His lips, and it is poured there for His people. There is a sufficiency of grace in our Lord

Jesus Christ to answer every need. Yes, in every time of need to come to Him and to receive of His fulness. Dear John says, "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." And some of us can say the same. He has brought us to this present moment of time and not one word of His good promise has ever failed. No, not one word has ever failed, and His grace has maintained us even to this present moment of time. "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee."

Well, how does that grace work in the heart of a child of God by faith? In the first place, grace humbles. Grace humbles! You remember how that the Apostle Peter gives that exhortation: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." The grace of humility and the grace of submission. We are well on the way to deliverance when the Lord gives us sweet submission to His will and His way for us, that we humble ourselves under His mighty hand, to own before Him that it is His sovereign right to govern us and ours. Yes, we will find there that His grace is all-sufficient to answer our prayers and give us sweet submission; yea, to commit even all our cares into His gracious hand; yea, to receive that strength that we might walk in the trial.

Remember this: the Lord in the case of the apostle did not take away his "thorn in the flesh." He did not take it away, but He gave him grace to bear it. And he found that he knew the answer, in the experience of it, to Samson's riddle. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judg. 14. 14).

Some of us can look back to some of the trials and tribulations that we have walked in and thank the Lord for them. As we look back in retrospect upon the way, we look upon those troubles which filled us with trouble and fear at that time, and may have put for a time rebellion into our hearts. We look back and we see the vessel full. The trial is over; it is finished. The grace of our God was all-sufficient. Through that trial we grew in grace, "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We did "business in great waters"; we saw the mighty hand of our God, "and His wonders in the deep." The Lord brings His people into trouble. Our pastor used to say, "To show them that He can bring them out of that trouble; and He can bless them in the trouble." The psalmist speaks of those many cases in Psalm 107. He says, "Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble," it is "in their trouble," yes it is when they are in the midst of it. There they are crying; there they are looking to Him. You see, He hears them, He blesses them indeed and He gives them at length sweet submission, the grace of submission, and they feel that hidden strength. He strengthens them for the conflict. They find this is "strength made perfect in weakness."



“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” How the Lord teaches His people to depend upon Him. O do you know what it is to depend day by day upon the help of the Lord? Yes, there are none but the people of God who are the recipients of this mighty grace of God, who know what it is to have that sweet communion with Him.

You think of poor Hannah in all her trouble. She had a “thorn in the flesh.” Yes, she had that which was such a trouble to her. Yes indeed it was a great and sore trial that this dear woman walked in. But you know, the Lord was all-sufficient to dear Hannah, giving her that grace to come to Him. She came in the bitterness of her soul, pouring out her heart before God.

She uttered her prayer silently; her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. She came there to that throne of grace. She went away and her countenance was no more sad. Maybe some of you know what that is! Yes, you feel that you have had access at the throne of grace and you feel that “the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33. 27).

John Berridge in one of his hymns, speaks and confesses his own weakness, and it speaks of the strength of his God, and in the last verses of hymn 904, he speaks of this:

“And none can raise to life the dead  
But He who raised Himself indeed,  
And for dead sinners died.  
Then let this mighty Jesus be  
An all-sufficient help for me,  
Creating power and will.”

Now there is the secret: “creating power and will”; working in us “to will and to do of His good pleasure”; giving us submission to His will and way; seeing that His way indeed is best, and realising and receiving by faith that precious promise, “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” (Isa. 43. 2). What wonderful promises the Lord gives to His people! Yes, though the waters may threaten, they will never overflow, and the child of God is enabled to walk through these trials. Yea, how sweetly David says, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” yes that last great trial. You see, if we have “run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?” (Jer. 12. 5).

Yes, “How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” asks Jeremiah by the Spirit. And yet even in this great trial, the dear psalmist says, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no

evil." "I will fear no evil!" There is no evil that will touch you in this trial, child of God. No evil will touch you in this trial. You will not be burned; you will not be overthrown. No, you will prove indeed that it is in these places that you will find that sweetness of the presence of the Lord. So dear Berridge says,

"Then let this mighty Jesus be  
An all-sufficient help for me,  
Creating power and will;  
Thy grace sufficed saints of old;  
It made them strong and made them bold,  
And it suffices still."

"And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." What a sweet grace is that grace of hope! Again, I believe the apostle in writing to the church at Rome, speaks of the exercise of it in his own heart, and you remember he said this: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" – not fall – "and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." And so it is in these trials. Yes, in the sweetness of dependence upon the Lord, on calling upon Him at a throne of grace, feeling His precious, secret strength given, feeling the strengthening of faith and hope and every grace and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.

We find it in the Word of God. We find those characters set before us who walked in these trials and proved the all-sufficiency of God. Dear Hezekiah, what did he say? He said, "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." It is the crucifying of the flesh, but indeed it is the life of the spirit. There is that deep and precious experience of having to do with this God of all grace. "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

O that dear man of God, Jeremiah! I love Lamentations 3. This man was walking in such deep trials. Yea, he lived in that evil day. He saw Jerusalem carried away captive, and in these deep afflictions, how he at first seems to be blind to the all-sufficiency of God's mercy and His grace. He says, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is He turned; He turneth His hand against me all the day." But you know, friends, the Lord gave him this secret strength. He said, "My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD: remembering

mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed."

Grace will enable you in all your trials, in all the tribulations, to look upon your own deserts. It is a great mercy when the grace of God makes us to look upon our own deservings, brings our own sin to remembrance. You know, it is a great mercy and we shall say, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psa. 103. 10). It is a wonderful thing to justify our God in all those troubles we come into, and O with what a soft heart to say, "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed." Isn't that true? Does the Lord give you grace to say that? O all our sufferings, all our trials and all our distresses, these are nothing compared with the deserts of our poor, sinful, fallen hearts.

O he could say this. "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." You know, it puts a new light upon the situation, and then this dear man could say, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul." Can you say that in your trial? O can you say that, I say, in all the tribulations? Has the Lord given you this grace? O to be submissive to His will, to humble yourselves under His mighty hand, and to say, "The LORD is my portion." It seems as though he has got the scales before him. On the one side he puts his trouble, his tribulation and his affliction, and on the other side he puts the Lord's mercy and goodness. He puts it there, and the scale tips hard down that way, and he says, "The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him."

Yes, he can see the goodness, and then he looks, you see, he looks upon the works of the Lord and he speaks of the experience of a gracious character. He says, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

You know this cross is sent for thy good. Some of us have looked back at those crosses, those trials. We have seen them amongst those all things that work together for the good of our never-dying soul, and you

know that does not drive us away from our God. It humbles us, brings us in submission to His feet. It brings us to know Him whom to know is life eternal. It brings us into that fellowship with Him in His sufferings. You see, to the child of God, where this grace is given, it is sanctified; he is brought to Calvary. He is brought there. He is brought to see One suffering for sin. What says the poet?

“His way was much rougher and darker than mine;  
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”

That makes a difference. The bitter waters of Marah are sweetened by the tree cast in (see Exod. 15. 25). You know, that tree is Christ. “With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.”

“In Thy presence I am happy;  
In Thy presence I’m secure;  
In Thy presence all afflictions  
I can easily endure.”

“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” You know this, that the Lord’s living family as they come to the end of the way, they will indeed look over the path and see how gracious the Lord hath been to them. They will see a necessity for all those privations, all those trials and all those tribulations.

Dear Jacob, when he came to the end of the way, as he looked over his life, he could see how the Lord was with him in all his distress and in the way that he took. He knew those sweet seasons when the Lord was with him in the midst of all his sorrows and trials. As he came to the end of his life, he could look over all his life, and he could wish nothing better for the succeeding generation, than that God who had fed him all his life long and that Angel who had redeemed him from all iniquity be with the lads, no matter what trials, what tribulations, what losses and crosses they may bear, or what sorrows they may bear. O he knew the secret, you see, of perseverance. He knew the secret of being upheld and of being brought through all the trials, and that by the presence of the Lord his God.

What a mercy that we have that God who is the God of all grace. He is the God of all comfort. He is the Father of mercies. Yea, He draws near to His people and, “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them.” O may you prove it and may I prove it. Then shall we look over our lives and say this: “My Jesus has done all things well.” O, “My Jesus has done all things well.” We shall find in all these things, we shall know something of what Medley knew. I love Medley’s hymn, when in all his trial and tribulation in the loss of a dear babe, he says,

“God shall alone the refuge be,  
And comfort of my mind;  
Too wise to be mistaken, He,  
Too good to be unkind.”

And he goes on (does he not?) to say this:

“What though I can’t His goings see,  
Nor all His footsteps find?  
Too wise to be mistaken, He,  
Too good to be unkind.

“Hereafter He will make me know,  
And I shall surely find,  
He was too wise to err, and O,  
Too good to be unkind.”

Again, these hymns are so sweet. Some do not like the hymns, but I love the hymns. Also they have been blessed to me, and I find there a sweet truth, where dear Toplady says,

“Thrice comfortable hope  
That calms my stormy breast;  
My Father’s hand prepares the cup,  
And what He wills is best.

“My fearful heart He reads;  
Secures my soul from harms;  
While underneath His mercy spreads  
Its everlasting arms.”

That is a sweet prayer. O may it be our prayer.

“O might I doubt no more,  
But in His pleasure rest;  
Whose wisdom, love, and truth, and power,  
Engage to make me blest!”

The psalmist could say this: “For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death” (Psa. 48. 14). O may this mighty God be our God. May we know the all-sufficiency of His grace.

The stones are taken out of nature’s quarry; they need shaping, being made fit to be put into that heavenly building. You find in the building of the temple of Solomon, that those great stones were shaped and fashioned away from the building. We read there that there was not the sound of a hammer or tool of iron in the building of the temple of Solomon. No, those stones were prepared before, and when they were brought to that building, they fitted exactly in that place allotted for them. The Lord’s people are just like that, you see, and His grace is all sufficient. I say it is the work of grace in their hearts that fits them for

that heavenly building. How sweet again those words of the poet when he says,

“Thou shalt see My glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done;  
Partner of My throne shalt be;  
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?”

O do not despise the trials, the tribulations, the crosses and the losses. May the Lord teach you as He taught the dear apostle. He could say, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities.”

Those days of prosperity, those days when there is nothing really troublesome, no troubles to bring you to a throne of grace, are days the poet speaks of in another place,

“For more the treacherous calm I dread,  
Than tempests bursting o’er my head.”

Not much grass grows upon the mountain top; it is in the valley. “Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools” (Psa. 84. 6). That is real experience. There the Lord is forming His people for glory. The dear apostle was brought to a knowledge of it. “Most gladly therefore” – now here is heavenly wisdom – “most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

May the Lord add His blessing for His name’s sake. Amen.

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### **A FORETASTE OF THE JOY TO COME**

*An extract from a letter by Mrs. Anne Brine (d. 1745).*

*Anne Brine was the wife of John Brine (1703-1765)*

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May grace, mercy and peace, through the love-passage of our Father’s heart, be multiplied to you, to your abundant filling with the firstfruits of glory unspeakable; in the faith-views, and irradiating influences of that love, life and light, which as an eternal, unchangeable flow of favour encircles you in the Person of the Beloved. The Spirit giving us to drink of the streams of the waters of life, makes us glad in the wilderness, as the certain earnest and foretaste of our being hereafter swallowed up in that love, life, light and glory, which flow through the channel of Christ’s flesh, as a river to swim in, that can never be passed over. When once that happy day comes, when we shall no more drink of the water of this river, as now we do, through the conduit-pipes of ordinances, but shall drink of the “pure river of water of life, clear as

crystal," as it riseth, "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22. 1). There (if I may so say) we shall drink our fill, though this will be our privilege, that the living virtue of this living water, will constantly maintain in us a living appetite, yet not such an one as will be in the least inconsistent with our being abundantly satisfied.

We shall never more know any pain of desire, for want of enjoyment; we shall drink, and forget our poverty, and remember our misery no more; and our appetite being always new, will only fit us for the participation of that glory, which will be new to all eternity. When that longed-for day comes, when the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead us to living fountains, and give us to eat of the hidden manna, on which we shall feed with wonder and sweet surprise; as the children of Israel, when they tasted the manna, in a kind of amazement at the goodness thereof, cried out, "What is it? What is it?" (See Exod. 16. 15 margin).

I had such a view of this glory one day last week, and a personal application of my being entitled unto it, and having a right to all the benefits, which flow through Christ, as filled me with astonishment. A sweet time it was indeed, while it lasted; but it was but for a few hours. Such times are very desirable, and very delightful. I was ready to cry out, as he of old did: "How is it Lord, that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to me, and not unto the world?" (see John 14. 22). I knew then for a little season, what it is to take up my rest where my God and Father rests. I am at times, through grace, made to believe that I have received the Spirit of adoption, not only to witness my relation to God, and give me faith-views of the inseparableness of that union in which I stand to the Person of Christ, as the security of all my happiness; but also, at times, to give me the greatest holy freedom, through the blood of Jesus, to draw nigh to God, as my own Father, to unbosom my soul to Him, and tell Him all my wants; and blessed be His name, I have not been sent away empty.

I have found the enjoyment of God to be strength in weakness, joy in sorrow, a reviving cordial in time of trouble; and in all that I meet with in my way homeward; I can say He is God all-sufficient, I find Him so through grace.

O how sweet is it to enjoy this love of loves! O the height and depth, the length and breadth, of the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord! If the enjoyment of God be so great here, whilst in a body of sin, and in a world of temptations and snares, what will the full enjoyment of Him be, where there will be no mixture of sin, nor sorrow! If the earnest be so great, what will the inheritance be? Well may it be said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2. 9).

## THE SUBTLE SERPENT

(Gen. 3. 1)

*A warning of the snares of the internet, by Mr. Timothy J. Pocock.*

*Mr. Pocock wrote this article in June 2017, for the instruction and welfare of young friends in his congregation at South Moreton chapel.*

*We feel it salutary and that it should be more widely read.*

Ever since Satan first came to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent, he has been deceiving men in very subtle ways. The Apostle Paul warns us: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11. 3). Adam’s fall into sin ruined himself and everyone that is naturally descended from him. Our fallen nature loves sin, thinks sin, speaks sin and walks in sin. All Satan now has to do is to set before us things that are attractive to our fallen nature, deceitfully hiding the truth that the wages of sin is death. Above all what he seeks to do is to keep sinners from Jesus Christ the only Saviour of sinners. When I was your age, young friends, there were many temptations in the world. But we had no computers in our homes and there were very few in schools and businesses. The mobile phone had not been invented.

Today the temptations are even greater and the snares more subtle. One of the snares Satan is using in our day is the internet. He is doing this in a very subtle way. In the 20th century he saw that many people were not attending cinema, theatre, music concerts and other places of carnal amusement. He saw that man was given the wisdom to develop the radio and the television. He used these means to get those same carnal amusements into people’s homes, to keep them from God’s house, to stifle any thoughts of God and their souls, to nourish their sinfulness, lead them astray into grosser sins, distract them from seeking the Lord, and to deceive them with false religion.

Some of the Lord’s people had the radio, beginning in the war years when they found it a useful means of obtaining up-to-date news. This proved a snare to many as they went on to listen to other unprofitable things. Some have had to confess this, and to tell of how the Lord delivered them from it, and of how they need Him continually to keep them. The more powerful visual snare of the television got into very few of the homes of the Lord’s people, and where it did, in most cases the Lord broke the snare and it had to go. When the Lord permitted the worldwide web to be developed, Satan immediately saw a powerful tool put in his hands. The internet has many more lawful uses than the radio and television. For that reason it is found in the homes of many of the Lord’s people. Children, young people and others in learning need to use it for their studies, because it has become the foremost up-to-date source



of information. The benefits of this have been significant, because of the scope of the information available and the ease of searching for it. Most businesses have come to rely upon it, because it is one of the main means by which business advertising, communications and transactions are conducted. Sending an e-mail is much quicker than posting a letter and costs less. Internet shopping has benefits for some, especially those unable to get to the shops. Some churches use the internet for publishing of sermons and other instructive material. We were pleased to discover recently that the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland website is closed on the Lord's day.

The internet's snare is that it has innumerable unlawful uses:

Firstly, the vast amount and scope of information freely available becomes a snare as users waste time unnecessarily searching and reading. How many of us have realised that an hour or more has gone by as our search has gone from one source to another with many digressions?

In 2015, Max Stossel, aged 28, had an awakening in his mind. He was a successful social media strategist working with major multinational companies. But that same year, he says, "I realised that some of the work I was doing wasn't actually in people's best interests."

"There's this idea that we're addicted to our phones, and that we've done this to ourselves. That is just not true. Tech design is increasingly informed by behavioural psychology and neuroscience. Technology is being designed to change what we think and do. There are thousands of people on the other side of your screens whose job it is to keep you as hooked as possible."

He asks a simple question: "Do you feel at all stressed when your phone is out of reach and it buzzes?" "Yes – the irresistible curiosity, the little surge of anxiety, which grows the longer I leave my notification unchecked – these are feelings I know well."

"Figuring out how to capture my attention like that, is the job of everybody in my industry. Broadly speaking, tech design seeks to take advantage of our brains' reward system, where dopamine activation leads to feelings of satisfaction and pleasure." Beware the serpent's subtlety!

Compare the leisure time you spend on the internet (or on other things) with the time you spend reading the Word of God and in prayer, meditation and reading spiritual books. In days gone by, some men of God spent hours every day in prayer and reading. Today the common complaint is, "My life is so busy." Ah how the devil loves that! The Lord help us to fight against the devil in the name of Jesus Christ: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10. 47).

Secondly, on the internet we can have access to *much worse things than are on television*. Articles, pictures and films show and describe the vilest sins and awful violence and blasphemy. It is such a powerful tool being used to further the present-day sinful liberal agenda. I know very

little of what is done on the internet, but I know enough to make me greatly concerned. Websites lead users into gross wickedness both online and offline. Children's lives are being ruined through getting a completely wrong impression of life by viewing sinful images at very young ages. Parents should, of course, take all necessary steps to try to prevent their children and young people viewing sinful things. But may the fear of God be put in your own hearts to keep you from the evil. If your parents are not looking over your shoulder, remember the Lord sees everything, including what you are thinking. The necessity for the internet in most homes can put the television where it was not before – in the homes of the Lord's people. The smartphone goes a step further – it puts the internet, and therefore television capability, into people's pockets and handbags. We felt thankful when free use of the BBC iPlayer on the internet was stopped and users were required by law to pay the television licence fee. We hope that none who fear God have paid for this service or will do so.

The internet is a major platform for 24-hour news coverage. It is right to keep informed of what is going on around us in our own country and across the world. The first good thing that may come from this is that as we read of all the evil in this present world we may be stirred to seek "a better country, that is an heavenly." Also it may stir us to pray for the Lord's mercy upon our country in these solemn days, and to pray for His people in trouble across the world. But we can become addicted to following the news. And remember this – all news broadcasters have some bias, and in our evil times it is an evil bias. Remember – they want to keep you looking for as long as they can. The media under Satan's direction plays a very great part in influencing the minds of the public.

Thirdly, the power of *social media* sites has been a great snare to many. An independent study has concluded that "Facebook's huge success is directly linked to its ability to persuade users. The best way to understand Facebook is to explore how this service is a platform for motivating and persuading people. No other perspective gives such insight into what makes Facebook tick. In other words, the psychology of Facebook is, at the core, the psychology of persuasion."

Much of the social media activity among young people (and older ones) appears to be completely unnecessary trivia. Do their "friends" really need to know all those details about their daily life? It can be very troubling for their husbands, wives and other family members who actually want their private family lives kept private. In many cases quite unsuitable "friends" are made. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4. 4). By bringing young people together in unsupervised constant contact at a very vulnerable time in their lives, these platforms can nurture sinfulness in language and

behaviour. One bad apple in the box quickly spreads its badness to the whole box. Because things can be typed and sent so quickly, there is often little thought put into what is written. Online bullying is a real problem. Social media has a tendency to encourage pride, self-exaltation, covetousness and idolatry as “friends” seek to out-do each other in telling and photographing what they have been doing or what they have just purchased.

Another snare is the gossip that quickly spreads through groups. The very nature of social media means that the consequences can be so far-reaching and damaging. Those with smartphones may receive many messages throughout a day by which some very trivial piece of information interrupts them in their work, study or most importantly seeking after the Lord in reading and in prayer. There is one Friend that sinners need to seek contact with. He is the One they need to be reverently speaking to. They need words from Him. He is the One whose felt support they need. That Friend is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a righteously-jealous Friend who will show His friendliness to His people by hiding His face and being silent when His people put self or others before Him. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov. 27. 6). “Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart” (Jer. 29. 13).

Of course, those who fear God do have like-minded friends, and are to communicate with them. But spiritual communion is a gift of God that is granted in a characteristically sober way, usually through speaking to each other, meeting face to face or by personal letters.

The last point I will mention is that if the internet becomes a snare to us, it affects those around us as well as ourselves. Inordinate use of the internet, especially via the smartphone, clearly has a bad effect upon marriages, families and real friendships. As the object of the providers is to take us from our life to what they want us to look at and be engrossed with, how can we give proper, full attention to our life? How can mothers and fathers give their children the attention they need? How can husbands and wives give each other the attention needed to maintain harmony? They are not living their lives as God would have them to – even in a natural sense.

It is ironic that in the age of advanced communications, some people are having less and less sensible conversation with each other. Images that sadly depict life in our present day come to my mind. Firstly, there is a couple sitting in silence at a restaurant table gazing at their smartphones, and then as we go outside there are several people walking down the street, thumbing over their smartphone screen and listening to it through their earphones.

What is the answer to this snare of Satan? Should the Lord’s people not use the internet and not have smartphones? The Lord may lead some

of His people that way; some have no need of them in their lives, or simply choose not to have them. It is certainly not wise for children to have their own devices until they are mature enough. But they will not be saved from the snares of Satan merely by doing that. If you in your own strength say, "I am not going to have anything to do with these devices; I am going to live as people did in the old days," your own strength is a snare, especially as you are likely to think yourself better than those who do use them. Neither the internet nor the smartphone is evil in itself. Both can be very useful. If Satan cannot ensnare a person by any outward device, he will try to ensnare them by blinding "the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4. 4). The only answer to all the snares is the given grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be given the fear of the Lord to hate the evil, the faith of the Lord as a shield against all the wiles of the devil, and the love of God which alone can conquer the love of the world.

The first step in deliverance is feeling convinced of your sin in the matter. That is why I have written to you in this way. If you are really convinced of what Satan is seeking to do to you, and convinced of your sinful weakness in this way and in everything, you will want Jesus Christ more than anything else. The reality of that want will be proven by your repenting of the sin and fleeing to Him for pardon and deliverance. One thing that the fear of the Lord does is to cause a person to seek to avoid the things that lead to sin. We are not truly seeking the Lord's deliverance if we do not take sensible steps to flee from the snare. As sin is with us every day, and as the snares are so subtle and so many and so strong, we need Jesus Christ every day and all through the day. As He is the real Friend of sinners, "He is altogether lovely." As there is nothing but righteousness, goodness, love and mercy in Him toward coming sinners, O how attractive He makes Himself to them. If He fills your heart there will be no room for idols.

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## THE NEEDY DIRECTED TO CHRIST

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Welwyn  
1938

My dear H.,

I have been reading R.M. M'Cheyne's Life. He was a young Scots minister, author of that sweet hymn: "When this passing world is done." But O how his grace, ability and life shone beyond my poor, blind wanderings! I had been musing over my poor, poor ministry, and my very soul longed to be made a real minister, a real pastor. The relation of M'Cheyne's ministry came like shafts of reproof to me. My heart

went out to God for more grace, more exercise, more concern, more living, gracious teachings. What a poor, dull, lifeless thing I feel to be! How merciful is God in His dealings with me!

As I ponder over my sins, failings, darkness, and then turn a little to the mercy, kindness and patience of God with me, where can the eyes of faith rest but on Him who stooped so low, and endured such sufferings to make salvation sure! O how low He had to come to reach one like me! What a vast work of redemption was committed to His all-powerful hands, and what a complete work He accomplished! Hell, death and the grave trembled under His almighty love and grace, and He did indeed conquer them all; and He rose again to prove that He had conquered them. He saw me and you ruined in the Fall. His Father's will brought Him a cup of wrath, a crown of thorns, a cruel spear, the hard, unyielding nails. You and I helped to fill that cup; I, more than you. Our hands wove that crown of thorns.

But O what pity and love shine in His tender words: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). What authority He has to say this to you. Go to Him, H., tell Him of the grief, sorrow, care and burden of your soul. Tell Him of sin, of unbelief; tell Him of disappointments; tell Him all your heart. Tell Him you want Him. Tell Him often. Everything but His own grace and truth will hinder you, but O do seek still for a real token, a real blessing, a real "earnest" of His love. I know you have often done this, and have felt much to need it. But still go against all your feelings, against all your fears, sins, doubts, unbelief, against all your darkness, and try to plead His dear, all-prevailing name. He must, He will answer. Say with one of old:

"In the world of endless ruin,  
Let it never, Lord, be said,  
Here's a soul that perished suing  
For the boasted Saviour's aid."

Let what will come into your path, this and this alone is of any value.

My mind has unaccountably turned this evening to a young girl who died at the early age of nineteen. She and I were great friends in the Sunday school at home. She was a humble, tender seeker, and the Lord early crowned His grace with glory. How little she had to show apparently of the work of grace, but O how real it was! I think sometimes of her; how favoured her lot! We follow on, hoping in the same promises, looking for the same grace, seeking for the same precious Christ. May my dear friend find in her heart a sweet testimony of Jesus, and a seal of His eternal love imprinted there.

Your very affectionate pastor and friend,

William H. Haddow

## THE ABUNDANT MERCY OF GOD

*By John Bunyan (1628-1688)*

“Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy” (Psa. 130. 7).

First. With Him *there is tender mercy*, and therefore let Israel hope (see Psa. 25. 6; 103. 4; 119. 156). Tender mercy is mercy in mercy, and that which Israel of old had in high estimation, cried much for, and prayed that God would deal with their souls by that. “Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from me,” said David, and “according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions” (Psa. 40. 11; 51. 1). And again, “Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live” (Psa. 119. 77). Now of this sort of mercies God has a great many, a multitude to bestow upon His people. And they are thus mentioned by the Word, to cause us to hope in Him. And is not this alluring, is not this enticing to the Israel of God to hope, when the object of their hope is a God “very pitiful, and of tender mercy”? (Jas. 5. 11). Yea, a God whose tender mercies are great and many. There are two things that this word *tender mercy* importeth.

1. The first is, that sin will put a believer, if he giveth way thereto, into a very miserable condition.

2. That God would have them hope, that though sin may have brought any of them into this condition, the Lord will restore them with much pity and compassion. “Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy,” tender mercy.

1. For the first of these, That sin will put a believer, if he gives way thereto, into a very miserable condition. It will make his soul to be much pained under rising fears.

The pains that guilt will make, when it wounds the conscience, none knows but those to whom sin is applied by the Spirit of God, in the law. Yet all may read of it in the experience of the godly, where this pain is compared to a wound in the flesh, to fire in the bones, to the putting of bones out of joint, and the breaking of them asunder (see Psa. 38. 3, 5, 7; 102. 3; 22. 14; Lam. 1. 13; 3. 4). He that knows what wounds and broken bones are, knows them to be painful things. And he that knows what misery sin will bring the soul into with its guilt, will conclude the one comes no whit short of the other. But now he that hath these wounds, and also these broken bones, the very thoughts of a man that can cure, and of a bonesetter,\* will make him afraid, yea, quake for fear; especially if he knows that though he has skill, he has a hard heart, and fingers that are like iron. He that handleth a wound, had need have fingers like feathers or down; to be sure the patient wisheth they were!

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\* This was written in the 17th century.

Tenderness is a thing of great worth to such; and such men are much enquired after by such; yea, their tenderness is an invitation to such to seek after them. And the thing is true in spirituals (see Isa. 42. 3). Wherefore David cried, as I said before, "Have mercy upon me, O God ... according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions" (Psa. 51. 1). O handle me tenderly, Lord, handle me tenderly, cried David. O cure me, I beseech Thee, and do it with Thy tender mercy.

2. Now, answerable to this, the Lord is set forth to Israel as One with whom is mercy, consequently tender mercy. "Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is" tender "mercy." God therefore would have the wounded and bruised, and those whose pains may be compared to the pains and pangs of broken bones, to hope that He will restore them with much pity and compassion, or as you have it before, in pity and tender mercy. See how He promiseth to do it by the prophet. "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Isa. 42. 3). See how tender He is in the action. "When he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (Luke 10. 33, 34). Every circumstance is full of tenderness and compassion.

See also how angry He maketh Himself with those of His servants that handle the wounded or diseased without this tenderness; and how He catcheth them out of their hand, with a purpose to deal more gently with them Himself. "The diseased," saith He, "have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.... Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD.... I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick" (Ezek. 34. 4, 7, 15, 16). Here is encouragement to hope, even according to the reason urged: "Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy" – tender mercy.

Second. As with Him is mercy tender, *so there is with Him mercy that is great*, for with Him is great mercy. "The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy" (Numb. 14. 18). When tenderness accompanies want of skill, the defect is great; but when tenderness and great skill meet together, such a surgeon is a brave, accomplished man. Besides, some are more plagued with the sense of the greatness of their sins than others are, the devil having placed or fixed the great sting there. These are driven by the greatness of sin into despairing thoughts, hotter than fire.

These have the greatness of their sin betwixt God and them, like a great mountain; yea, they are like a cloud that darkeneth the sun and air.\* This man stands under Cain's gibbet, and has the halter of Judas, to his own thinking, fastened about his neck.

And now, cries he, "*Great* mercy or *no* mercy; for little mercy will do me no good"; such a poor creature thus expostulateth the case with God, "Wilt Thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise Thee?" (Psa. 88. 10). Lord, I have destroyed myself; can I live? My sins are more than the sands; can I live? Lord, every one of them are sins of the first rate, of the biggest size, of the blackest line; can I live? I never read that expression but once in all the whole Bible: "For Thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great" (Psa. 25. 11). Not that there was but one man in Israel that had committed great iniquities, but because men that have so done, have rather inclined to despair, than to an argument so against the wind. If he had said, Pardon, for they are little, his reason had carried reason in it; but when he saith, Pardon, for they are great, he seems to stand like a man alone. This is the common language: "If our transgressions ... be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" (Ezek. 33. 10). Or thus, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts" (Ezek. 37. 11). Wherefore to such as these, good wishes, tender fingers, and compassion, without *great* mercy, can do nothing. But behold, O thou man of Israel, thou talkest of great sins; answerable to this, the Scripture speaks of great mercy; and thy great sins are but the sins of a man, but these great mercies are the mercies of a God; yea, and thou art exhorted, even because there is mercy with Him, therefore to trust thy soul with Him. "Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy," great mercy. This therefore is a truth of singular consolation, that mercy is with the Lord, that tender mercy is with Him, that great mercy is with Him, both *tender* and *great*. What would man have more? But,

Third. As great mercy is with the Lord to encourage us to hope, so this mercy that is great, is *rich*.. "God ... is rich in mercy" (Eph. 2. 4). There are riches of goodness and riches of grace with Him (see Rom. 2. 4; Eph. 1. 7). Things may be great in quantity, and little of value, but the mercy of God is not so. We use [are accustomed] to prize small things when great worth is in them; even a diamond as little as a pea, is preferred before a pebble, though as big as a camel. Why, here is rich mercy, sinner; here is mercy that is rich and full of virtue; a drop of it will cure a kingdom. "Ah! but how much is there of it?" says the sinner. O, abundance, abundance! for so saith the text: "Let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for His" rich "mercies are great" (2 Sam. 24. 14).

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\* Bunyan had felt all this. "Alas!" says he, "I could neither hear Christ, nor see Him, nor feel Him, nor savour any of His things; I was driven with a tempest, my heart would be unclean, the Canaanites would come into the land" – *Grace Abounding*, No. 78.



Some things are so rich, and of such virtue, that if they do but touch a man, if they do but come nigh a man, if a man doth but look upon them, they have a present operation upon him; but the very mentioning of mercy, yea, a very thought of it, has sometimes had that virtue in it as to cure a sin-sick soul. Here is virtuous mercy!

Indeed mercy, the best of mercies, are little worth to a self-righteous man, or a sinner fast asleep. We must not, therefore, make our esteems of mercy according to the judgment of the secure and heedless man, but according to the verdict of the Word; nay, though the awakened sinner, he that roareth for mercy all day long, by reason of the disquietness of his heart, is the likeliest among sinful flesh, or as likely as another, to set a suitable estimate upon mercy, yet his verdict is not always to pass in this matter. None can know the riches of mercy to the full, but he that perfectly knoweth the evil of sin, the justice of God, all the errors of man, the torments of hell, and the sorrows that the Lord Jesus underwent, when mercy made Him a Reconciler of sinners to God. But this can be known by none but the God whose mercy it is. This is the “pearl of great price.”

The richness of mercy is seen in several things. It can save from sin, from great sin, from all sin (see Tit. 3. 5). It can save a soul from the devil, from all devils (see Matt. 15. 22, 23 and 17. 15, 18). It can save a soul from hell, from all hells (see Psalms. 116. 3, 5, 6). It can hold us up in the midst of all weaknesses (see Psalms. 94. 18). It can deliver from eternal judgment (see Rom. 9. 23). Yea, what is it that we have, or shall need, that this virtuous mercy cannot do for us? “Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is” *rich* “mercy,” mercy full of virtue, and that can do great things.

*(To be continued)*

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### CHRIST DRINKING OF THE BROOK

*Extract from Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

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“He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head” (Psalms. 110. 7).

The brook of Kedron was a black brook (for so the word Kedron signifies), into which all the filth from the sacrifices was thrown; it was the brook over which the Son of God passed in the night that He entered the Garden of Gethsemane. Now, as the whole Psalm from which this portion is taken, refers to the Person of Jesus, nothing can be more plain than that David, by the spirit of prophecy, is here describing the deep sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. By the expression,

drinking of this black brook, it is intended to convey an idea of the “cup of trembling” put into the Lord Jesus’ hands, when He sustained all the sins and filth of His people, and in consequence as their Surety, all the Father’s wrath against sin. Hence the Lord said, “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18. 11).

My soul! pause, and ask thyself, Doth not this sweet but solemn verse give thee precious instruction, when thou considerest that all thy filth, and all thy defilements, were imputed, by the Father Himself, unto the Person of thy glorious Surety? Is it not blessed thus to see, that by Christ’s drinking “of the brook in the way,” He took all thy transgressions, and was made both sin and a curse for thee, that thou mightest be made the righteousness of God in Him? (see 2 Cor. 5. 21). And though, in Himself, He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7. 26), yet, as the Surety of His people, He was made black with sin and suffering; “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52. 14). Precious Jesus! may I never lose sight of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, and the Brook Kedron! Here, by faith, let my soul frequently take her daily station, and behold Thee pouring out Thy soul unto death, numbered with the transgressors, drinking of the brook in the way, that Thy sacred head might be lifted up, first on the cross in suffering, and then with Thy crown in glory!

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## THE GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST 52ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Report of the Meeting held at Uffington Chapel, on Saturday  
afternoon, May 19th, 2018*

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The Chairman, Mr. D. J. Christian, welcomed a good number to the meeting which commenced with hymn 64. The Chairman then read Genesis 45. 1-15 and Mr. D. Pepler sought the Lord’s blessing. The Secretary then introduced the 2017 Annual Report and Financial Statements. First, he mentioned Mark 14. 8: “She hath done what she could,” and so the Trust seeks to provide practical guidance and financial help where needed and to publish books which would be a spiritual help. He expressed thankfulness to the Lord for the supply of all our financial needs. In 2017 a share of the sale proceeds (£171,891) was received from Station Road Chapel, Redhill, which was very timely.

He explained that over the last eighteen months there had been much more involvement with the Charity Commission than for many years previously and he had been through a very busy time for helping with

legal matters. The trustees at Reading had received sale proceeds of over £600,000, which the trust deed stated should be used for building a Particular Baptist chapel, but does not say where. Application had been made to the Charity Commission for a Scheme and it was hoped that they will allow the money to be used for building chapels as well as the repair or improvement of existing Gospel Standard chapels. The trustees hope that this will be a help to any with a particular burden regarding their own cause. The rate of chapel closures was very sad – four cases were mentioned in the printed report. He expressed the desire that we might be burdened more with a spirit of prayer for revival.

The website had been updated and a new section added about the general data protection regulation which applied from May 25th. Sadly, these rules apply to chapels, so a circular had been sent to chapel correspondents to provide guidance and draft documents. He hoped the impact on chapel administration would be low. He expressed appreciation for the assistance given by an Oakington church member in the preparation of that circular.

Two cases concerning pastors' houses were in hand with the Trust solicitors. Changes were being made to the objects of chapel trust funds so that they could be used to help provide living accommodation for pastors. A loan for £100,000 had been made in 2018 to the Staplehurst pastor to assist him in purchasing a house. In view of the substantial need at Oakington with their renovation, the balance held for the Zion Chapel, Ely Charity (over £47,000 at December 2017) had been paid out to them as well as a grant of £60,000 from general funds in 2018.

Turning to Publications, he expressed thankfulness for the number of sales. He recommended reading the book *An Exposition of the Fifty-First Psalm* by Martin Luther printed in 2017. The foreword states, "It is amazing how full of the pure gospel are Luther's writings. There is nothing second-hand about his religion." Luther goes through and comments on each of the verses of Psalm 51 and on verse 17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise," he states, "This passage is worthy of being written in letters of gold." Further he says, "There is also set forth so blessed and sweet a representation of God that you cannot find one more so anywhere. It shows that He is the God not of death but of life, not of destruction but of salvation, not an enemy of the humble and the lost, but a lover and a helper, and plainly that He is the God of life, of salvation, of rest, of peace, of all consolation and joy."

Two new books soon to be available were: the original account of John Kemp, first pastor at Biddenden, with previously unpublished sermons and letters, and *Behold the Lamb*, containing previously unpublished prayer meeting addresses by J.K. Popham. Books available

later in the year, if the Lord will, would be the fourth in the *Faithful Footsteps* series, on Mordecai, and it is hoped to produce another *Sketches* to go with it. Also sermons by Mr. Ernest Roe and a book of sermons by Mr. C.A. Wood were expected.

He briefly mentioned the Library, which is a very valuable resource and needs the continuing support of the churches as the funds in hand will not last many more years. The Trust had helped with grants totalling £4,801 in 2017. The Library owns hundreds of manuscript sermons, and these were being added gradually to the Gospel Standard website. It was hoped that these would be particularly helpful for deacons taking reading services. The Secretary expressed thanks to churches and Trust members for their continuing support. "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us" (1 Sam. 7. 12).

The Chairman thanked the Secretary for his report. There were no questions, and the Report and Financial Statements were received by the Trust subscribers present. The three members of the Executive Committee retiring in rotation, Messrs. H. Mercer, M.J. Hyde and D.J. Christian, were re-elected. Mr. P.J. Pocock's appointment to the Committee (from February 2018) was confirmed.

The Chairman expressed sincere thanks to the Secretary for all the work he does, particularly with the amount of legal work that has arisen. He explained that the Secretary did not wish at present to give up, but felt it prudent to advertise and see if there was anybody willing to understudy him or pick up some of the work that he does, perhaps initially on a part-time basis. He thanked the Publications Manager for all the work he does, including proof-reading and going round to various meetings on behalf of the Trust with a bookstall. He also thanked Mr. John Kingham for the work he does in the bookroom, in Publications and on the Gospel Standard website. He expressed thankfulness to the Lord for all His goodness through another year.

Hymn 4 was then sung, following which Mr. G.D. Buss gave an address entitled, "The Overruling Hand of Almighty God."

It was the overruling hand of God wonderfully seen in the Book of Esther with which Mr. Buss dealt mainly, but in his introduction he mentioned Nehemiah. He heard of the low state of Jerusalem, it weighed heavily upon him, he was sad before the king, he prayed and the king granted his requests according to the good hand of his God upon him. Mr. Buss set down two principles which always, whatever the circumstances, whether providence or grace, undergirded the subject of his address. First, the overruling hand is always, without any qualification, for the ultimate honour and glory of God. You have that in John 11. For example, when Lazarus was sick, the Lord sent a message: "This sickness is not unto death," but that the Son of God

should be glorified. The second thing which is closely and undeniably united to this is that what is for the ultimate honour and glory of God is always for the ultimate good of His people. The two are inseparably joined. He gives. He takes. He makes no mistakes.

There are many examples in the Word of God of how the Lord has overruled things for the honour and glory of His name. He mentioned Job, the Book of Ruth, Joseph and the pre-eminent example of the Fall. In the Book of Esther, the hand of God is seen in every chapter. We also see the hand of Satan just as in our day.

He mentioned three ready agents of Satan. The first was King Ahasuerus who was an erratic, hasty, ill-tempered, easily manipulated man, but God permitted him to be on the throne. Secondly, a man called Haman. Haman was of an evil, vindictive nature and had an inveterate hatred to the Jews. We need to remember that Satan again and again throughout the Old Testament sought to hinder the coming of our Saviour by trying to annihilate the seed of Abraham and trying to undo what God had promised in the Garden of Eden. Satan always failed. He always will fail. But he has not given up trying, even in our day. The third one was Haman's wife, a woman called Zeresh. She was the one who advised him to erect the gallows upon which to hang Mordecai.

Then he mentioned three honourable people. Vashti who, in all the circumstances appeared to be a woman of a modest character. She was deposed. Whatever good could come from that strange event? It opened the door for Esther in the mysterious ways of God. Esther was now on the throne "for such a time as this" which the Lord knew would come to pass. Whilst Satan's agenda was very apparent, Mr. Buss said that at first God's purposes were kept very much in secret. The third one we have is Mordecai, a godly man, who would not bow to Haman and break God's commandment. In the events that followed, great trouble came upon the Jews. The sentence of death was upon the whole nation. In more than 127 provinces the decree went forth that they were to be slain. The people were perplexed, but God was not. God is never perplexed. We often are.

Then Mr. Buss dealt with five seemingly inconsequential things which God used to overturn Satan's devices. The first was when Haman cast the lot as to when the annihilation should take place. It fell out to be seven months later. If it had been the following week, for example, it would have been catastrophic, but no, God was over that casting of the lot that Haman did.

Secondly, Esther's caution. She did not ask her request at the first banquet she prepared for Haman and Ahasuerus. There was a caution on her spirit. Mr. Buss gave wise advice from the Book of Esther to any at

the meeting who had a caution on their spirit over any matter, to wait; to wait until the Lord removed the caution on their spirit, and then they would know the time would be right as well as the thing, he trusted.

This caution was followed by the king's sleepless night. The king was kept awake by God. The overruling hand of God ordained that the record read to him should concern Mordecai. God's timing is always perfect. So there were Haman's lot, Esther's caution, a sleepless night, a scroll from the library, and then, the timing for Mordecai to be honoured.

Haman comes in with one intent – to ask for the life of Mordecai. But before he could open his mouth, the king said to Haman, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" (Esth. 6. 6). The overruling hand of God in His perfect timing. Ere the day was done it was not Mordecai that hung on the gallows; it was Haman. Mr. Buss said God always has the last word. He vindicates in His own time and His own ways.

In the history of God's dear people, God's timing is seen again and again. Mr. Buss mentioned John Newton, who was appointed in Liverpool as a customs officer. He was exceedingly precise in his time-keeping, but on one occasion he was ten minutes late. The boat he missed sank in the Mersey. That was the overruling hand of God. Whilst we might not always understand God's dealings, they are always right. Even in the history of our own nation, the abdication of Edward VIII made way for George VI, a praying man who did much to lead the nation in the right way. The overruling hand of God.

He confirmed these things with a few quotes from the Word of God. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Prov. 16. 33). Also those words in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans at the end of chapter 11, where the dear apostle had been discoursing on the mysterious ways of the Jew and the Gentile churches and he says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11. 33). Good Samuel Rutherford's words surely summed it up:

"I'll bless the hand that guided,  
I'll bless the heart that planned,  
When throned where glory dwelleth,  
In Immanuel's land."

Whilst we may not feel we can bless Him at this time as we would like to, we should just stand still and remember who is on the throne. It is not vacant; it is not empty. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19. 6).

The Chairman thanked Mr. Buss for his very instructive lesson. Appreciation was expressed to the friends at Uffington for making us so welcome. The meeting concluded with hymn 320 and the benediction.

D.J.Playfoot

Copies of the full address given by Mr. Buss are available from the Trust Secretary.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Introducing Tyndale** – An Extract from Tyndale’s Answer to Sir Thomas More’s Dialogue, with an introduction by John Piper and an epilogue by Robert J. Sheehan; paperback; 106 pages; price £5.50; published by The Banner of Truth Trust and obtainable from Christian bookshops.

From the title of this book we were expecting an introduction giving an outline of William Tyndale’s life and work, a survey of his works and how they came to be written, and perhaps to put everything in context, a summary of the book of Tyndale’s from which the extract published here is made. Instead the book commences with an intellectual essay by John Piper called “Always Singing One Note – a Vernacular Bible.” It discusses various, especially controversial, aspects of Tyndale’s life, but being written more in the form of a scientific paper with numerous footnotes, it is sometimes tedious to follow. It jumps around from one point to another with little continuity, and there are several expressions which to the reviewer did not show any gracious empathy with Tyndale as a godly man. In short, it is not an introduction to Tyndale or the work which follows.

The extract from Tyndale’s book, “Answer to Sir Thomas More’s Dialogue,” is not easy to follow for modern readers. It is written in old English and uses words and expressions which would be unfamiliar to most people, though many of these are explained by footnotes. For example the “shaven, shorn and oiled,” the “spirituality” are all words used to describe Roman Catholic clergy. The first part deals mainly with the reason certain words were translated as they were in Tyndale’s English New Testament. As he proceeds, one cannot but marvel at his faithfulness as a godly man against all the errors which had been introduced by the Roman Catholic church, and yet his equal faithfulness in contending for the doctrines of grace and their experimental application. His description at the end of the difference between a “feeling faith” and a “historical faith” is very telling.

The last section of the book is an epilogue by Roger Sheehan on “William Tyndale’s Legacy.” It describes the effect Tyndale had on the whole course of history in England, the influence his translation of the Bible still has on English language and literature, and the debt we owe to him today. We much preferred this to the introduction; it was clear and contiguous. There was one statement on page 94 with which we disagreed: “From 1530 onwards, Tyndale emphasised the twin truths of ... justification by faith and sanctification by the law [which] was to prove foundational and central to Christian thinking ...” How can the law

which on page 62, Tyndale speaks of as a “tormentor” ever sanctify? Sanctification is in Christ (1 Cor. 1. 2, 30), and by faith (Acts 26. 18).

Overall, we were unsure who the book was aimed at. There is no doubt a place for a book giving an introduction to William Tyndale and perhaps a “translation” of his works into modern English. Those who are interested in Tyndale are more likely to read his works directly. This book does not seem to fit into any particular category.

John A. Kingham, Luton

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### THE STABILITY OF THE COVENANT

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When at the Almighty's dread command,  
The watery deluge left the land,  
Then from the ark the prophet came,  
And built an altar to His name.

Saved, from the vast, tremendous flood,  
He offered sacrifice to God,  
Jehovah liked the oblation well,  
And did of rest a savour smell.

Then, with a solemn oath He spoke,  
“Though once for sin My wrath awoke,  
Yet now I rest, My fury's o'er,  
I will destroy the world no more.”

Thus to His church in Christ He said,  
“Since Justice smote thy Saviour's head,  
And in the cloud My bow I see,  
I never can be wroth with thee.

“Sooner the massy hills shall prove  
Like chaff before a whirlwind drove,  
Than I forsake My firm decree,  
Or let My love grow cold to thee.

“The ponderous mountains sooner may  
Desert their seats and flee away,  
Than I forget or disapprove  
The chosen objects of My love.

“As by My name of old I swore  
To drown a guilty world no more,  
So have I sworn I'll never be  
Incensed with wrath to deluge thee.”

John Kent (1766-1843)



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
OCTOBER 2018

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

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**JEHOSHAPHAT'S FAITH**

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"Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee" (2 Chron. 20. 12).

This prayer of Jehoshaphat is so often echoed in the hearts of the dear people of God, from one generation to another, when under trial. Even though Jehoshaphat expressed himself in this way, in the wonders of grace, the good man did know what to do: and that was to look up unto, and pray unto his God. And is it not so with the dear people of God today, when in great tribulation, perplexed and distressed, they have to fall down and pray, "Lord, I do not know what to do; please help me and save me, and show me what to do, and deliver me, I pray, for Thy great name's sake"?

Almighty God in His gracious government over His dear people, in His wisdom and love to them, sees a needs-be to try their faith, that He might show to them His wondrous works of love and mercy. The Scriptures are clear, that all that God brings into the lives of His dear children must and will work for their good and for their eternal felicity and joy (see Rom. 8. 28-39). We are humbled and laid low in the dust, that God may show us His marvellous works of love and mercy (see Isa. 25. 1-5).

So many of the Scripture records of the godly show how they were led by God into the depths to find God as the Rock of their salvation. "He only is My Rock and my salvation: He is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the Rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God" (Psa. 62. 6, 7). Good King Hezekiah proved this in His affliction during the siege of Jerusalem, when He said, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live" (Isa. 38. 16). The Lord healed King Hezekiah and delivered the city. David also experienced judgment and mercy when he cried out in his dilemma, "I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man" (1 Chron. 21. 13). Disobedient Jonah also proved the faithfulness and goodness of God when he prayed in the fish's belly, "Out of the belly of hell cried I" (Jon. 2. 2), and concluded with, "Salvation is of the LORD" (Jon. 2. 9).

This humble expression, “Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee,” sprang out of a firm faith and a holy confidence in the promise and covenant of God with Abraham and his “seed for ever” (Gen. 13. 15). This also includes those Gentiles who possess the faith of Abraham and are freely justified: for the earthly promised land is a wonderful type of the heavenly Canaan, which is promised to both Jew and Gentile when they repent of their sins, and trust wholly to their risen Saviour. We see the steadfast faith of Jehoshaphat in his prayer as recorded in verses 6 to 12. He reverently pleaded the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, and pleaded the promises that sprang forth from that covenant. This was the vital part of his prayers, for he pleaded that which he believed to be true. We need that same like precious faith in our day and generation to plead the glorious and sure promises that are given us in the beloved Son of God.

“Immanuel! thrice-blessèd name!  
The God we trust is still the same!  
An endless Father, He;  
A most illustrious Prince of Peace;  
A Tower, a precious Hiding-place,  
Is Jesus Christ to me.”

“Neither know we what to do.” One thing is most clear from the doctrine and experiences we read of in the Scriptures, that the people of God are eternally safe, although they often feel unsafe and are afraid in their fiery trials. As “deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts,” and, “all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me,” the dear saints prove with David of old, “Yet the LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life” (Psa. 42. 7, 8). The Lord brings us to the end of our own wisdom, our own strength, our own integrity and understanding. We realise that we have not a vestige of righteousness ourselves. “He weakened my strength in the way” (Psa. 102. 23).

So often, when experiencing the trying of faith in providential matters, former sins come to remembrance, and together with fresh-contracted guilt, put us in a very low place, so that our state and case looks well-nigh impossible. God-wrought faith pleads what it believes. It is true that “none can keep alive his own soul” (Psa. 22. 29), but a faithful God revives His work in our hearts to bring us to that safe place; at His blessed feet. It is at the Lord’s feet the dear saints find access and pour out the troubles of their soul. It is in patiently waiting for the Lord at His footstool that we find relief and obtain answers in due time, which is His set time.

“Could the creatures help or ease us,  
Seldom should we think of prayer;

Few, if any, come to Jesus,  
Till reduced to self-despair.

“Can His pity or His power  
Suffer thee to pray in vain?  
Wait but His appointed hour,  
And thy suit thou shalt obtain.”

“But our eyes are upon Thee.” True and living faith in exercise can only do this. Faith in exercise always turns to its “Author and Finisher” which is Jesus Christ (see Heb. 12. 2). True faith knows that all other ways are death; but “looking unto Jesus” is the way of life and peace. The eye of faith sees such wondrous grace and glory for poor, lost sinners in the Lord Jesus. So there is a coming unto, and a pleading with God’s great High Priest, Jesus Christ. For acceptance and blessing there is the pleading of His all-prevailing name, and the precious blood of Jesus, the “Lamb of God.” There is a rehearsing of the exceeding great and precious promises sealed by the blood of God’s own Lamb. Faith is always accompanied by genuine repentance and brokenness of heart, as well as good hope in “the Son of the living God.” The eyes of precious faith look up to Jesus, believing He is very merciful and full of compassion, tenderness and lovingkindness to all who come to His feet as humble, believing penitents. A believing heart believes that the Lord knows what is best for them, and He will do all for them, to bring them safely home to God.

So the dear people of God have to be brought low to be lifted up, that they might know that He is their God, by His wonderful and tender mercies to them. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas. 5. 11). “I was brought low, and He helped me” (Psa. 116. 6).

“No help in self I find,  
And yet have sought it well;  
The native treasure of my mind  
Is sin, and death, and hell.

“To Christ for help I fly,  
The Friend of sinners lost,  
A refuge sweet, and sure, and nigh,  
And there is all my trust.

“Lord, grant me free access  
Unto Thy pierced side,  
For there I seek my dwelling-place,  
And there my guilt would hide.”

If the eyes of the faith of pilgrims here below, see such a glory and beauty in their beloved Immanuel as they pass “through much tribulation” to “enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14. 22), what a blessed *seeing*

there will be hereafter, when the bride sees her beloved Bridegroom face to face, and, in rapture, says with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

“The bride eyes not her garment,  
But her dear Bridegroom’s face;  
I will not gaze at glory,  
But on my King of grace;  
Not at the crown He giveth,  
But on His piercèd hand:  
The Lamb is all the glory  
Of Immanuel’s land.”

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### A GRACIOUS HUMBLING OF OURSELVES

*Sermon preached by James Kidwell Popham in September 1911*

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**Text:** “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5. 6, 7).

The holy Scripture in the hand of the Spirit is spirit and life, and when it is set home on any sinner’s conscience to convince him of sins done, then they are seen, they are felt, and it is God’s will that they shall be acknowledged. “Only acknowledge thine iniquity” (Jer. 3. 13) is a solemn word. You will never go to God without sin, for there is no man “that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccles. 7. 20). Therefore if you go without confession, you will get no hearing, no welcome. By confession I do not mean the ordinary, the easy, the general confession that we are sinners, but that you your own selves have done evil in God’s sight; and that not generally, but particularly – today, any day, all days. Some particular things may be brought home – not perhaps enormities such as men would esteem and call enormities, but something that looks lawful, for which you may have a kind of natural excuse, but yet which is sin in God’s sight; and by His light you see it to be sin, and detrimental, injurious to your soul.

A despising of His goodness, a neglecting of His throne of heavenly grace, that kind of sin is too common, alas, and too commonly slurred over as if it were but little. We may be very unconscious for a time of a death that is upon our spirit, but when God draws near to deal particularly with us, then we see and feel we have despised His Sabbaths, and have not rendered to Him according to His mercy to us. And this solemn business is naturally regarded as low, mean, legal, and very much below what people call “a believer’s privileges.” But when viewed in the light of the Spirit’s teaching as contrary to gospel precepts, as a setting

up of an idol in the form of your own pleasures, your own ways, your own strength and wisdom, then you see what death you were under, what carnality swayed you, and what by-ends drew you aside, and brought you into desolation.

We little know till God comes near to teach it us, how we provoke Him to walk contrary to us by walking contrary to Him (see Lev. 26. 23, 24). The holy precepts given to the Jews in their dispensation were striking. They were not more striking, though, than are the precepts of the gospel, nor were they more strict. You may say, "O but grace is grace." Yes, and grace will teach you that sin is sin, if you have grace; it will teach you that "the thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24. 9). That when your mind is occupied with the question, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (Matt. 6. 31), to the exclusion of, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (verse 33), that when this mortal life in certain things and pleasures and ways, occupies the greatest part of the mind, in that very way of living we set up some idol. And what is that? The idol Self – the greatest and basest. I find God at times comes near to me, and it is often in conviction, so that I get a sight of myself and my sins which without the gospel would sink me into despair.

The Apostle Peter here speaks very, very sweetly, and O that the Lord may make it His speaking to *us*! Notwithstanding all he feels of his own unworthiness, he exhorts all the saints, elder and younger, to be subject one to the other, and sets before them the evil of strife by saying, "God resisteth the proud." Mind, if you walk in pride in anything in this world, and specially in the church, you will find that in that particular God will resist you. Sooner or later you will know it.

He then exhorts all of them in the words I have read for a text: "Humble yourselves therefore" – because God resisteth the proud – "under the mighty hand of God." By "the mighty hand of God," I understand God *in His dealings with them*. The prophet Isaiah tells us that the Lord instructed him "with a strong hand" (8. 11). That was His mighty hand on the prophet's heart, instructing him into separation from the world and from professors who were saying, and would have him say, "A confederacy." "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy" (verse 12). Be separate.

He deals with people with a strong hand in providence when He solemnly afflicts them either in their persons, or in their families, or their businesses, or the church, or when sometimes He removes men far away. It is said, "And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land" (Isa. 6. 12). This is God's mighty hand – His dealings with His people. I know there may be a refuge in the reflection that others are afflicted as well as we, and why

should we expect to be otherwise dealt with, seeing we are the same sort of wicked people? It is very false, and God has brought it down at times as by a hailstorm. *That*, as sure as you get into it, if but for an hour, will deaden your exercises, block the way of prayer, harden your heart against the Lord, give room for a proud reason and a rebellious will to work, and you will get into a far worse place than you were in before you sought the false shelter. My beloved friends, I know it; the Scriptures teach it, and I have experienced it.

Now let me warn you against any such refuge. “With the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself froward” (Psa. 18. 26). They say in the stoutness of their hearts, “The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars” (Isa. 9. 9, 10). Now is not that natural? Do you not see it in all men, that when anything is loose or broken, or any breach is made, they at once set to to repair the damage? It is quite as natural as if a piece of our chapel wall were broken or weakened, we should seek to have it speedily repaired.

So a person says naturally, without any looking to God for grace and strength, “I am weak here and weak there, and God seems to weaken me still more; now I will repair the damage as well as I can.” That is rebellion. You may not believe it, nor be now able to receive it, at least some of you, but it is rebellion. “Well, but what ought we to do?” Nothing more than God says. What is that? “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God” – it is His solemn direction. It is His doing, to weaken your strength in the way (see Psa. 102. 23). When men pine away in weakness, the thing is not merely to go to some strengthening remedies, and taking them, say, “Now I am going to be strong,” but rather first to fall down in their weakness and pining, and turn to the Lord. That was the effectual remedy we read of this evening (see Lev. 26. 40-46), and it still is the remedy.

Now, may the Lord help you to follow me in a few words I would say on this great, suitable exhortation, “**Humble yourselves.**” I conceive that it lies in these exercises of the soul: first, *in an honest and diligent and thorough confession of all the sins we feel – nay, all the sins of our nature*, but particularly of the sins we feel. We have this explained in the scripture. If a man sinned a sin of ignorance, said the Lord, “when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty” (Lev. 5. 4, 17). And the teaching in that appears to me to be this: that whenever conviction comes by the law into anyone’s conscience, that then he is sensibly a guilty man, though guilty, to be sure, the moment he did the act. And when he is convinced, he is to begin this business of humbling himself under God’s mighty hand in confession of his sins.

If ever you get near to Jesus Christ, you will do so as a confessing person, a sinner. And it is not a condition by which you procure favour, but the way which He Himself has ordained in which to dispense favour: "Only acknowledge thine iniquity" (Jer. 3. 13). And, my friends, if we can enlarge here a little – I will say it will be very easy to do it when the light shines on you, when it conducts your eye to this, to that, to the other sin; when your heart is opened to receive rebuke, and there is discovered an act of pride, there an act of covetousness, there an unclean thought, there a piece of idolatry, there a giving yourselves up to a pleasure which, though lawful in itself, carried your heart and mind away from your everlasting interests; if words were to be had to enlarge where necessary, what should we not have to say about this kind of sinning?

Beloved friends, do you follow me? Must you say, "Yes," to all of it? Then what a mercy to fall flat, to leave off saying, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3. 12); to leave off saying of this second cause, "It drove me," and of that external influence, "It drew me"; of this (lawful) interest, "It enticed me" – to leave off that, and to confess your sin, and seek pardon! No excuses are ever to be used at the throne of grace. For of what you excuse yourselves in before the Lord you cannot say to Him, "Do pardon." What you confess is wrong, of that you can say, "Do forgive it; do cleanse me with the blood of Christ."

This, then, is one of those exercises in which may the Lord make us diligent, because I am certain we are benefited by it. I know in my own case when this spirit thrives in me, because it is a real prosperity of mind, of soul; when it thrives in me, I am better. I am always the best when I live in confessing my sins before the blessed God of all grace. If I lived every day like this, I should be a better Christian, and I think I should be a better minister. When I do confess, I find a liberty in my spirit. It is not binding, mean, legal, hard, unwelcome at all; it is a healthy exercise, a really spiritual exercise, because we are concerned about what has dishonoured our Lord; we are concerned about the disobedience of our nature, and of our heart in some particulars.

Thus we have to go on guilty, guilty, guilty, till it is nothing but guiltiness. "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psa. 32. 5). What a blessing to be able to say it! O the shame that covers us, but O the welcome that is given to us! I have proved God resisting me when I have tried to pray sometimes; but I have never found Him to resist me in my approaches when I have approached with confessions. You must, if you have observed the dealings of God with you (if God has indeed dealt with you in power and mercy), say you have had the same experience; that is, if

you have been as wicked as I have, to go to Him without this confession and in some stoutness of heart, wanting to have your own way.

“Humble yourselves.” My friends, you will not lose your leanness, nor get from your distance, nor escape from your enemies’ land and clutches and power, till you are brought down to confess your sins to the Lord. It is His method; remember it, regard it; search the Scriptures, and you will see it is so. It is His method to humble and exalt, pull down and build up. Ah then, if David proves a companion to you, or, if I may so put it, if you are permitted to get alongside of that eminent saint, and pray his prayer in the fifty-first Psalm, what a blessing for you! How he confessed his sins! And we may confess church sins, sins here and sins there, and then the sins of the nation. These are all to be confessed; we partake of them particularly, and then we have to confess them. Get low, and you will be safe, sinner; as low as ever you can get, and you will be safe. “He that is down,” confessing his sins, “needs fear no fall.” He that can take the lowest place, he that looking on his leprosy, says to his great High Priest, “There is a leprosy in the house, O look on me,” he is safe. The society of the priest and the leper the law forbade not; and the coming to the Lord Jesus by a sinner the gospel forbids not but encourages. “Only acknowledge thine iniquity.”

Now God knows if you feel anything wrong in your own souls before Him. He knows if there is any conviction in any of you as you come here. You may come and go, and say it was a very dead service. Why? You say the preacher had no liberty. How do you know he had none? Because nothing came to you? Is it a proof that he was dead, because you were? O my friends, acknowledge your sins. And besides this, suppose the ministry is dead to you, may it not be because you have walked contrary to God? Is the Bible life to you when you read it in private? You say, “No.” Is the throne of grace open to you when you try to get at it? “No,” you may say; “it is long since I had a sight of Christ, and heard His blessed voice.” Why? You say, “Christ is a Sovereign.” Yes, and sin is a deadening thing. Grace will remove it, but it will begin to remove it by convincing you of it. As sure as you ever get a conquest, you will find the beginning of it is the conviction of sin and power to confess it imparted to the soul. That is one thing, then.

Now the next thing I would say in this point is, “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God” *in a genuine acceptance of His dealings with you*. There is an acceptance not genuine or gracious, as when a person says, “This is a grief and I must bear it,” and so he sullenly drops down; no prayer, no acceptance, no submission, just tries to get through it as well as he can. How different from that spirit (and who has not known it?) is the spirit that enables you to say, “I will bear the



indignation of the LORD, **because I have sinned against Him**" (Mic. 7. 9).

Now the former spirit will give you a good deal of liberty, but not with God – liberty to run to second causes and blame them; liberty to try to get out in *some* way; liberty to use this means and devise that, in order to free yourself from the particular trouble. But that is an ungracious liberty, a deadening liberty. No access to God there. But when you can say, bitter as it may be to your flesh (and the Lord knows how bitter some things are to our flesh), that you will, through grace, bear the indignation of the Lord, because you have sinned against Him; when you can come down to the bottom and say, "If with my sin compared, how light is this affliction!" – and if the Lord lets you look into your deserts somewhat, you will say, "He exacteth of me less than my iniquities deserve" (see Job 11. 6) – then you will find some easing of the burden. The yoke of Egypt then is taken off, and you can walk upright, as God said in the word I read just now (Lev. 26. 13). The bitter, galling, prevailing yoke of iniquity is taken off your neck, and you can walk as an upright person before Him in accepting what He lays on. This is very wholesome for us. Mind it. I know and love the feeling. Good is it to accept what the Lord does. Now watch this in your spirits; and, when you do not accept, you will find a bondage; when you accept, a liberty. You will find when you do not accept, there is no kind of access, when you are enabled to accept, it is just as if the Lord, when you are pining and mourning, lets down some hint of *His unchangeable love to you*. "Then will I **remember** My covenant," He said; blessed be His name, He has not forgotten it. He says, "I will not abhor you, I will not punish you utterly to destroy you" (see Lev. 26. 42, 44). O the kindness of God!

The next thing is this:  *fervent supplication*. It is not dictative now. The Spirit of grace in you brings you to the bottom, and you say, "Lord, bless my soul; pardon my sin; give me union with Christ, make out afresh my interest in Him. Open to me the fountain of life; let its healing streams flow into my barren soul. Sin has made a desert of my heart; O make it the garden of the Lord by Thy grace; come to me." This exercise is a truly humbling one; you are humbled in it, and humble in presenting your petition to God. No *right* now; only one plea, and that is Christ; one hope, and that is His atonement; one Shelter, and that is His Person; one thing to look to – unchangeable love. And this runs through all the prayers you offer like a spirit of life; and wherever the Spirit of life from Christ Jesus is to go, thither also your spirit goes. You go to the throne, and there to the Fountain, the Root of this real, true, powerful life, which is opened for one who is feeling the death that sin has brought to him. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17).

Humble yourselves therefore in praying and beseeching the Lord to return to your soul, and to return you to the days of your youth.

Next, “humble yourselves” by *a waiting temper and disposition*. It is good to wait. Now at times some of us have thought we could not live another day if God did not do this or that, and sometimes unbelief has said He is not going to do it. Why? Because He has not answered us yet. He is not going to do it at all, because He did not do it the moment we asked Him. But when we are truly humbled, the time is as much left with Him as the thing is. You understand that, some of you; you can as much leave the time of deliverance, the return of God’s blessing you, as you can leave the blessing itself. “All-kind and all-wise, Thy season is best.” And it seems to me here that there is one thing in which, above all others, the soul is made lively, fervent, earnest; and that is,

“Lord, make our union closer yet,  
And let the marriage be complete.”

The Apostle Paul has a striking word in his first Epistle to Timothy. He says, “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Tim. 6. 7, 8). This is the thing: “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (verse 6). If your heart can be content to bear trouble, if your will is content with God’s will and way, if you can humble yourself in waiting on the Lord, somewhat of this exhortation is accomplished in you: “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.” What is the best portion? To have sin forgiven. What is the brightest prospect? Heaven. What is true wealth? Righteousness, life. What is the sweetest of all the enjoyments we can have? Sensible union and communion with Christ. Now there are times when these things so shine in a man’s eyes, sparkle as gems, heavenly treasures, that he can let the rest go. The language is, “Give me Christ, let me embrace Him, the Antidote of death, let me have union with Him, let me walk with Him in peace and equity.” The rest you can leave.

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.” Says the Apostle James, “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray” (Jas. 5. 13). Do not let him run anywhere; “let him *pray*.” There is one place, only one, fit for this sinner; there is but one Person suitable to his case! there is but one hand that can be laid on him for good. “Let him pray” at that place for that Person to come and lay His hand on him. “Let him pray.” That is heavenly direction. O when walking thus you say, “I wonder the affliction is so light; I wonder God has borne with me as He has; I wonder He deals with me as He does – so kindly; I wonder He allows me to live on the earth, that He lets me have a place in the church. I wonder any scripture comforts me, any mercy reaches my soul, any

goodness divine ever enters my sinful soul.” In this humbling of yourselves under God’s mighty hand there is a great deal of mercy. For instance, in the Lord’s giving you a plea to use before Him, when your sin shuts your mouth. The blood of Christ is the plea, His merits the opening of the mouth. “Open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise” (Psa. 51. 15). The merits of Christ, applied by the Spirit, will open the lips that guilt has sealed. Every Christian knows that sooner or later, more or less distinctly.

Individuals – individual Christians, “humble yourselves”; churches, this church, “humble yourselves” under God’s mighty hand, in His dealings – His solemn dealings. Families, where the heads are godly, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. You must have trouble: “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16. 33). You need trouble. It is a mercy to have it sent, and to have it *sanctified* by the Holy Ghost. It is a great mercy to be dealt with. Therefore, “humble yourselves ... under the mighty hand of God.”

Now, briefly, next, what will the Lord do? Says Peter, He will “exalt you.” For although he puts it in the form, as it were, of a condition, it is also a promise. Humble yourselves in order that He may exalt you; get low, that He may lift you up. It is a promise also, as if the Lord should say, “O sinning people, lie in the dust, and your God shall come and lift you up.” What is the best lifting up a sinner can get? The cleansing of his sins from his conscience; the lifting of him out of the dust and from off the dunghill of his nature’s corruptions, and the setting of him with princes, even the princes of God’s people; the making of him to “inherit the throne of glory” (1 Sam. 2. 8). That is the best. Afflicted saint, press after this. You might get lifted out of some providential trouble, and yet have a lean soul; but if you are to retain your temporal trouble, and get enriched in your experience of Christ and His gospel and your interest therein, that is the best.

I do not speak lightly, I have no reason to do so. I know what trouble is, what keen trouble is. But sometimes through the Holy Ghost, a poor, afflicted man can say, “Lord, my soul’s choice is that I may be forgiven and cleansed; that I may have union and communion, closer, nearer, dearer, sweeter than ever I have had before; and if it is best (and Thou knowest) for me to remain in this trouble, do not let it go.” “A people near unto Him” (Psa. 148. 14). Israel knew what sin was when they were taken from their own land into an enemy’s; but said He, If they remember Me when they pine away in an enemy’s land, “Then will I remember My covenant” (Lev. 26. 38-46). And if you have grace to pray to God when you are far off, thoughts of Jerusalem coming into your mind – that Jerusalem, the mother of us all, where you used to live – then He says, I will remember My covenant – My covenant with Abraham,

with Isaac and with Jacob; and I will *not utterly* consume them. Think of it. Nor will God utterly consume us; no, blessed be His name. The gospel coming restores us. “I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm” (Joel 2. 25) – *I will restore* these years! “No,” one says, “my tree is barked; restoration is impossible.” God can clothe it again. He says, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21. 5).

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.” Now if you get His hand on you for good, this is an exaltation. If you get His word into your heart with life and love and power, if you are indulged with five minutes’ fellowship with Him, if you get quickenings in your soul by a visit from Christ from time to time, these are exaltations. When you get a prospect before you of the favour of the Lord and His loving presence throughout eternity, that is an exaltation. “Before honour is humility” (Prov. 15. 33); just as before a fall is a haughty spirit (see Prov. 16. 18), so before this honour is a humble, broken spirit, a contrite heart – a humbling of yourself. God notices a man in that case, though he feels far off from Him. God says, I will look to him, I will dwell with him, to revive his heart and spirit (see Isa. 57. 15).

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5. 7). The apostle says in this Epistle, “The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles” (1 Pet. 4. 3). Did such a word ever speak to you? I verily think that if ever any word has spoken to me, that has more than once; and it has said, “What, were you born to live in this sin? Are you born again to be in bondage like this?” “Is Israel a servant? is he a homeborn slave? why is he spoiled?” (Jer. 2. 14). Says the Lord, “Has Israel no heirs?” (see Jer. 49. 1). O my friends, when God says, “The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,” it is a very solemn word. Well then, you may say, “I will try not to live so.” You are living so at the time you thus speak, because the trying or the effort that you make, or think you make, is really the fruit of pride. What then? Says the Holy Ghost, “Cast the care of your life on Me; commit the keeping of your poor, wandering, silly heart to Me; cast the care of keeping your gadding thoughts on Me; cast the care of keeping your conscience tender, of having a prayerful spirit and a reviving in that spirit – cast all that care on Me. Cast the care of coming through your troubles profitably on Me. Casting *all* your care upon Me.” Well, it is a mercy to be able to do it.

The Spirit is in the saints as the Spirit of counsel and might, and worketh in them both to will and to do. He says, “O sinner, go to thy Lord with this trouble; He invites the burdened. Take thy poor body, thy tried circumstances; take thy painful afflictions, thy sinful nature, with all

the vile propensities of thy temperament, and take the tempter with his temptations – take all these things in so many prayers in humble supplication, and cast them upon the Lord.” Why should we cast all these cares on the great God? Because He careth for us.

You will hardly be able to hold your head up under a sweet sense of this, a sweet persuasion of it, when He comes and gives it to you. Doth God care for sparrows? Doth He care for sinners? Does God care whether a sinner lives to Him or otherwise? whether one of His redeemed ones lives at Babylon or Jerusalem? whether one He has bought and quickened should live in His sabbaths or disregard them; that is, live in Christ or not? Does God care for His people? “He careth for you.” Has He given *proof* of it? Yes; hereby know we it: “Because He hath given us of His Spirit” (1 John 4. 13) – the Spirit of forgiveness, the Spirit of love, of affection, of power; the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit who testifies of Christ, and draws the soul out to Christ, and as it were, pulls the sinner through the fire of affliction from sin to Christ. This is the proof that God cares for a sinner.

“Humble yourselves therefore” under God’s mighty hand. Let me tell you this: until you are here, if now you complain of leanness you will keep it. But God can give you this humble faith, and O, He can maintain it in you. “I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day” (Isa. 27. 3). May the Lord keep us individually, who fear His name; may He bless you who do not, with a gracious spirit, a new life. May He make His Word as a holy and incorruptible seed in our hearts, that it may spring up, grow, and bring forth fruit to His glory. Amen.

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## THE ROOT GRACE OF FAITH

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303 Hangleton Road, Hove.  
December 1975

My dear Friend,

It was kind of you to write. To possess that faith which responds to the truth as preached by the Holy Spirit, and is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11. 1), is to possess a gift from heaven which transcends all the world calls good and great.

It is a root grace by which a sinner is planted in the house of God and brings forth fruit in old age.

It will be a wonder of grace to be proved at last a sinner saved by grace. In reviewing my long life, I see everything of mine to be ashamed of and everything of the Lord’s to be thankful for. My infirmities

increase, but I do pray they may not impoverish the Lord's people and send them empty away. We are passing through a hostile wilderness. Christ is the only Rock; all other ground is shifting, sinking sand. O to be fixed upon it – "Him." Such will "stand every storm, and live at last."

May the Lord be with you in your solitary path, favour you with communion in secret, through His Word and the throne of grace, and unite you in heart to those that fear God at Galeed.

Your affectionate pastor,

F.L. Gosden

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### THE ABUNDANT MERCY OF GOD

*By John Bunyan (1628-1688)*

*(Continued from page 281)*

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Fourth. As the mercies that are with the Lord are tender, great and rich, *so there is a multitude of them*, and they are called "manifold"; there is a multitude of these rich and virtuous mercies (see Psa. 69. 13). By multitude, I understand mercies of every sort or kind; mercies for this, and mercies for the other malady; mercies for every sickness, a salve for every sore. Some things that are rich and very full of virtue, have yet their excellency extending itself but to one, or two, or three things for help; and this is their leanness in the midst of their excellencies. But it is not thus with the mercy of God. Some things that are rich and virtuous, are yet so only but at certain seasons, for there are times in which they can do nothing. But it is not so with this tender, great and rich mercy of God. There are some things, though rich, that are sparingly made use of. But it is not so with this mercy of God. There is a multitude of them; so if one will not another will. There is a multitude of them; so one or other of them is always in their season. There is a multitude of them; and therefore it must not be supposed that God is niggardly as to the communicating of them.

As they are called *a multitude*, so they are called *mercies manifold*. There is no single flower in God's gospel garden, they are all double and treble; there is a wheel within a wheel, a blessing within a blessing, in all the mercies of God. Manifold; a man cannot receive one, but he receives many, many folded up, one within another. For instance,

1. If a man receiveth Christ, who is called God's tender mercy, why, he shall find in Him all the promises, pardons, justifications, righteousnesses and redemptions, that are requisite to make him stand clear before the justice of the law, in the sight of God, from sin (see Luke 1. 76-79; 1 Cor. 1. 30; Eph. 4. 32; 2 Cor. 1. 20).

2. If a man receive the Spirit, he shall have as folded up in that, for this is the first unfolding itself, many, very many mercies. He shall have the graces, the teachings, the sanctifications, the comforts, and the supports of the Spirit. When He saith in one place, He will give the Spirit, He calleth that in another place, the “good things” of God (see Luke 11. 13; Matt. 7. 11).

3. If a man receive the mercy of the resurrection of the body, and God’s people shall assuredly receive that in its time, what a bundle of mercies will be received, as wrapped up in that? He will receive perfection, immortality, heaven and glory; and what is folded up in these things, who can tell?

I name but these three, for many more might be added, to show you the plenteousness, as well as the virtuousness of the tender, great and rich mercy of God. A multitude! There is converting mercy, there is preserving mercy, there is glorifying mercy; and how many mercies are folded up in every one of these mercies, none but God can tell. A multitude! There are mercies for the faithful followers of Christ, for those of His that backslide from Him, and also for those that suffer for Him; and what mercies will by these be found folded up in their mercies, they will better know when they come to heaven. A multitude of preventing mercies in afflictions, in disappointments, in cross providences, there are with God; and what mercies are folded up in these afflicting mercies, in these disappointing mercies, and in these merciful cross providences, must rest in the bosom of Him to be revealed, who only “is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working” (Isa. 28. 29). A multitude of common mercies, of every day’s mercies, of every night’s mercies, of mercies in relations, of mercies in food and raiment, and of mercies in want of these things there is, and who can number them? David said, he daily was loaded with God’s benefits (see Psa. 68. 19). And I believe if, as we are bound, we should at all times return God thanks for all particular mercies. And all this is written, that Israel might hope in the Lord: “Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy.”

Fifth. As the mercies that are with the Lord are tender, great, rich, a multitude, and manifold; so *they are mercies that diminish not in the using*, but that rather increase in the exercising of them. Hence it is said, grace aboundeth, and hath abounded unto many; and that God is able to make all grace abound towards us (see Rom. 5. 15; 2 Cor. 9. 8; Eph. 1. 7, 8). The grace of forgiveness I mean, wherein He hath abounded towards us. Now, to abound, is to flow, to multiply, to increase, to greaten, to be more and more; and of this nature is the mercy that is with the Lord, mercy that will abound and increase in the using. Hence He is said to pardon abundantly, to pardon and multiply to pardon: and, again,

to exercise lovingkindness; to exercise it, that is, to draw it out to the length, to make the best advantage and improvement of every grain and quality of it (see Isa. 55. 7; Jer. 9. 24). “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Exod. 34. 6).

Behold, when God sets mercy to work, it is like the cloud that at first was but like a man’s hand, it increaseth until it hath covered the face of heaven. Many have found it thus, yea they have found it thus in their distress (see 1 Kings. 18. 41-44). Paul has this expression, “The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant” (1 Tim. 1. 14) that is, increased towards me exceedingly. And this is the cause of that change of thoughts that is wrought at last in the hearts of the tempted; at first they doubt, at last they hope; at first they despair, at last they rejoice; at first they quake, while they imagine how great their sins are, and how little the grace of God is; but at last they see such a greatness, such a largeness, such an abundance of increase, in this multiplying mercy of God, that with gladness of heart, for their first thoughts, they call themselves fools, and venture their souls, for the next world, and their interest in it, upon this mercy of God.

I tell you, sirs, you must not trust your own apprehensions nor judgments with the mercy of God; you do not know how He can cause it to abound; that which seems to be short and shrunk up to you, He can draw out, and cause to abound exceedingly. There is a breadth, and length, and depth, and height therein, when God will please to open it; that for the infiniteness can swallow up not only all thy sins, but all thy thoughts and imaginations, and that can also drown thee at last. “Now unto Him that is able” as to mercy, “to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3. 20, 21). This, therefore, is a wonderful thing, and shall be wondered at to all eternity, that that river of mercy, that at first did seem to be but ankle deep, should so rise, and rise, and rise, that at last it became “waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over” (Ezek. 47. 3-5). Now all this is written, that Israel might hope. “Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy.”

Sixth. As there are with God mercies, tender, great, rich, a multitude, and mercy that abounds; so to encourage us to trust in Him, *there is mercy to compass us round about*. “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about” (Psa. 32. 10). This is, therefore, the lot of the Israel of God, that they, trusting in their God, be compassed with mercy round about. This is mercy to do for us in this world, that we may arrive safely in that world which is to come. Another text saith, “For Thou, LORD, wilt bless the



righteous; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield" (Psa. 5. 12). "As with a shield." This compassing of them, therefore, is, to the end they may be defended and guarded from them that seek their hurt. When Elisha was in danger, by reason of the army of the Syrians, "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha," to deliver him (2 Kings 6. 15-17). Round about on every side; or as David hath it, "Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side" (Psa. 71. 21). "I will encamp about Mine house," saith God, "because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth (Zech. 9. 8).

This, therefore, is the reason why, notwithstanding all our weaknesses, and also the rage of Satan, we are kept and preserved in a wicked world; we are compassed round about. Hence, when God asked Satan concerning godly Job, he answered, "Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" (Job 1. 10). I cannot come at him; Thou compassest him, and keepest me out. By this, then, is that scripture opened, "Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Psa. 32. 7). And, indeed, it would be comely if we, instead of doubting and despairing, did sing in the ways of the Lord (see Jer. 31. 12). Have we not cause thus to do, when the Lord is round about us with sword and shield, watching for us against the enemy, that He may deliver us from their hand?

This also is the reason why nothing can come at us, but that it may do us good. If the mercy of God is round about us, about us on every side, then no evil thing can by any means come at us, but it must come through this mercy, and so must be seasoned with it, and must have its deadly poison, by it, taken away. Hence Paul, understanding this, saith, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8. 28). But how can that be? Did they not come to us through the very sides of mercy? and how could they come to us so, since Satan pryeth to wound us deadly in every, or in some private place, if mercy did not compass us round about, round about as with a shield? He went round about Job, to see by what hog-hole [sinful weakness] he might get at him, that he might smite him under the fifth rib.\* But, behold, he found he was hedged out round about; wherefore he could not come at him but through the sides of mercy, and therefore, what he did to him must be for good. Even thus also shall it be in conclusion with all the wrath of our enemies, when they have done what they can; by the mercy of God, we shall be made to stand. "Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief," said David, "O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually" (Psa. 52. 1). And that will sanctify to me whatever thou

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\* See 2 Sam. 2. 23; 3. 27. To smite under the fifth rib is to give a mortal blow.

doest against me! This, therefore, is another singular encouragement to Israel to hope in the Lord; for that there is with Him mercy to compass us round about.

Here is, I say, room for hope, and for the exercise thereof, when we feel ourselves after the worst manner assaulted. "Wherefore should I fear," said David, "in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?" (Psa. 49. 5). Wherefore? Why now there is all the reason in the world to fear the day of evil is come upon thee, and the iniquity of thy heels doth compass thee about. The hand of God is upon thee, and thy sins, which are the cause, stand round about thee, to give in evidence against thee, and therefore thou must fear. No, saith David, that is not a sufficient reason; "he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about." Here is ground also to pray in faith, as David, saying, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings, from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about" (Psa. 17. 8, 9).

Seventh. As all this tender, great, rich, much-abounding mercy, compasseth us about, *so that we may hope in the God of our mercy, it is said this mercy is to follow us.* "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (Psa. 23. 6). It shall follow me, go with me, and be near me, in all the way that I go (see Psa. 32. 8). There are these six things to be gathered out of this text, for the further support of our hope.

1. It shall follow us to guide us in the way. "I will guide thee with Mine eye" (Psa. 32. 8), says God, that is, in the way that thou shalt go. The way of man to the next world, is like the way from Egypt to Canaan, a way not to be wound out but by the pillar of a cloud by day, and a flame of fire by night; that is, with the Word and Spirit. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psa. 73. 24). Thou shalt guide me from the first step to the last that I shall take in this my pilgrimage: "Goodness and mercy shall follow me."

2. As God in mercy will guide, so by the same He will uphold our goings in His paths. We are weak, wherefore though the path we go in were never so plain, yet we are apt to stumble and fall. But, "When I said, My foot slippeth; Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up" (Psa. 94. 18). Wherefore we should always turn our hope into prayer, and say, Lord, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psa. 17. 5). Be not moved; let mercy follow me.

3. As the God of our mercy has mercy to guide us, and uphold us, so by the same will He instruct us when we are at a loss, at a stand. "I led Israel about," says God, "I instructed him, and kept him as the apple of Mine eye" (see Deut. 32. 10). I say we are often at a loss; David said,

after all his brave sayings, in Psalm 119, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant" (verse 176). Indeed a Christian is not so often out of the way, as he is at a stand therein, and knows not what to do. But here also is his mercy as to that. "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30. 21). Mercy follows for this.

4. Mercy shall follow to carry thee when thou art faint. We have many fainting and sinking fits as we go. "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isa. 40. 11), or upon eagles' wings. He made Israel to "ride on the high places of the earth," and "made him to suck honey out of the rock" (Deut. 32. 13).

5. Mercy shall follow us, to take us up when we are fallen, and to heal us of those wounds that we have caught by our falls. "The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down" (Psa. 145. 14). And again: "The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous" (Psa. 146. 8). Or, as we have it in another place, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with His hand" (Psa. 37, 23, 24). Here is mercy for a hoping Israelite; and yet this is not all.

6. Mercy shall follow us to pardon our sins as they are committed. For though by the act of justification, we are for ever secured from a state of condemnation, yet as we are children, we need forgiveness daily, and have need to pray, "Our Father, forgive us our trespasses." Now, that we may have daily forgiveness for our daily sins and trespasses, mercy and goodness must follow us; or as Moses has it, "And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance" (Exod. 34. 9). Join to this that prayer of his, which you find in Numbers: "Now, I beseech Thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying, The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now," or hitherto (Numb. 14. 17-19). How many times, think you, did Israel stand in need of pardon, from Egypt, until they came to Canaan? Even so many times wilt thou need pardon from the day of thy conversion to the day of death; to the which God will follow Israel, that he may "dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

*(To be concluded)*

## THE WINE OF THE KINGDOM

*Letter written by William J. Brook (1776-1811), minister at  
Providence, Brighton*

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Undated

Dear Friend,

What can I wish better than that you may drink the new wine with the Master of the feast in His kingdom? The exhortation is, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5. 23). The weak are they who stand in need of it, and those who are ready to perish, and for such it is prepared. It never inflames, gives red eyes, or breeds contentions, makes the head giddy, or the legs weak. The more copiously it is drunk, the more sober we grow, and the stronger it is, the more able we are to bear it. It never creates sickness or disgust; its flavour never loses its relish; it is best taken upon an empty stomach, and cannot be drunk too early in the morning, and if you keep at it all night, so much the better; it braces and it purges, it is a powerful astringent [binding medicine] and a gentle cathartic [purgative]; in fevers it reduces the heat, in chills it warms and invigorates, in tremblings it is a great strengthener, in low spirits it cheers and enlivens, and in great elevations it is sure to work moderation and temperance; it is good for stiffness of the joints, and excellent in all disorders of the bowels; it gives clear vision to the eyes, and is no less useful in complaints of the ears; the hands that have hung down through weakness have often felt its efficacy, and the feet that have stumbled have acknowledged its benefit; it is a great improver of the skin and complexion; and is sure to make him who uses it fat and comely, though it never can help the flesh. It is of wonderful use to the tongue, and has been known to make those who stammer speak plain, yea, and even the dumb to sing; it is of greatest use to the voice; it has changed the querulous [peevish] sounds of grief into the melodious chantings of exquisite joy; it has often made a palace of a prison, and has been seen to assuage pain in a fiery furnace; it has the happy art of making affliction pleasure, and tribulation joy.

But there are counterfeits, my friend, and these all ferment, inflame, intoxicate, create sickness, fill all places with vomit, enfeeble through their poisonous ingredients, and these meeting with the foul humours of the corruptible part, at last bring on dreadful disease, which proceeds in bloatings and swellings till the whole frame is emaciated, and death ensues. God preserve thee and thine from such spurious and destructive mixtures, and bless thee with many draughts of genuine wine. The first

is the venom of asps, the poison of dragons; the last, the pure and unadulterated juice of the red grape.

The Almighty bless my friends.

Ever yours,

W.J. Brook

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## THE BRIDE'S DESIRE FOR CHRIST'S LOVE

*An extract from James Durham (1622-1658)*

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“Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine” (Song 1. 2).

The bride begins this sweet conference in verse 2. She speaks to Christ. Her great wish is, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.”

1. By kisses, we understand most lovely, friendly, familiar and sensible manifestations of His love. Kisses of the mouth are so amongst friends, so it was betwixt Jonathan and David, and so it is especially betwixt husband and wife.

Next, there are several delightful circumstances, that heighten the bride's esteem of this, the so much desired expression of His love. The first is implied, in the Person who is to kiss; it is *Him*. “Let **Him** kiss” – He who is the most excellent and singular Person in the world. The second is hinted in the party whom He is to kiss; it is *me*. “Let Him kiss **me**,” a contemptible, despicable creature; yet this is the person this love is to be vented on. The third: wherewith is He to kiss? It is with the “kisses of His mouth,” which we conceive is not only added as an Hebraism, like that expression, “The words of His mouth,” and suchlike phrases, but also to affect herself, by expressing fully what she breathed after, viz. kisses, or love, which are the more lovely to her, that they come from His mouth, as having a sweetness in it above anything in the world. Christ's love hath such a sweetness in it.

They are kisses, in the plural number, partly to show how many ways Christ hath to manifest His love, partly to show the continuance and frequency of these manifestations, which she would be at. The thing which she here desires, is not love simply, but the sense of love; for she questions not His love, but desires to have sensible expressions of it, and therefore compares it not only to looks, that she might see Him, but to kisses; which is also clear from the reason annexed, while she compares His love to wine.

Again, her manner of designing Christ, is observable – *Him*.

i. Christ's singular excellency, which is such, that He hath no match, or equal; there is but one Him.

ii. Their singular esteem of Him, whatever others think: "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. 8. 6).

iii. A constant and habitual thinking, and meditating on Him; for though there be no connection in the words expressed, yet what is expressed, may have, and hath connection with the thoughts of her heart; and if all were seen that were within, it would be easily known what *Him* she meant. And so we are to gather its dependence on the affection, and meditation it flows from, rather than from any preceding words; for here there are none.

iv. It is to show, her thoughts of Christ were not limited, or stinted to her words, or her speaking of *Him*. For though there be no words preceding, to make known who this *Him* is spoken of, yet we may well conceive her heart taken up with desire after *Him*, and meditation on *Him*: and so there is a good coherence – "Let Him," that is, *Him* I have been thinking on, *Him* whom my soul desires, He only whom I esteem of, and who hath no equal, etc. This sort of abruptness of speech hath no incongruity [is not out of place] in spiritual rhetoric.

Whence we may observe,

i. That Christ hath a way of communicating His love, and the sense of it to a believer, which is not common to others.

ii. That this is the great scope and desire of believers, if they had their choice, it is to have sensible communion with Christ: this is their one thing (see Psa. 27. 4). It is the first and last suit of this Song, and the voice of the Spirit and bride, and the last prayer that is in the Scripture (see Rev. 22. 17 and 20).

iii. That believers can discern this fellowship (it is so sweet and sensible) which is to be had with Jesus Christ.

iv. That they have an high esteem of it, as being a special signification of His love.

v. That much inward heart fellowship with Christ, hath suitable outward expressions flowing from it.

vi. That believers in an habitual walk with Christ will be abrupt in their suits to Him, sometimes meditating on Him, sometimes praying to Him.

vii. That where Christ is known, and rightly thought of, there will be no equal to Him in the heart.

2. In the next place, she lays down the motives that made her so desire this; which are rather to set forth Christ's excellency, to strengthen her own faith, and warm her own love in pursuing after so concerning a

suit, than from any fear she had of being mistaken by Him, in being as it were, so bold and homely with Him in her desires. The sum of it is, Thy love is exceeding excellent, and I have more need, and greater esteem of it, than of anything in the world, therefore I seek after it, and hope to attain it.

There are four words here to be cleared:

1. "Thy loves" (so it is in the original, in the plural number).

i. Christ's love is sometimes (as the love of God) taken essentially, as an attribute in Him, which is Himself, "God is love" (1 John 4. 8). Thus the Lord, in His love, is the same in all times.

ii. For some effect of that love, when He doth manifest it to His people, by conferring good on them, and by the sensible intimations thereof to them. So it is (see John 14. 21, 23). We take it in the last sense here, for she was in Christ's love, but desired the manifestations of it; and it is by these that His love becomes sensible and refreshful to believers. It is loves in the plural number, although it be one infinite fountain in God, to show how many ways it vented, or how many effects that one love produced, or what esteem she had of it, and of the continuance and frequency of the manifestations thereof to her; this one love of His was as many loves.

2. The second word to be cleared, is "wine." Wine is cheering to men, and makes their heart glad (see Psa. 104. 15). Under it here is understood, what is most cheering and comfortable in its use to men.

3. Christ's love is better,

i. Simply in itself, it is most excellent.

ii. In its effects, more exhilarating, cheering, and refreshing; and,

iii. In her esteem; to me (saith she), "It is better"; I love it, prize it, and esteem it more, as Psalm 4. 7: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." This His love is every way preferable to all the most cheering and refreshing things in the world.

4. The inference, "for," is to be considered: it sheweth that these words are a reason of her suit, and so the sense runs thus: because Thy love is of great value, and hath more comfortable effects on me, than the most delightful of creatures, therefore let me have it. Out of which reasoning we may see what motive will have weight with Christ, and will sway with sincere souls in dealing with Him, for the intimation of His love, for the love of Christ, and the sweetness and satisfaction that is to be found in it, is the great prevailing motive that hath weight with them; and sense of the need of Christ's love, and esteem of it, and delight in it alone, when no creature-comfort can afford refreshing, may, and will warrant poor hungry and thirsty souls, to be pressing for the love of Christ, when they may not be without it; which shows,

i. That a heart that knows Jesus Christ, will love to dwell on the thoughts of His worth, and to present Him often to itself, as the most ravishing object, and will make use of pressing motives and arguments, to stir up itself to seek after the intimations of His love.

ii. That the more a soul diveth in the love of Christ, it is the more ravished with it, and presseth, yea, panteth the more after it: it was *Him* before: “Let Him kiss me,” as being someone afraid to speak to Him; it is now, *Thou*, “**Thy** love,” etc., as being more inflamed with love, since she began to speak, and therefore more familiarly bold, in pressing her suit upon Him.

iii. The exercise of love strengthens faith, and contrarily, when love wears out of exercise, faith dieth. These graces stand and fall together; they are lively and languish together.

iv. Where Christ’s love is seriously thought of and felt, created consolations will grow bare, and lose all relish; wine, and the best of creature-comforts will lose their savour and sweetness with such a soul, when once it is seen how good He is.

v. An high esteem of Christ, is no ill argument in pressing for, and pursuing after His presence; for to those that thus love and esteem Him, He will manifest Himself (see John 14. 21, 23).

vi. Where there hath been any taste of Christ’s love, the soul cannot endure to want it; it cannot enjoy itself, if it do not enjoy Him; this is the cordial that cheereth it in any condition, and maketh every bitter thing sweet.

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### SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

*Extract from sermon preached by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London, on Friday, April 14th, 1978*

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If you have ever been made rich to all eternity, it is through the poverty of Christ. That will make these blessings precious. How poor the Lord Jesus became that you might be made rich eternally! Look at the poverty of His birth: “No room ... in the inn” (Luke 2. 7). Look at the poverty in His temptation, forty days and nights in the wilderness. Look at His poverty day by day: “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head” (Matt. 8. 20). Look at His poverty in His life; look at His poverty in His death. Especially you see it in His sin-atonement sufferings in Gethsemane, and in the judgment hall, and at Calvary. How low the blessed Redeemer sank in poverty there! Then look at His poverty in His burial. He rode to



Jerusalem on a borrowed ass, and was buried in a borrowed grave. The poverty of the Lord Jesus! "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1. 10, 11). The poverty of the Lord Jesus! "He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53. 3). The poverty of the Lord Jesus! "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9). Now that will make the riches of Christ precious to you because they come to sinners through His poverty.

"Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop;  
Thou that art the people's hope;  
Thou wast poor, that they might be  
Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee."

What are these riches that the Lord Jesus abundantly bestows upon His people? The riches of an interest in His atonement, the riches of His precious blood, the riches of His dying love, the riches of His glorious righteousness, the riches of His promises, the riches of His great salvation, the riches of eternal life, the riches of "safety on earth, and, after death, the plenitude of heaven." These are the heavenly riches that the Lord Jesus freely bestows upon His poor, unworthy people, and if your religion is real, you will highly value them. In a word it is this: to possess Christ Himself. If you have Christ, you are rich indeed, and if you are without Christ, whatever you may possess, you are of all men most miserable. He is the "Pearl of great price"; if we possess Him we possess the "Pearl of great price." Then, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3. 8). "The Pearl of great price": "He that finds this is rich indeed"! "A merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13. 45, 46). The world is seeking goodly pearls, such goodly pearls as these: happiness, peace, joy and contentment. These are goodly pearls; but the world can never find them, the world never *will* find them. But by divine teaching you will be shown there is "one Pearl of great price," and you will be willing in the day of divine power to part with everything else that you may possess this one thing. If you find Christ you have all.

O the solemnity of being without God:

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

## A SINNER SAVED BY FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE

*Memorial of George Frost, for twenty-one years Pastor of  
Rehoboth Baptist Chapel, Jarvis Brook, Sussex, written by his widow*

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My dear husband was born at Tollesbury, in the county of Essex, on March 13th, 1834. He was brought up to attend the Established Church with his parents until the year 1853, when in the providence of God we were brought together in marriage, after which he attended chapel with me. Neither of us having reached the age of twenty, we were full of the world and its pleasures, led captive by the devil at his will, determined to have our fill of it. Notwithstanding, the Lord –

“Watched o’er our path,  
While Satan’s blind slaves, we sported with death.”

Once in particular, when at sea, a severe storm arose. Many around him sank with their vessels to rise no more, yet he – being immortal until God had fulfilled His purpose – was washed into the harbour, and saved from destruction.

Nothing took place to mar our peace and happiness until the year 1862, when the Lord saw fit to lay upon him His afflicting hand, which, according to outward appearance, was for death; but in mercy the Lord saw fit to raise him up again. He declared that during that period eternity, or how he stood for it, never crossed his mind. But on leaving him alone in his room, while attending chapel, the arrow of conviction entered his never-dying soul. On my return I saw grief stamped upon his face, and concluding he was not so well, said, “I wish I had not left you.” He answered, “I am no worse in body.” He went to bed, but not to sleep, his poor soul being tortured with the pains of hell, which “gat hold upon him.” For fourteen days or nights he did not rest. I entreated him to tell me what was the matter.

I being ignorant of a work of grace at the time, it was impossible for me to understand his case; my dear husband also dreaded that anyone should know that he was religious – he intended to keep it all to himself. But the Lord had determined otherwise, that he should be as a light to the whole house. However, I could give him no rest until he had told me his trouble, upon which he broke out and said, “I shall as surely go to hell as I am born.” He said, “You remember that evening you left me. I was not thinking of any such thing, when the words thrust themselves into my mind, ‘What a wonderful thing it must be to be born again!’” and so he proved it, for during those fourteen nights he had a dream or a vision, he knew not which. He lost himself for a time, never expecting to return into this world again. It appeared to him as though he was sinking into

hell. He felt himself sinking gradually lower and lower; one more space and he felt he must have dropped into the pit. Just at that moment a cry went forth from his heart and lips, "Lord, save, or I shall sink to rise no more!" This cry continued, and for some time did he beseech God to appear, but he got no answer. He cried and shouted, but God appeared to shut out his cry – the heavens appeared as brass. But being brought into that spot, in his agony to fall down and none to help, he said, "Once more will I look," when he declared he felt the arms of everlasting love and power put under him, raising him up, and the Lord spoke these words: "I have raised thee up from the pit of destruction to reign with Me for ever and ever, and the powers of hell shall have no dominion over you."

Well do I remember him walking about blessing and praising his God. And like many of the Lord's people, he not only wanted to get to heaven to see Him as He is, but declared his life was short upon earth. He said, "I am quite willing to depart from a world of sin to be with Christ, which would be far better." But –

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform."

Soon after this deliverance the Lord spoke home these words with power: "I will make you a fisher of men."\* (This he kept to himself for many years.) He answered, "Lord, how can this thing be, seeing I am so ignorant?" which tried him exceedingly. Nevertheless, his soul being full of the love of God, he had a desire to –

"Tell to poor sinners round  
What a dear Saviour he had found,"

and felt, "Surely I shall one day speak in His holy name." After which this labour wore off, then he felt more at ease, it being a little comfort to him to get free from the painful exercise.

But in due time it returned with double force, which in the hands of the Spirit led several of the old friends (who used to meet to worship in a house), feeling the force and weight both in his prayer and conversation, to meet, and invite him to attend the meeting. Not knowing their intentions, on his arrival, they, being alone, said to him, "We are about to ask the Lord to bestow a blessing upon both you and us," upon which they handed him the Bible, and said, "Now, friend Frost, we desire you should read wherever you like, and should anything strike your mind with light and power, speak it out." So doing, one of the friends arose, and pleaded with God in prayer, if His blessed will and right in His sight

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\* He was a fisherman by profession.

for him to take that step which was so powerfully impressed upon their minds, that He would help him and make it plain to both parties, upon which he took the Bible, full of trembling, and read a portion and spoke with power. It being so commended to their souls, they said to him, "Friend, you must be silent no longer. We need someone to speak to us" (this being the people Mr. Isaac Lewis was over before he settled at Staplehurst). But what he passed through from this time until the Lord gave him a fleece wet, I can never tell out – nor could he. At times he had such light that some remarked that he had more light than others who had been in the way for years. But as he went about, he continually begged of God to make it over to him again what He had told him.

One night as he lay upon his bed begging for another proof He would make him a fisher of men, the Lord spoke these words: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. 3. 8). He said, "Lord, I am willing to go wherever Thou art pleased to send me, even if into the Church of England – this actually came to pass, December 23rd, 1885.

From this time he spoke to the people before-named, feeling a strong attachment to them; he felt he should live and die with them. But some time after, these people were obliged to remove to another place – at Salcot – where my dear husband had many refreshing seasons, which abode much upon his spirit for some considerable time. But this was not the place for him to stay, the Lord knowing that, to meet the cases of His poor, tried and afflicted people, he must first go into the wilderness, there to be tempted and suffer, that there might be a conformity to a suffering Christ – that he might be led to speak a word of comfort to those of His dear people who were likewise tempted. So the Lord hid His face, and permitted the angry powers of hell to attack his soul with double force, suggesting to him that he was deceived, and all was a delusion. This led him to that part of experience to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Under this fearful temptation, he was determined to make an end of it, upon which he left home, resolved in his own mind never to return, but to seek a place where he could lie down and die, feeling God had forsaken him and no man cared for his soul.

In rambling, he came to a gate, upon which he leaned. Casting his eyes around to see where there was a quiet spot, his eye rested upon a path. He started to find the end, expecting it would lead him to a suitable place, but he did not reach the end, when suddenly the thought came to his mind, "You have been from home a long time. Your poor wife will be in trouble, and you will bring her as low as yourself," when something said, "Return – make the best of it! Who can tell?" He therefore started to retrace his steps, but had proceeded but a short distance when the Lord

came with sweet power into his soul and applied these words: "I will pour the oil of gladness into thy heart in abundance." He looked up and said, "What, me, Lord?" and the Lord answered, "Yes, thee." In looking round, he saw a man over the hedge, and he concluded that the man must have heard him. However, he took no notice, but returned home, overflowing with the love of God in his poor soul. This lasted upon him for some time. It was indeed a soul-refreshing time, his cup ran over, which established him in the faithfulness and unchanging love of God, which he proved amidst all his sorrows down to his latest breath.

Up to this time he had never been led to see that the ordinance of believers' baptism was the only scriptural way into the church militant, and was the Lord's command; yet not without many exercises, especially considering the churches he then supplied were Baptist churches – also the one he took charge over – and felt they could receive him only as a supply.

But the Lord's time came to convince him of this also. It happened on one occasion that he had got one first Lord's day at liberty, and he concluded that he would spend that day with a friend of his at a farm near Coggeshall, so that he might be favoured to hear a Mr. Powell, having heard a good report of him from many of his friends. So taking this opportunity we drove to Coggeshall, and heard him with pleasure and profit. After the morning service we took dinner with some strangers, keeping it quiet as to who we were. We went again in the afternoon, and again had a refreshing season.

After the sermon the minister arose, looked round, and said, "Friends, if there is any friend here from any other church of the same faith and order, they are at liberty to sit down with us. But they must be washed or baptized persons before they can sit down to their Father's table." This the Lord sent home with power, convincing him of his disorderly and disobedient walk, so much that he got no rest until he had put on the Lord by an open profession.

He went on from day to day, but the weight became so heavy he said to me, "I must write to Mr. Powell, and tell him what my disobedience has cost me, seeing the Lord has done such great things for me." The length of time I am unable to state. But whenever he took up the Word of God, his eyes would rest upon those scriptures respecting disobedience. This compelled him to make a venture, and take the step. He did so, and made a clear confession to Mr. Powell, and wished him to baptize him, upon which he received a reply: "If you can give a good account of your religion and its beginning, I will do so." Upon this it was arranged for him to meet the church at Coggeshall on Friday, March 21st, 1877. He gave in his testimony, and was received by all, and it was agreed for him to be baptized on the following Sunday.

Here God moved in a mysterious way to accomplish His ends. He laid His afflicting hand upon the minister, which prevented him from being able to baptize him. However, they tried all in their power to get a supply, but all attempts proved in vain. We having driven near upon ten miles for this purpose, my husband began to sink in his mind, fearing after all nothing would come out of it.

The friends where we stayed, living a distance out of Coggeshall, drove into the town to see if they could be more successful, as they felt anxious. During their absence, my husband, being in great trouble, left the room. The lady of the house, not knowing where he was, went in search, and found him lying on the couch in another room. On entering he said, "Your husband will return with the news, they can get no minister." She said, "Mr. Frost, do you think our people will act like that?" Said he, "I can say nothing of your people. This I will say, You will get no minister." This put us all into confusion, he having told us nothing of what the Lord had spoken to him about.

When our friends returned, the reply was as predicted. "The time," said he, "is too short for anyone to get off." Our eyes at once fixed upon my husband, wondering how he should know. However, it was so, and the Lord had furnished him with a subject, which he himself was to speak from. This seemed to us so remarkable, as the old minister requested that Mr. Frost should preach himself – as he had before spoken in the Lord's name – and then suggested that the senior deacon should baptize him, which came to pass. This he kept all to himself until he arose in the pulpit. Then he told the friends how he came by his text, which convinced him there would be no minister to preach to them that day.

Notwithstanding it being a wet day, the chapel was full, the pool being open. My husband ascended the pulpit in his baptizing dress. Many were unable to make the stranger out. He first read a chapter and commented upon it, and preached from Mark 16. 16 : "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." As he got well into his subject one old gentleman cried out, "He is the right sort; this will do. It is him," meaning he was like his old pastor.

The Lord having favoured him in speaking, he came out of the pulpit, went into the water, and was baptized by the deacon in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. As he went under the water, his face shone. It was stated by those present that they had never witnessed the like before. He came out of the water and addressed the people under the sweet anointing of God the Holy Ghost, telling them how he became a Baptist, and what led him to take the step. I think there was scarce a dry eye in the chapel.

After taking dinner, he preached to the friends in the afternoon. The deacon administered the ordinance, and took him into the church by

giving him the right hand of fellowship, wishing him God's blessing, and told him that "wherever a door was opened to him to preach those blessed truths as revealed to him, he was to do so, the Lord having told him that He had set before him an open door, which no man could shut." This he proved, for men and devils tried hard to do it.

*(To be concluded)*

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Memorial of George Frost** (of Jarvis Brook); paperback; 110 pages; price £3.30; compiled by B. Wickins; republished by Matthew Burgess and obtainable from [www.lulu.com/matthewburgess](http://www.lulu.com/matthewburgess) or Matthew Burgess, 16 Harvesters Way, Weaving, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5SJ.

This profitable book was first published by Benjamin Wickins, and printed by Farncombe and Son in 1906. The short account of George Frost's life is being serialised in this month's and next month's *Gospel Standard*, God willing. The reader will find a simple and humble account of a man taught of God and separated by God unto the work of the gospel ministry. An unusual incident in the narrative is that George Frost had to preach at his own baptism, as the expected minister was unable to come as he was unwell, and he was baptized by the deacon.

In addition to the short account of the life of George Frost, there is an account of his funeral. Mr. James Dickens of Rotherfield officiated; there was also an address by Mr. Robert Webb of Plumstead. This is followed by a funeral sermon preached by James Dickens on Lord's day, November 6th, 1904. There are also a few letters written by George Frost and four sermons. Three of these were preached at Jarvis Brook, and one at Christ Church, Crowborough Cross.

George Frost was favoured with a triumphant end to his pilgrimage. We will hope to insert some of his dying sayings at the conclusion of the memoir in the next number, God willing. A sinner saved by grace!

God moves in mysterious ways. George Frost of Jarvis Brook preached at the funeral service of his friend, Isaac Lewis of Staplehurst. George Frost was born at Tollesbury, Essex, and Isaac Lewis at Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Tollesbury is approximately nine miles north of Burnham-on-Crouch (longitude). Both were fishermen. George Frost was appointed pastor at Jarvis Brook in the High Weald of East Sussex, and Isaac Lewis was appointed pastor at Staplehurst in the Low Weald of Kent (commonly known as the Vale of Kent). These two villages are approximately eighteen miles distant, as the crow flies. In youthful days unknown to each other; in adult days, "brethren in Christ."

We can truly recommend this book.

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Friendship with God makes enmity against Satan.

*James Janeway*

## HEART LONGINGS

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O Jesus! methinks could I always delight  
 To dwell on Thy Person and love,  
 'Twould meeten me well for that glorious sight  
 Which I hope to e'er gaze on above.

But here, in this wilderness, briar and thorn  
 Entangle and oft tear my feet,  
 And burdens and cares come as oft as the morn,  
 And Thou art my only retreat.

O could I but closely and constant abide  
 At Thy dear once nail-piercèd feet,  
 And bathe in the stream which once flowed from Thy side,  
 Till with Thee in glory I meet.

Lord, help me my lot in this vale to endure,  
 And yield to Thy sovereign will,  
 Persuaded Thy promise is faithful and sure,  
 "To the end I'll deliver thee still."

And when the last conflict shall dim these frail eyes,  
 And all things recede which are vain,  
 Then may my freed spirit triumphantly rise,  
 With Thee in Thy heaven to reign.

Author Unknown

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## NOTICE OF DEATH

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This is a belated notice.

**Alan Victor Buggins**, a deacon for approximately eighteen years at Hope Chapel, Sedgley, died on Tuesday, January 16th, 2018, aged 77 years. Our late friend was a faithful deacon but very afflicted in recent years, and we believe his sufferings are now over. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4. 9).

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The more pain, and the more night-watching, and the more fevers, the better. A soul bleeding to death till Christ were sent for, and cried for in all haste, to come and stem the blood, and close up the hole in the wound with His own hand and balm, were a very good disease, when many are dying of a whole heart.

*Samuel Rutherford*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
NOVEMBER 2018

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

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**FLEEING TO CHRIST**

“I flee unto Thee to hide me” (Psa. 143. 9).

David prayed this prayer desiring to be delivered from his enemies. In his early days he was hunted from pillar to post by Saul, and later was often engaged in conflict with the enemies surrounding Israel. As it was with David in the good providence of God over him, so it is with God’s dear people today, with much opposition, much temptation, much weakness and a powerful adversary, and worse than all, a sinful heart called “an evil heart of unbelief” (Heb. 3. 12). As Joseph Hart expresses,

“Mighty enemies without,  
Much mightier within.”

The pilgrim’s life here below is a life of fleeing unto Him of whom the psalmist declares, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psa. 46. 1). He also says in precious faith, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee” (Psa. 56. 3). The Lord’s dear people are having to flee continually to their dear Saviour from the power of sin, the love of sin, and the effect of sin. David pleads, “The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring Thou me out of my distresses” (Psa. 25. 17). Our troubles are many and varied, such as temptation, affliction, poverty, persecution, evil men, and fiery trials of all sorts, together with that cruel enemy, Satan, who harries the pilgrims at every turn and step. Job in his manifold distress, said by faith, “The righteous also shall hold on his way” (chapter 17. 9). In spite of all their troubles, the just men who live by faith are found in this safe exercise of soul: “I flee unto Thee to hide me.”

Jesus is the blessed hiding place. “And a Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa. 32. 2). In a Psalm of David, we read, “Thou art my hiding place”; and those who flee to Jesus and look to, and trust in Him alone, confessing their sin and unworthiness, shall prove the sweet truth of the whole verse: “Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah” (Psa. 32. 7).

Not only does the church of God flee unto their Redeemer in all their many troubles, but they have to flee as sinners with their sins, to be

saved by the exceeding riches of the grace of God which are in Christ Jesus. There is nowhere else to flee to as a poor and needy sinner. We have to flee knowing the shame of the power of sin, and also the shame of the love of sin. The sorrows of life and all personal troubles are the effect of sin, and culminate in the fruit of sin which is death, and which steadily draws near. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1. 15). Jesus is that glorious hiding place from the curse of the law, and that sure refuge from a well-deserved hell. O how blessed Immanuel truly is! "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15. 2).

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me;  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

If the Lord Jesus is our hiding place, then truly our hiding place is in God. For Jesus and His Father are One. "I and My Father are One" (John 10. 30). And if God is our hiding place, then Jesus is our hiding place for ever and for ever. Yes, our hiding place in all our soul and providential troubles throughout the time of our sojourning here below; our hiding place in the hour and article of death; our hiding place at the grand assize when all the books shall be opened and everything recorded shall be brought to light. Then the blessed Lamb of God shall lead all those who hid in Him by precious faith in this time state, "shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. 7. 17). There is no need of a hiding place in eternal bliss, for nothing can trouble the happy songsters, as they, in oneness of spirit, gaze upon the lovely Lamb in the midst of the throne and sing the song of the redeemed for ever and for ever; for they are then with God.

"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
O receive my soul at last!"

May the Lord grant us this blessing above all blessings: "To be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23).



Christ dwells in that heart most eminently that hath emptied itself of itself.  
*Thomas Brooks*

## SETTING THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE US

*Sermon preached by Mr. Norman Roe at Ebenezer Chapel, Ossett, on  
Lord's day evening, July 6th, 1969*

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**Text:** "I have set the LORD always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psa. 16. 8).

This is undoubtedly a Psalm of David, and in the heading it is termed a golden Psalm (margin). What precious things are contained in it! Undoubtedly this Psalm has reference to the blessed Person and work of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Peter quotes from it in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, saying these very words: "I have set the LORD always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved," and so on, with the last three verses showing how they blessedly refer to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As David was a prophet, so he spake of those things which were to come.

It is true that this is a Psalm full of the Lord Jesus Christ, that in it Christ is All and in all. Yet we must remember this, when God spake by His servants the prophets and the psalmist, and when also later on in the New Testament dispensation by the apostles in their epistles, that God did not speak through them as though they were merely robots. They were the means He used, truly for setting forth the precious truths of His Word; and those things of which they spake and testified contained in them, as in this Psalm, deep, full and gracious truths concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet they were also the very experience of David's soul. All the Lord's sent servants that He used in the proclamation of His truth, experienced and proved the truth of those things they spake, walking them out in their daily life. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and many other prophets of the Old Testament, were called as the servants of the Lord to speak and testify of those things which God gave them to declare – being wholly taken up with that message. Everything that concerned them in their private life, in their walk and conversation, was subject to this one end: the service of their Lord and Master.

This particularly came to me in reading the eighth chapter of Isaiah, where the Lord blessed Isaiah with a son, and we see how that even in his family, his children were subject to this one end: the service of God and the glory of His name. In the names that were given to the two children of Isaiah, there was that wherein God testified unto Israel, in the one of His judgments, and in the other of His mercy towards them. As Isaiah said, "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 8. 18). We see this in Ezekiel also, where the Lord declared to Ezekiel that He would take away the desire of his eyes from him. Why was the

wife of Ezekiel taken away from him? For a sign to Israel of impending judgments. My friends, the Word of God bears this out, that when one is called to be a servant of the Lord God of hosts, all that he has, all that concerns him, is made subordinate to this one end: the service of the Lord, for Him to use as He sees fit, to His own honour and glory, however painful to the flesh and their carnal nature.

So in these Psalms of David there is the very experience of his own soul breathed out. I believe this is what makes them so sweet and precious to the living family of God. True, there are also in them those deep, profound truths of God, but in them also is His doctrine that drops as the rain, and His speech that distils as the dew (see Deut. 32. 2). As David speaks in this Psalm, he sets forth those things which he himself had handled, tasted and felt of the good word of life. There is a blessed fulness in this Psalm. It is difficult to separate one portion of it to speak from, my friends. We can but, as it were, touch the fringes of it, and try to set forth before you a few things concerning it.

“I have set the LORD always before me.” Now this was pre-eminently so in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ as He lived and ministered here below, as He dwelt and tabernacled amongst men. The one bent of His heart, the one concern in all that He did, what was it? His one concern was the honour and glory of His heavenly Father. Everything came, my friends, into subordination unto this one end: the honour and glory of the name of a thrice Holy God. I have said this before – you no doubt have heard me say it – that it is one of the precious things of the gospel, one that makes it, my friends, so glorious in the eyes of His own dear people as rightly taught of the Holy Spirit, that the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, the salvation that saves a sinner from his sins and brings him at last into that blessed abode with God Himself, glorifies God. In other words, God is glorified in the salvation of a sinner.

This principle was pre-eminently seen in the life of the Lord Jesus, but I believe that in measure the same blessed principle will be seen in all that are led and taught of the Holy Spirit. David found it so in his soul’s experience as he says, “I have set the LORD always before me.” Not now and again was the Lord set before him, but the continual bent of his heart and the constant concern of his life was to this one end: the Lord, and the honour and glory of His great name.

“I have set the LORD always before me,” was constantly in his view – what the Lord had spoken, what He had promised unto him. The things of God were the continual employment, as it were, of his soul. Ah, in all those things in which he was engaged, there was this blessedly manifest: the fear of God in his life, walk and conversation. You will say, Wait a

minute; look at those things of which David was guilty. True, my friends, David was a sinful man; David was guilty of some heinous sins. Ah, but does not this show forth that of which the apostle speaks, and which is the case of each one this side of the grave, taught of the Holy Spirit, that there is in them two natures, which not only caused David, but also the apostle to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7. 24). This is the point. David had a principle in his soul, as the apostle speaks of in the seventh of Romans, where he not only says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" not only that which he groaned under and which I believe in measure the Lord's people do groan under, not only the negative side of religion was experienced; there was a blessed positive side as well: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (verse 22). He had another principle in his members that was God-ward, which was for the honour and glory of God, implanted through divine power in his soul, that went out after and towards the Lord as we have in the words of the psalmist: "I have set the LORD always before me."

One was much struck in reading the second Epistle of Peter during this last week. In the first chapter, Peter makes this statement: "That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (verse 4). Consider, my friends, the import of these words: "Ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." When the Lord begins a work of divine grace within the soul, a person is made a partaker of the divine nature, which is spiritual life as set forth in the Word of God. Is it possible that a sinner can be a partaker of the divine nature – that such a jewel as this can dwell within such a casket of dust and ashes, as His people are in and of themselves? Wonder above wonders that it is so! What a blessed and divine truth! This treasure in earthen vessels blessedly evidences exercise after Him and for the things of God.

Have we this spiritual life within our souls, this of which the psalmist speaks, of which the apostle testifies, which the Word of God sets forth? Ah, we can speak and I trust we feel it when we speak it, of a sinful nature, that which is to be mourned over, to be confessed before the Lord. But have we that also which under the gracious Spirit's teaching goes along with it, that principle that is God-ward? You know, the Apostle John, in his Epistle comes very close in these things. He says, "And he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3. 9). O what a fulness in those words, but so it is in each one born again of the Holy Spirit: they have that principle of divine life within, which cannot sin, because it is born of God, that which as it were is habitually towards God, for and after the things of God.

“I have set the LORD always before me.” Now if this spiritual life is in your soul and mine, it will evidence itself, as the Lord Jesus Christ declares, “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7. 20). Here was the evidence and the fruit in the life of the psalmist: “I have set the LORD always before me.” Ah, where was found the constant bent of his soul? Was it not in looking toward the Lord?

We find the Lord time and time again throughout the Word of God, directing His people to this one blessed end, to look to Him only. In the eighth chapter of Isaiah, the prophet, as taught by the Lord, was bidden to speak unto the children of Israel, and not to them only, but to the living family of God in all ages (and how necessary are these words in our day and generation): “Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread” (Isa. 8. 13). Is not the same truth set forth in the words of David, “I have set the LORD always before me,” which was to look constantly, continually and alone to the Lord?

Israel in Isaiah’s time was threatened by the army of the Assyrians, and amongst the inhabitants of Jerusalem were those that were for a confederacy with Egypt, who said something like this: “Let us go down into Egypt and seek help of Pharaoh.” God speaks a solemn woe to them that go down unto Egypt for help, that trust in horses and chariots, because they are many (see Isa. 30. 2, 31.1). Ah, He says, “Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.” The host of the Assyrians that opposed Israel was great. Israel were weak in themselves; they had no power, no might against this great company that came up against them, but the word was, “Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself.”

David says, “I have set the LORD always before me.” He was looking toward the Lord. However great his weakness, however many were his fears and tremblings, however great the enemy that came against him, we find David running to this one source of help, consolation and strength. He was shut up unto the Lord, in and for all things.

So, my friends, it is our wisdom, as led and taught of the Holy Spirit, in all our needs to be found looking alone to the Lord. How prone we find our hearts when trouble comes in our path, when tribulations beset us, when difficulties arise, to lean upon an arm of flesh. But the Lord will teach us, if we are His, the folly of this action. I have not lived many years upon this earth, but I believe that the Lord has taught me this, and of late one has felt it more and more: the vanity, the foolishness of putting our confidence in an arm of flesh. O this never will avail, never will be of help to us in the time of need. It is as a broken reed, that whoso leaneth upon shall pierce his hand. Ah, what a solemn woe is there in the Word of God upon such vain confidence! O for this

constancy in our souls, as it was with David: "I have set the LORD always before me," to look to Him alone in all our times of need.

Read the experience again of David, as set forth in the Word of God – as a shepherd lad when he kept his father's flock, in insignificance as the youngest of his father's sons. He recounts to Saul when he came to go forth against Goliath, how a lion and a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock and he slew them, but, "The LORD ... delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear" (1 Sam. 17. 37). "I have set the LORD always before me," was the principle manifested in his heart even in his younger days. In all the trials and the difficulties that he encountered, we find him time and again, going unto the Lord, the only refuge of his soul, and strength on which he could rely.

A mere lad going out against Goliath. O, some might say, what a foolish thing for a raw youth, as David, to go against a man of war like Goliath. But, "I have set the LORD always before me," was blessedly true as his eye was towards the Lord God of hosts with a trust in His great and holy name. David said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand" (1 Sam. 17. 45, 46).

My friends, David was blessed with faith and confidence in God, with a single eye toward Him and a humble trust in His great and holy name, that the Lord would hear, answer, and do for him in his time of need. My friends, we find this time and again in the life and experience of David and so it is the same even today in the experience of the Lord's people. They that trust in Him shall never be ashamed, no, shall never be brought to confusion – David was not.

"I have set the LORD always before me." What wisdom is there in this for you and me. O may the Lord so teach us. Is your path trying, my friends? Is it difficult at this time? Are there those things in it which you fear will be the very end of you at times? Why does your way so bow you down? You say, you feel your own utter weakness and sinfulness and the greatness of the difficulty in your path. O what wisdom here, to know this same precious truth as David: "I have set the LORD always before me." Remember this: weak as you are, yet He is strong. Remember this as well: the Lord reigneth, as David speaks in another place: "The LORD liveth; and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted" (Psa. 18. 46).

Ah, my friends, however great your need, however great your weakness, you have a great God; remember that. O this is what David felt and kept in view, as blessedly taught of the Holy Spirit. This was the One he went to in his troubles and in his trials as he was graciously led

of the Spirit. You know, we often speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as the All and in all to His people, but how little of the walking out of it is there in our experience. When things go wrong, when trials and difficulties come into our path, how prone to complain, how prone to discontent, how little do we find of that looking alone to the Lord. O my friends, it is a great mercy, an unspeakable mercy, if those things which the Lord brings into our path, cause us to be shut up alone to the Lord.

“I have set the LORD always before me.” He was set before him as the only Refuge of his soul. He was set before him as the blessed Object of his love. My friends, when we rightly view these things, O how true is this – What is there to be found in the things of this present time state? Change and decay is written upon them all. “Vanity of vanities,” says the wise man, “all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccles. 1. 2, 14), but in the Lord there is a blessed fulness, peace for the soul, and joy and gladness to be obtained. Why, my friends, as our affections are set upon the Lord alone, His people rest and rejoice in Him even in the midst of their severest trials.

I have been reading again lately in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, and O my friends, as we read the account of what the Lord’s people suffered for His name’s sake, how this blessed spirit is manifested: “I have set the LORD always before me.” It was manifested in their lives – “they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12. 11), when called forth to suffer for His name’s sake. Where would we be if these things were so in our day and generation? How many of us would be found here this evening if we had to meet in the fear of our lives? I know the Word of God declares that “as thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. 33. 25), but we do well to examine our hearts in the light of these things. In those that suffered in past days for His name’s sake, there was manifest in them the blessed truth of the work of divine grace in their souls. What was the Lord Jesus to them? Not a mere myth, not a cunningly devised fable. He was to them as He was to David here,

“A living, bright reality,  
More present to faith’s vision keen  
Than any outward object seen;  
More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than e’en the sweetest earthly tie.”

O may Jesus Christ be so in your experience and mine, as David knew the comfort, the strength and the consolation of Him in his own soul’s experience.

Blessed truth, this: “I have set the LORD always before me.” In the light of the things that have been mentioned, how little do we know! There is still much land to be possessed in your experience and mine.



We are still only upon the fringes of these things. O that the Lord may so teach us in the things of God that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My friends, the Lord Jesus is as real to His own dear people today as He was to those in the times of David, and also when He was here upon this earth. Let me ask this question: Is the Lord Jesus real to you and me this evening? My friends, is there that within our souls which goes forth after Him? Is there that blessed attraction in the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Ah, may each one of us, through the Lord's goodness and mercy, be enabled to answer in the affirmative.

One was much grieved during this last week to read, my friends, in the national press (I do not often touch upon these things, but it is well worth bringing before you this evening) the proposal this next week to put a man on the moon. The merits of it I leave, but this statement was made: that it will be the most momentous event in the history of man. O how short sighted is man, even though exalted with the wisdom that he has, even though men go to such great lengths, how short sighted. The greatest, the most momentous thing in the history of man! Never, my friends. There is something far greater, more momentous than that, and that is the blessed coming and incarnation of the Lord Jesus into this sinful world. See how great have been the results of it. O what fruit has it produced in the history of the world, in the history of nations, in the history, my friends, of individuals. May we be brought by divine grace to know the momentousness of it within our own souls.

Ah, while men are engaged in seeking after those things which can be of no real, spiritual profit to their souls, may we – and especially would I address these words to our younger friends – be found seeking after this momentous truth. There is something real in religion, be assured of that. There is that which David found here, as the Lord was constantly set before him, a sweet and blessed communion with the Lord, and from this he drew all his strength, all that he needed, the only trust and stay of his soul. So remember this, my friends: whatever you may attain to, whatever lengths you may go to in this world, if you are short of this, you are lost and undone. There is nothing before you but an eternity of condemnation and banishment from the Lord.

"I have set the LORD always before me." God was real to David; is He real to you and me? Ah, he says, "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." God was at his right hand, as the psalmist speaks in the 109th Psalm: "He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul" (verse 31). The Lord was at his right hand as a delivering God, as a supporting God, as a keeping God. As the 121st Psalm says, "The LORD is thy Keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand" (verse 5). The Lord was the One that led him

and directed him in the way he should go, even in the way of the Lord's commandments.

Ah, he says, "I shall not be moved." The soul that has been brought by divine grace to stay upon Jesus, shall not be moved. Not all the things that he passes through in this time state shall ever move him off that one foundation. Ah, not all the power of Satan and hell itself. My friends, even death itself at last shall not move a soul from off this foundation, but shall be the means whereby he enters into the fulness of what David speaks in these words, "I have set the LORD always before me.... Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." What a sweet view here did the psalmist have of the resurrection and glorification of the great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the resurrection, life and glorification of His people in Him.

O that we could say with Job, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19. 26, 27). To die in hope – hope of what? Hope of the resurrection of the dead. My friends, what a blessed and glorious truth is this to the church and the people of God and how prone we are to forget it. How concerned we are with the things of this present time state, and it is right and proper to be concerned with them in their place, but I mean an undue concern with them. How little do we think and meditate upon that which God has provided. As the Lord was always set before him, so David's eyes were upon that which the Lord had provided. O this was what his soul was enabled to rejoice in, even in times of severe trials and tribulations, that there was an end to these things. As the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to His own disciples, "The things concerning Me have an end" (Luke 22. 37), and what a glorious and blessed end did those things have, even the salvation of His people. So with the Lord's own people, the things concerning them have an end – they shall not live here always – there is provided for them an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation (see 1 Pet. 1. 4, 5).

Ah, there is a blessed rest that remains for the people of God, a keeping of an eternal Sabbath. Ah, my friends, what a blessed constraint is this to the soul as led and taught by the Holy Spirit. The Lord is always set before God's people, even as the blessed Spirit teaches them to live trusting in and dependent upon Him, and there is that time coming when He shall take them to Himself. O to be enabled to enter into the words of the hymnwriter – one trusts one knows a little of it, and something of the sweetness of it in one's own soul:

“I feel this mud-walled cottage shake,  
And long to see it fall;  
That I my willing flight may take  
To Him who is my All.”

You know, my friends, unless there is within your soul and mine, that delight in God, and in the Lord Jesus while here below, there will be no delight in Him through eternity. Ah, the apostle could say, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1. 21). Many, I fear, have this desire, that for them to die will be gain, but they forget the important part of it – is for them to live, Christ? Is the Lord always set before them, as He was in the experience of David? If through grace, for us to live is Christ, then to die will be gain.

Ah, he says, “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.” We know the next two verses indeed refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not left to see corruption; He rose again the third day from the dead, and in His rising again there is the blessed reality set forth, that those that die in Christ shall rise again through Him at the last great resurrection morn. O what a mercy, my friends, to die in Christ! Ah, this is but a going home, a departing from this sinful world into His immediate glory and presence.

“I have set the LORD always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” David could rest in this: come what may, whatever lay before him, the Lord was the portion of his soul and his inheritance for ever. So through grace may we prove it.

May the Lord add His blessing. Amen.

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## GRACIOUS COUNSEL TO THE REDEEMED

*By Elisha Coles (1608?-1688)*

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If Christ gave Himself a ransom for the elect, then is redemption also of grace, and free as election itself, which bespeaks both our thankful remembrance, and all self-denial. There is a great aptness to forget our original; to pay tribute where it is not due, and to withhold it where it is. It was needful counsel of old, and no less at this day, “Ye that follow after righteousness ... look unto the rock whence ye are hewn” (Isa. 51. 1). Your Redeemer first brought you out of nothing, and when you had sold yourselves for nought, He Himself became your ransom, though He needed you not. See therefore that ye ascribe all to His love. It was not any excellence of yours that gave you preference in redemption, nor was it your ingenuous [innocent or artless] compliance that made redemption effectual to you (these are slight pretences). Had

not your Redeemer bought you from yourself, released you from your imaginary freedom, and saved you from unbelief, you had never known what this redemption had meant, nor what it is to be “free indeed.” No, it was purely your Redeemer’s love. He valued you as being His Father’s gift, and as given to be one with Himself. He therefore loved you, and gave Himself for you (see Gal. 2. 20).

When you were in your blood, and no eye pitied you, no, not your own, then was the time of His love. Even then He accepted the motion made by His Father and yours, and signed the contract. He knew both your weight and your worth; your natural unfitness for Him, and aversion to the match. He also knew what it must cost Him to make you both meet and willing, and that it was so stupendous a work, that all the hosts of heaven would have broken under it. He further knew, that after all He should do and suffer for you, you could not advantage Him in the least; only He should have the satisfaction to have made you happy against your unrenowned will; and yet He declined it not. He came “leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” (Song 2. 8) of death and difficulties, as longing for, and delighting to be in that work. He was straitened until it was accomplished; such was the intenseness of His love to you!

And a great deal ado He had with your wills, before you were made willing. And for all this He only expects you will carry it worthy of so great a lover, and such manner of love, which is, in effect, but to accept of, and to continue in His love, and be willing He should save you freely, and own this love of His, as the immediate fountain whence your happiness is derived.

Since your propriety [fitness] in redemption is founded in electing love, “give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1. 10). Spare not for pains; its fruit will be worth all the labour and cost you can lay out upon it. If clear in this point, the whole body will be full of light. And among other evidences of election, review the marks specified before under that head. Make out also your interest in redemption, by walking worthy of redeeming love, which cannot be, but by doing and being something more than others; some singular thing must warrant your claim to that singular privilege. Hold forth, therefore, in your life, the effect of your union with Christ in His death. Let the scope of redemption be the scope of your conversation.

You have no such way, if I may so speak, to gratify your Redeemer than by letting Him see the travail of His soul. A thorough newness of life, with a total devoting yourself to God, will illustrate redemption not a little, and proclaim convincingly both its merit and efficacy. It will also be a good office done to yourselves, as an evidence of your special concern in redemption, and much more vindicate your Christianity, than

formal professions or eager contests. And in order to this, determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (see 1 Cor. 2. 2); count all things else not worth your knowing; for, in truth, all knowledge else will come to nothing. Let all, therefore, be loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord (see Phil. 3. 8). And study the doctrine of His cross, that ye may not stand by and hear Him defamed, and not have a word to say for Him. So also observe Him, that when the world and He part, you may know your own Master, and be known by Him.

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### THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

An indisputable evidence that no scientist can overthrow

*By John Newton (1725-1807)*

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I apprehend the chief and most satisfactory argument [of the inspiration of the Scriptures] to those who are capable of receiving it, arises from the correspondence between the subject matter of the Scripture, and the state of an awakened mind. When the eyes of the understanding are opened, we begin to see everything around us, to be just so as the Scripture has described them. Then, and not till then, we perceive that what we read in the Bible concerning the horrid evil of sin, the vileness of our fallen nature, the darkness and ignorance of those who know not God, our own emptiness, and the impossibility of finding relief and comfort from creatures, is exactly true. We cannot but apply the words of the woman, and say, Come and see a Book that has told me all that ever I did, the ground of all my complaints, the true cause and nature of all the evil I either see, hear, or feel, from day to day. And as we find our disease precisely described, so we perceive a suitableness in the proposed remedy. We need a Saviour, and He must be a mighty one; but though our wants and sins, our fears and enemies, are great and numerous, we are convinced that the character of Christ is sufficient to answer them all.

We need a rest, a rest which the world cannot give. Enquire where we will among the creatures, experience brings in the same answer from all: It is not in me. This again confirms the Word of God, which has forewarned us that we shall meet nothing but disappointment in such pursuits. But there is a spiritual rest spoken of which we know to be the very thing we want, and all our remaining solicitude [concern] is how to attain it. From hence, as I said, we may assuredly conclude, that the Book which gives us such just views of everything that passes, must be given by inspiration from Him who is the Searcher of hearts. This proof

is equally plain and conclusive to all capacities that are spiritually enlightened, and such only are able to understand it.

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### ENDURING TEMPTATION

*Extract from Daniel Smart of Cranbrook (1809-1888)*

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Now when I was in the “horrible pit,” and the “miry clay,” my great concern was to get out of it, and to know something of God’s salvation. And when my feet were set upon the Rock, sometime after when the Lord hid His face, O what floods arose on my soul; floods of infidelity and blasphemy, floods of lust, floods of scarlet-dyed and crimson-coloured sins, which threatened to swallow me up. But the more the dragon cast the waters out of his mouth to cause the woman to be carried away with the flood, so it was with me, the more these floods of temptations arose, and beat on my soul, the more I felt the need of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice.

But I recollect once being so pestered and beset with horrible temptations concerning the Godhead of Jesus, and that He was nothing more than a mere man, that like poor old Bunyan, I was desperately hard put to it; but at length I said, Well, Devil, if He is nothing more than a mere man, He cannot be a Saviour to me, for I might as well look to a stock or a tree for salvation, or anything else that men or devils can invent, if He is not the “Mighty God”! And so I say now, Jesus Christ could not be the foundation of the sinner’s hope, if he were not God over all blessed for evermore! (see Rom. 9. 5).

But the psalmist says, “I shall not be greatly moved” (Psa. 62. 2); and Paul says, nothing shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (see Rom. 8. 39). So that none of these floods of sorrow and tribulation can separate the humblest believer from Jesus, for his feet are set upon a rock, and his goings are established. “It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace” (Heb. 13. 9), and there is nothing so establishes the mind in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the power of His grace, as these floods of temptation beating on the soul, with the grace of Jesus sustaining and upholding it. It cannot be shaken, “for it is founded upon a rock.” The superaboundings of grace over the aboundings of sin, will so establish his goings, that all the inventions of either men or devils will be like nothing to him; he is on the Rock, come what will; he is in union to Christ, arise what may; and his language is,

“None but Jesus,  
Can do helpless sinners good.”

## THE ABUNDANT MERCY OF GOD

*By John Bunyan (1628-1688)*

*(Concluded from page 307)*

Eighth. As all this tender, great, rich, abounding, compassing mercy, shall follow Israel to do him good; *so shall it do him every good turn*, in delivering of him from every judgment that by sin he hath laid himself obnoxious [liable] to, with rejoicing. For, “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (Jas. 2. 13). That is, applying it to the mercy of God towards His, it rejoiceth in delivering us from the judgments that we have deserved; yea, it delivereth us from all our woes with rejoicing. In the margin it is “glorieth”; it glorieth in doing this great thing for us. I have thought, considering how often I have procured judgments and destructions to myself, that God would be weary of pardoning, or else that He would pardon with grudging. But the Word saith He “fainteth not, neither is weary” (Isa. 40. 28). “I will rejoice over them to do them good” (Jer. 32. 41) – with my whole heart, and with my whole soul. This doing of us good with rejoicing, this saving of us from deserved judgments with rejoicing, this getting the victory over our destructions for us, with rejoicing – O it is a marvellous thing! “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” (Psa. 98. 1), the victory for us. And as Paul said, “We are more than conquerors through Him” (Rom. 8. 37); and this he did with triumph and rejoicing (see Col. 2. 15). The heart is seen oftentimes, more in the manner than in the act that is acted; more in the manner of doing than in doing of the thing. The wickedness of the heart of Moab was more seen in the manner of action than in the words that he spake against Israel. “For since thou spakest of” – against – “him, thou skippedst for joy” (Jer. 48. 27). So Edom rejoiced at the calamity of his brother; he looked on it and rejoiced: and in his rejoicing appeared the badness of his heart, and the great spite that he had against his brother Jacob.

Now, my brethren, I beseech you consider, that God hath not only showed you mercy, but hath done it with rejoicing. Mercy doth not only follow you, but it follows you with rejoicing. Yea, it doth not only prevent your ruin, by your repeated transgressions procured, but it doth it with rejoicing. Here is the very heart of mercy seen, in that it rejoiceth against judgment. Like unto this is that in Zephaniah: “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3. 17).

There are many things that show with what an heart mercy is of God extended, as is afore described, to Israel for his salvation; but this, that

it acteth with rejoicing, that it saveth with rejoicing, and gets the victory over judgment with rejoicing, is a wonderful one, and one that should be taken notice of by Israel, for his encouragement to hope. “Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy” (Psa. 130. 7), tender, great, rich, multiplying mercy, mercy that compasseth us about, that goeth with us all the way, and mercy that rejoiceth to overcome every judgment that seeketh our destruction, as we go toward our Father’s house and kingdom!

It is said in the Word, God delighteth in mercy. “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy” (Mic. 7. 18). Here then is a reason of the rejoicing of mercy against judgment. Why, mercy is God’s delight; or, as another hath it, “Mercy pleaseth thee.” What a man delights in, that he will set on foot, and that he will seek to manage, that he will promote, and that he will glory in the success and prosperity of. Why, the text saith, God delighteth in mercy: nor do I believe, how odious soever the comparison may seem to be, that ever man delighteth more in sin, than God hath delighted in showing mercy. Has man given himself for sin? God has given His Son for us, that He might show us mercy (see John 3. 16). Has man lain at wait for opportunities for sin? God has waited to be gracious, that He might have mercy upon us (see Isa. 30. 18). Has man, that he might enjoy his sin, brought himself to a morsel of bread? Why Christ, Lord of all, that He might make room for mercy, made Himself the poorest Man (see Luke 9. 58; 2 Cor. 8. 9). Has man, when he has found his sin, pursued it with all his heart? Why God, when He sets a showing mercy, shows it with rejoicing, for He delighteth in mercy.

Here also you may see the reason why all God’s paths are mercy and truth to His (see Psa. 25. 10). I have observed that what a man loveth he will accustom himself unto, whether it be fishing, hunting, or the like. These are his ways, his course, the paths wherein he spends his life, and therefore he is seldom found out of one or another of them. Now saith David, “all the paths of the LORD are mercy” (Psa. 25. 10). He is never out of them, for wherever He is, still He is coming towards His Israel in one or other of these paths, stepping steps of mercy. Hence again it is that you find that at the end of every judgment there is mercy; and that God in the midst of this remembers that. Yea, judgment is in mercy; and were it not for that, judgment should never overtake His people (1 Cor. 11. 32). Wherefore “let Israel hope in the LORD,” seeing with Him is all this mercy.

Ninth. Besides all this, the mercy that is with God, and that is an encouragement to Israel to hope in Him, *is everlasting*: “The mercy of



the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him” (Psa. 103. 17). From everlasting to everlasting; that is more, more than I said. Well,

1. Then from everlasting; that is, from before the world began; so then, things that are, and are to be hereafter, are to be managed according to those measures that God in mercy took for His people then. Hence it is said, that He has blessed us according as He chose us in Christ, before the world began; that is, according to those measures and grants that were by mercy allotted to us then (see Eph. 1. 4). According to that other saying, “According to His mercy He saved us” (Tit. 3. 5), that is, according as mercy had allotted for us before the world began. “According to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1. 9). This is mercy from everlasting, and is the ground and bottom of all dispensations that have been, are, or are to come to His people. And now, though it would be too great a step to a side, to treat of all those mercies that of necessity will be found to stand upon that which is called mercy from everlasting, yet it will be to our purpose, and agreeable to our method, to conclude that mercy to everlasting stands upon that; even as vocation, justification, preservation and glorification, standeth upon our being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (see Rom. 8. 29, 30).

Here then is the mercy that is with God and that should encourage Israel to hope. The mercy that has concerned itself with them, is mercy from everlasting. Nor may it be thought that a few quarrels of some brain-sick fellows will put God upon taking new measures for His people; what foundation has been laid for His, before He laid the foundation of the world, shall stand, for that it was laid in Christ by virtue of mercy: that is, from everlasting (Rom. 9. 11). The old laws, which are the Magna Carta, the sole basis of the government of a kingdom, may not be cast away for the pet [offence] that is taken by every little gentleman against them.\* We have indeed some professors that take a great pet [offence] against that foundation of salvation, that the mercy that is from everlasting has laid; but since the kingdom, government and glory of Christ is wrapped up in it, and since the calling, justification, perseverance, and glorification of His elect, which are called His body and fulness, is wrapt up therein, it may not be laid aside nor despised, nor quarrelled against by any, without danger of damnation.

Here then is the mercy with which Israel is concerned, and which is with God as an encouragement to them that should hope, to hope in Him.

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\* Human laws we must obey, unless they infringe upon the prerogative of God and upon conscience; to such we must refuse obedience, and count it an honour to suffer as Daniel and the Hebrew youths. These laws we may strive to get repealed or amended; but the laws of God are immutable and eternal – they must be obeyed, or we perish.

It is mercy from everlasting; it is mercy of an ancient date; it is mercy in the root of the thing. For it is from this mercy, this mercy from everlasting, that all, and all those sorts of mercies, of which we have discoursed before, do flow. It is from this that Christ the Saviour flows; this is it, from which that tender mercy, that great mercy, that rich mercy, and that mercy that aboundeth towards us, doth flow; and so of all the rest. Kind brings forth its kind; know the tree by his fruit; and God by His mercy in Christ; yea, and know what God was doing before He made the world, by what He has been doing ever since. And what has God been doing for and to His church from the beginning of the world, but extending to, and exercising lovingkindness and mercy for them? Therefore He laid a foundation for this in mercy from everlasting.

2. But mercy from everlasting is but the beginning, and we have discoursed of those mercies that we have found in the bowels of this already, wherefore a word of that which is to everlasting also. "From everlasting to everlasting." Nothing can go beyond *to everlasting*; wherefore this, to everlasting, will see an end of all. The devil will tempt us, sin will assault us, men will persecute; but can they do it to everlasting? If not, then there is mercy to come to God's people at last, even when all evils have done to us what they can. After the prophet had spoken of the inconceivable blessedness that God hath prepared for them that wait for Him, he drops to present wrath, and the sin of God's people in this life. This done, he mounts up again to the first, and saith, "In those is continuance"; that is, the things laid up for us are everlasting, and therefore "we shall be saved" (Isa. 64. 4, 5). How many things since the beginning have assaulted the world to destroy it, as wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, etc., and yet to this day it abideth. But what is the reason of that? Why, God liveth, upon whose word, and by whose decree it abideth. "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth"; it standeth fast, and "cannot be moved" (Psa. 119. 90; 93. 1). Why, my brethren, mercy liveth, mercy is everlasting; "His mercy endureth for ever" (Psa. 136). And therefore the church of God liveth, and when all her enemies have done their all, this is the song that the church shall sing over them: "They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright" (Psa. 20. 8). Everlasting mercy, with everlasting arms, is underneath (see Deut. 33. 27).

And as this shows the cause of the life of the church, notwithstanding her ghostly and bodily enemies, so it sheweth the cause of her deliverance from her repeated sins. As God said of leviathan, "I will not conceal his parts" (Job 41. 12). So it is very unbecoming of God's people to conceal their sins and miscarriages, for it diminisheth this mercy of God. Let therefore sin be acknowledged, confessed, and

not be hid nor dissembled; it is to the glory of mercy that we confess to God and one another what we are; still remembering this, but mercy is everlasting!

As this shows the reason of our life, and the continuance of that, notwithstanding our repeated sins, so it shows the cause of the receiving [or renewing] of our graces, from so many decays and sickness. For this mercy will live, last, and outlast, all things that are corruptible and hurtful unto Israel. Wherefore, "Let Israel hope in the LORD," for this reason: "for with the LORD there is mercy" (Psa. 130. 7). 1. Tender mercy for us; 2. Great mercy for us; 3. Rich mercy; 4. Manifold mercy; 5. Abounding mercy towards us; 6. Compassing mercy wherewith we are surrounded.; 7. Mercy to follow us wherever we go; 8. Mercy that rejoiceth against judgment; and 9. Mercy that is from everlasting to everlasting. All these mercies are with God, to allure, to encourage, and uphold Israel in hope.

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## ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRESS TOWARDS CHRIST

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Stamford  
October 16th, 1863

*To David Beattie*

Dear Sir,

I sincerely wish that I could, with the blessing of God, write you anything that might afford relief to your troubled mind, but I feel how helpless I am in this matter.

Your case, as you describe it, is truly pitiable; but it is what many have passed through before you, who afterwards had reason to bless God for the fiery trial. We have all by nature a great deal of vain confidence and self-righteousness, which have to be burnt up in all who truly fear God; and the Lord often sees it necessary to show His people terrible things in righteousness, that they may learn experimentally somewhat of the depth of the Fall, and the need of being saved by the free, sovereign grace of God. Besides which, the Lord has to make His people see and feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they may truly loathe it, and themselves for it.

Now when the soul is under these painful exercises, it cannot tell what the Lord is about, nor how the scene will end. Sometimes it hopes and sometimes it fears, but its fears are usually much greater than its hopes; and so it goes on, often it may be sinking lower and lower until the Lord appears. You will find in this month's *Gospel Standard*, and in the forthcoming number, an account of exercises even greater than your own, in the first piece, called "A Mirror of Mercy," so that you have no

need to despair. And you will find in “Grace Abounding,” by Bunyan, an account of his deep troubles and almost despair.

If I could give you any advice, it would be to continue as far as you can reading the Word, and above all plying the throne of grace with earnest prayers and entreaties that the Lord would pity your case, have mercy upon you, and reveal to you a sense of His pardoning love. The great thing is not to give way to despair, nor give up what little hope you may have that the Lord will in due time appear for the deliverance of your soul. The blessed Lord is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them (see Heb. 7. 25). And the same gracious Lord has said, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37). You will find it good to plead with the Lord His own promises, such as the one I have just quoted, and that also: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11. 28). The blessed Lord came to seek and to save that which is lost (see Luke 19. 10); and thus there is hope for every poor, sensible sinner who feels himself in a lost condition.

That the Lord may soon graciously appear for your deliverance is the desire of,

Yours very sincerely,

J.C. Philpot

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### TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN

*By John Calvin (1509-1564)*

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If heaven is our country, what can the earth be but a place of exile? If departure from the world is entrance into life, what is the world but a sepulchre, and what is residence in it but immersion in death? If to be freed from the body is to gain full possession of freedom, what is the body but a prison? If it is the very summit of happiness to enjoy the presence of God, is it not miserable to want it? But “whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord” (2 Cor. 5. 6). Thus when the earthly is compared with the heavenly life, it may undoubtedly be despised and trampled under foot. We ought never, indeed, to regard it with hatred, except in so far as it keeps us subject to sin, and even this hatred ought not to be directed against life itself. At all events, we should stand so affected towards it in regard to weariness or hatred as, while longing for its termination, to be ready at the Lord’s will to continue it, keeping far from anything like murmuring and impatience. For it is as if the Lord had assigned us a post, which we must maintain till He recalls us. Paul, indeed, laments his condition in being still bound with the fetters of the body, and sighs earnestly for redemption (see Rom.

7. 24); nevertheless, he declared that, in obedience to the command of God, he was prepared for both courses, because he acknowledges it as his duty to God to glorify His name whether by life or by death, while it belongs to God to determine what is most conducive to His glory (Phil. 1. 20-24). Wherefore, if it becomes us to live and die to the Lord, let us leave the period of our life and death at His disposal.

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### LETTER BY JOSEPH HART

This is the only known remaining letter by Joseph Hart

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London  
Tuesday, December 29th, 1767

Dear Nephew,

I am glad the Lord has so far wrought on your soul as to make you concerned for its everlasting state, and I sincerely wish you may hold out to the end and be saved. As to your fears of falling back again, they are no signs that you will fall, but rather the contrary; for none depart from God while they have any fears of departing from Him. You do well to hear the gospel at all opportunities as the means appointed for the good of souls, but always endeavour to look through all means to the God of grace, and depend on His strength and not your own. When you are comforted, bless God for the encouragement, and when it is otherwise trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon the God of your salvation.

Remember the Lord will cast out none that come unto Him, though they come ever so poor and helpless. The alteration of your frames from warm to cold, from lively to dead is what all Christians experience, and therefore let not that make you cast off your confidence. Remember, we are made partakers of Christ if we hold fast our profession to the end.

“The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb. 10. 38).

“Fear not, be of good courage; wait on the Lord, and He shall bring it to pass” (see Ps. 27. 14, 37. 5). When you are weak, then you will be strong, if you look out of yourself to Christ Jesus, whose strength is made perfect in weakness.

Be often in secret prayer. And remember, the trial is, not what frames of mind you may be in, but whether you endure to the end. The Lord strengthen, settle, and stablish you.

If I can be of any service to you, write as often as you please. Our love to you and yours, from

Your loving brother,

Joseph Hart

## A SINNER SAVED BY FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE

*Memorial of George Frost, for twenty-one years Pastor of  
Rehoboth Baptist Chapel, Jarvis Brook, Sussex, written by his widow  
(Concluded from page 319)*

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After this he settled down with his few friends at Salcott, near Tiptree, until the Lord saw fit to call him to speak at other places. This caused him great exercise of mind – sometimes he felt such a fool, he must give up; then again a willingness to run in His ways. Many times has he groaned under the weighty exercise in the silent watches of the night, tossing about on his bed. Who knows the weight and soul travail of a living ministry? None but those whom God has called to such a position. How often would he beseech God to give him a sure token that he was His mouthpiece. Seldom was he very high in his own esteem. Nevertheless the Lord encouraged him from time to time.

Once, after being so tried as to the reality of his being sent to preach, the Lord blessed him with a fleece dry. Asking the Lord for a proof, the Lord answered, “A gentleman shall give you a watch and chain, and that shall be a proof to you.” He wondered who this would be; however time rolled on, and no watch or chain. But after eight months he was invited to visit a gentleman, and after staying some time, he said, “Mr. Frost, what is the time?” He replied, “I know not!” He said, “Have you no watch?” and he replied, “No, sir.” Said the gentleman, “For three nights I have had no rest, thinking I must give you a watch and chain,” which he did. Then my husband told him how the Lord revealed it to him that such should be the case, as a proof of his being sent to preach. This was a time of refreshing to both parties, and a confirmation down to his dying day.

I will relate another circumstance which took place before leaving Essex. Having preached at a place called Heybridge for several years, one morning he received a letter informing him that the man who gave out the hymns where he was to preach the next Sabbath had taken his life. Never shall I forget the agony of his soul. He cried out, “What shall I do?” He said, “I must write and cancel my engagement.” As it was not post time, I begged him to wait till it was. He paced his room, after which he left me. Having been gone some time, and being near post time, I went to him to see what steps he would take. When he approached, he said, “I shall go; the Lord having spoken these words to my soul: ‘Cast not away therefore your confidence’” (Heb. 10. 35). He went, and spoke from these words. He told the friends how the Lord had comforted him in telling him He would never cast him off, nor would He let him cast off the Lord. He had a good day, and the Lord used him in

comforting His poor people. He spoke also of the fierce temptation he had had, that his and everybody else's religion was a delusion, until the Lord was pleased to assure him that none of His children should come to that spot – to cast themselves into eternal destruction, upon which he cried out, "O Lord, it is enough; I will go and tell the people so, and leave the poor man – he having gone to his own place, and I have nothing to do with that, feeling it is of Thy sweet mercy alone that I am preserved from doing the same thing."

One thing was a great comfort to my dear husband. Although he held that position in the church, on taking dinner with this man he made an honest confession that he knew nothing of those blessed truths my husband spoke of while in his presence. "O," said my husband, "what a mercy to be able to speak a little of what God has done for our poor souls, for what the Lord has done will never be undone by Him."

The Lord blasted all my husband's earthly schemes, which compelled him to give up his business. He was out two whole nights with his boats, and caught but two small fishes. He came to land to return to sea no more; after which we came into Sussex. He preached his first sermon at Frittenden, in Kent, then at Ashford, and after a short time at Flimwell. These churches he supplied for many years. Many other doors were opened in this direction, which led us to take apartments at Tonbridge, in Kent, being more central, returning home occasionally. But the journey being so long, we were obliged to break up our home and live entirely in Sussex.

After this he had invitations to preach at Abingdon, East Peckham, Folkestone, Guildford, Luton, Ticehurst, Trowbridge, Redhill, Southill, Reading, Forest Hill, Great Alie Street, London, Jarvis Brook, Plumstead, and many other places.

In the year 1883 he had a call to the pastorate from two churches – Jarvis Brook and Ashford – both at the same time, which led to many anxious cries to the Lord that He would direct him, and lead him in a plain path. So weighty was this exercise that he spent one whole night in wrestling with God, when the Lord appeared to him and made him feel that Jarvis Brook was to be his place by applying the following scripture: "And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation" (Isa. 12. 1, 2) – which he felt to his latest breath was the Lord's will, and none were ever able to remove him, nor aught failed of all the Lord had spoken to him of, to the honour of His great and holy name. His base ingratitude was often a trouble to him, seeing the Lord

favoured him from time to time in declaring His truth. But O the many changes he was the subject of!

Truly it was with him “the burden of the Word of the LORD” (Zech. 12. 1), which caused him often to go into the pulpit much cast down, feeling the solemn position of standing between a holy God and never-dying souls. It was not with him what poor mortals would think of him, but he desired the approbation of his God, and to have no soul-blood upon his conscience when he came to his deathbed, but to be able to say, “By grace I have fought the fight; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (see 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8). Such a weight has this been, I, with others, have seen him ascend the pulpit with strength just sufficient – we have felt it would be impossible for him to speak. But the Lord has appeared and favoured him in exalting a precious Christ and laying the sinner low. His countenance has beamed with joy, visible to all, proving to his friends God was with him, likewise to the confounding of his enemies who were watching for his halting.

This often led him to seek solitude, which made him a man of decision. He failed to see where there could be much weight with that man’s ministry who could go from house to house, and join with all classes of professors in light and vain conversation. He knew what it was to have sweet fellowship with Christ in His sufferings in that lonely retreat, likewise a sweet view of Christ as exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, which he often expressed – no sorrow, no joy, and that all real religion must begin with trouble. Many trials and sorrows he passed through, which the Lord overruled for the good and profit of His tried people. Such a sweet view of the Word of truth would he get, that he could bless God for the trial, and pray, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do; lay not this sin to their charge” (see Luke. 23. 34). These things – although painful – were often the means God used to furnish him with a subject, and the Lord’s poor people have had cause to bless Him for so ordering him to speak of those things. As my dear husband had grace to leave these matters, I desire to pass them over.

After settling at Jarvis Brook he was allowed twelve Sabbaths to supply other churches, but for many years he took but six, which prevented him from going much about. Often on returning home would he express feeling how much he came short in setting forth the truth – “I am of no use or profit to God’s people” – which always helped to cast him down. Yet when the dear Lord used to break through the cloud of dejection he would say, “Why me, Lord? I wonder Thou shouldst put up with me.” This would, however, cause him to drop his head in self-abasement, feeling himself a sinner of the worst sort – not that anyone could lay anything to his charge outwardly; God mercifully kept him. He



contended for a practical walk, as that which becometh the children of God. He ever desired to be kept from laying a stumbling-block in the way of God's poor people. It was the light of God's truth that shone into his heart and discovered to him what vile, outrageous things dwelt there, and but for keeping grace they would break out. This made him cry, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psa. 17. 5). These things often strove for the mastery, which made him cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7. 24). This made him a champion for free and sovereign grace; creature merit was most hateful to him. He felt that it robbed God of His honour and glory.

He felt much at home at the Lord's table. He often expressed it, "Seldom do I get through that ordinance without a look from the dear Lord." Also the days of baptizing – he loved to see the prosperity of Zion.

Many things I will pass over, and come to the time the Lord saw fit to lay His afflicting hand upon him, which proved in the end for death. During the year 1902 he preached on and off one or two Sabbaths, then was laid aside for two. This continued until December 21st, when having an engagement at Forest Hill, he ventured to fulfil it, although so unwell he concluded at one time he must wire [send by telegram] to say he could not go; but as he rallied a little in the afternoon, he took tea and left home. But on his return he was so tried in his mind, fearing in his weak state he had advanced something wrong, it working upon his mind so, he wrote to his friend the deacon asking if it was so. He received a reply to say the friends were pleased to see him, and they considered nothing was amiss, and telling him not to be troubled on that account as it was the devil trying to distress him. He blessed the Lord, and said, "Surely it must have been the Lord who helped me!"

He did not attend chapel again after this until February 15th, 1903. He spoke on Sunday, then was obliged to stay away several others.

On April 5th he broke bread, when the friends feared his end was near.

He was favoured to get out to speak on the Good Friday, also on the following Sunday, April 19th. This was his last sermon, although, he having a severe attack of vomiting, I tried to persuade him not to speak. He replied, "I must go and tell the people I need a change, or I shall sink under it." He had another attack in the vestry before entering the pulpit, and preached for a short time from Galatians 6. 7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." After preaching he told the friends that perhaps a little rest would benefit him, and they must do without him.

On April 21st we left home and went to a friend's house at Tollesbury, in Essex, hoping the change might do him good, and upon seeing some of his old friends there, he seemed somewhat brighter. But as time rolled on, he became weaker, and we called in a doctor, who said to him, "You must not preach for three months." Upon hearing this, he burst into tears, and said, "What shall we do?" Our friends tried to persuade him to take no notice of the doctor, but his soul was much cast down. The following morning he said to me, "The Lord has come and assured me I shall want no good thing, and that He will provide all needful good, and I believe it" – which sweetly resigned him to the will of God. His niece got him every nourishment in her power to strengthen him.

The doctor wished him to be weighed every day, that he might know if he gained flesh, but alas! every day he got weaker. He expressed a wish to return home, fearing, if he did not, he would be too weak to undertake the journey. So we returned home on Friday, May 15th. After resting on the following day, he ventured to meet with his people at the chapel on the next Sabbath, a friend driving him. The friends could see their position, and feared he would speak to them no more (and he seemed quite overcome on seeing his pulpit empty, the service being conducted by reading and prayer). Seeing things get worse, we called in another doctor, that being the third. On seeing him, he said but little, but requested that he might speak to my niece. This raised a fear in me that things were very bad. I cannot describe my feelings when the news reached me that he would get no better, and further, owing to his weak state the news must be kept from him, as it might prove instant death. We felt this very hard, but when the doctor called again, my husband said to him, "Doctor, what is my complaint?" He said, "Would you like to know?" He replied, "Yes," and the doctor said, "It is your heart and lungs, but you may last some time; let it not trouble you to throw you back." "Doctor," he said, "I am not afraid to die. I have a good God to go to. I know I must go down into the grave, but no lower; it is no terror to me. The sting of death is removed." After the doctor had gone, he asked why I had kept from him what the doctor had said previously. I told him the doctor's request. He looked at me and said, "You know better than that; I shall not die before my time, nor do I wish to live one minute after." This did not move him.

He came downstairs nearly every day, and lay on a couch, and when any of his friends came to see him, although it seemed more than his weak body could bear, yet he would frequently sit up in a reclining position and speak to them of the goodness of God in so gently taking down his frail tabernacle. Sometimes he would talk to them so long that

they were afraid he would injure himself in so doing, and to prevent this would leave him.

Various things were tried for his relief, which he was most thankful for, but nothing did him any permanent good. He continued in this way to come downstairs till November, when, as he became weaker, the exertion of getting up and down stairs was too much for him, and he took entirely to his bed. He came downstairs but three times after this.

Often did he preach a sermon while upon his bed to his friends who came to see him; although at first his affliction lay in his throat, but that getting stronger enabled him to speak out more clearly. Feeling so frequently his sinkings, he needed much attention and frequent nourishment, but the Lord raised him up many friends, which enabled him to have all he needed, and though his affliction was a long one, he lacked nothing. His church and congregation rendered freely to his assistance, and also his dear friends at Forest Hill and Brighton. How he has begged of God to bless them, and often said, "I believe He will."

Many of the friends at Jarvis Brook, when unable to procure in the neighbourhood things needed, have sent for, and some have even gone to Tunbridge Wells to procure them, and he expressed a desire that I should tender his heartfelt gratitude to his many friends for their kindness, and I now take this opportunity of so doing.

The last six weeks we were obliged to sit up with him. He suffered but little pain, except once, and was soon relieved. He often spoke of how the Lord comforted him. He said to his niece one night, "I would sing, if I could, of the covenant mercy of my God." He said once, "I cannot see why the Lord keeps me here, seeing I am no use." I replied, "You desire to wait the Lord's time, do you not?" He answered, "I do." One day, seeing his countenance sad, I asked him the state of his mind. He said, "I have no mind; I am in a wilderness." I said no more. The next morning, his countenance being bright, I said, "I believe the Lord has appeared." He answered, "The Lord knows how weak I am, and how strong is the devil, and if possible he would rend my soul from Him. But the Lord told me, 'I have you in My arms, and will not let you go!'" The enemy was not permitted to harass him for long together.

When in his usual health and strength, he always desired to be of little trouble to any of us, but he now desired, as his strength was gone, that I and his nieces should wait upon him, this wish being granted. His reason he retained down to his latest breath. After falling asleep, upon opening his eyes he would freely converse upon the things of God. He continued sinking until October 22nd; that morning I was with him. Having just spoken to him, I crossed the room. On my return I saw a great change in him. I placed my hand upon his dear head, and found it

cold and wet with perspiration. I said, "O, you are worse." He looked at me and nodded his head. I called my nephew, and the young woman who had lived with us fourteen years, who were taking a little rest. He spoke no more, but was quite sensible. I took his right hand in mine, which he pressed several times. Then he took it from me, and placed it over his head twice, then again into mine, again pressing it until his soul took its happy flight into the regions of eternal bliss, there to bask in the sunshine of His love, to go no more out for ever, but to cast his crown at the feet of Him to whom belongs all the glory.

Having a fear that he would struggle in death, which I felt I could not endure, this often caused me to cry to the Lord that He would give him an easy passport out of time, which desire the Lord granted, there not being a sigh nor a groan. On the contrary, it was a noble sight to see a believer die, with his eyes fixed, looking for the sweet coming of the Lord who had promised to bring him safe home to glory.

His chapel was at times evidently on his mind, as once, on seeing his eyes filled with tears, I said, "Are you in any pain?" He looked straight at the mantelpiece and said, "My chapel," as a portrait of it was hanging there. I said, "Shall I take it down?" He said, "No." I then asked if I should cover it up, when he shook his head; he liked to see it, but felt he should never go into it again.

With this I close. We may safely say of him, "He's gone in endless bliss to dwell." May my end be like his.

M. Frost

He was buried in the cemetery at Rotherfield, on October 27th, 1904, by Mr. James Dickens of Rotherfield, assisted by Mr. Robert Webb of Plumstead, members of his own church being the principal bearers, followed by his church and congregation, and a large concourse of people and friends from various places.

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## **DYING SAYINGS OF GEORGE FROST**

read out by James Dickens at the graveside

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I have a few words he addressed to a friend not quite a fortnight before he died. I will read them to you. There are not many words, but there is much in them.

On Monday afternoon, October 10th, we went to see Mr. Frost at Jarvis Brook. When taken to his room, we were asked merely to look at the dear patient, and not to speak, as he was very ill, and it was desirable not to disturb him. However, on entering he instantly recognised us, and began moving his hands under the bedclothes as if he wished to shake hands with us.

“Fulfilled!” he exclaimed, and raised his hand over his head.

“I dreamt last night you came to see me, and sat down there.” Then followed this most blessed testimony, which we wrote down at the time from his own lips, every word being clearly and distinctly spoken:-

“I am like one waiting the coming of his Lord. O I am so glad (referring to the fulfilment of his dream). Not by works! Not by works! I never felt so completely cut off from every occasion of the flesh as I do now. All grace! All of the covenant love of God to me when a rebel. My call, my deliverance, the revelation of Christ to me, the Holy Ghost to instruct and guide me into all truth, was of a marvellous manner. He has brought me through to the honour of His name. None on earth, nor in heaven, to be compared with my Lord. He don’t let me sink an inch!

“The adversary is as quiet as if he were dead.

“I feel it will be a grand opening when the door of earth closes, and the door of eternity opens. I could as easily believe God could cease to exist as that He could cease to love.

“O the world is a fading flower, a dying leaf. It is not to be compared with the paradise of God I hope to enter. I have no more fear of dying than of going to sleep. I can’t talk of these things as I have done – my strength is gone.

“O faithful God! O unchangeable God!” he said, “It is for ever settled; His word is not like the word of man – ‘It shall not return unto Me void.’ O what a beautiful settlement! What a firm foundation, what a solid Rock I feel!

“I feel as if I had arms inside me that long to lay hold of Christ. Although my natural powers fail me, I feel as if I should burst out now sometimes, ‘Unto Him that loved us, and washed us.’

“I feel I have an eternal interest in Christ in heaven, and a continual interest in His lovingkindness on earth. What a difference there is between talking of Christ and having Him!”

After this the dear, dying minister was exhausted. We exchanged a few loving farewell words and parted, never to meet again this side of eternity.

He lingered on yet another eleven days, and just after the first hour of the 12th had chimed he gazed steadfastly upward, and with the word “My” twice repeated – as if, like Thomas, he would say, “My Lord, my God” – he squeezed the hand of his beloved helpmeet, and entered into rest.

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Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as, “I imagine so,” or “It is likely”; but the cable, the strong tow of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity.

*Samuel Rutherford*

## BOOK REVIEW

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**The Lord's Day;** Articles by Thomas Boston, James Fisher and John Kennedy; paperback; 126 pages; price £6.90 plus postage; published by Reformation Press and obtainable from their web site [www.reformationpress.co.uk](http://www.reformationpress.co.uk).

We were pleased to read a book which unashamedly contends for the scriptural position that from creation God ordained one day in seven as a day of rest and worship; a book which shows clearly the biblical commands and precedents for keeping the Sabbath, and the testimony of the blessing that such Sabbath keeping has been for untold millions. Jesus plainly said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2. 27); that is, that the Sabbath was instituted by God at the time of man's creation because He saw that man needed a regular day of rest, both to recover from the exertions of the rest of the week and for time to commune with the God who created him and to whom worship alone is due.

The book consists of three separate works, together with an introductory foreword and an appendix. The treatise on the fourth commandment by Thomas Boston consists of six chapters setting out what the command requires, which day is set apart for rest, how the Sabbath is to be kept, the reasons for the commandment and some practical applications. The second part of the book is a series of questions and answers by James Fisher on questions 57 to 62 of the *Shorter Catechism*, designed to clarify some of the issues. The last article in the book is a lecture given by Dr. John Kennedy on the fourth commandment.

All the articles were written by Scottish ministers, in some of the better days of Scotland when the Lord's day was held in far more reverence than today. This inevitably leads to statements which could hardly be made today – for example, the question as to how civil magistrates should suppress the profaning of the Sabbath. Then, although we are pleased that the book contends so strongly for the Lord's day, there are a few weaknesses which we cannot pass by.

1. There is a legal bias to some of the statements, which is not wrong in that the Sabbath is for all men, whether Christian or not, but to a true Christian there are blessings which the worldly man cannot enter into and cannot be enforced on legal grounds. The Lord's day cannot be a "delight" to a natural man (see Isa. 58. 13), and no amount of legal precepts can make it so. We would have liked to see the distinction between the law and the gospel made clearer and more emphasis on the privilege and blessing the Lord's day has been to those who can truly say,

"How dear to me, O Lord of Hosts, the place where Thou dost dwell,  
The tabernacles of Thy grace in pleasantness excel.  
My spirit longs, yea, even faints Thy sacred courts to see;  
My thirsting heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for Thee."

2. Some of the arguments in the second part of the book are based on questions relating to the *Shorter Catechism* questions, and although some profitable and helpful points are made, inevitably at times the catechism, or the

Westminster Confession of Faith, becomes the standard of appeal, instead of the Word of God.

3. In some cases we felt the arguments would have benefited from using much simpler language. For example, the word “moral” is never found in the Word of God, and even in common parlance today it has many different shades of meaning. So using such expressions as “the morality of the fourth commandment,” and making distinctions between “moral-positive” and “moral-natural” does not help in the least, but rather confounds things which if kept simply to the precepts and examples of God’s Word are straightforward. Whenever human reason is added to the Word of God it always weakens it. God’s Word stands in no need of human ingenuity to prop it up – let the Word of God be set forth in its native simplicity.

4. When describing the standard of the Law of God, there is always the danger of falling into the same error that the Pharisees fell into of adding to the Word of God, and in zeal for the law to end up walking contrary to the law. In trying to expound and interpret, we can end up making rules of our own for others to walk by. Let us take one example of this – the warnings on pages 115-116 against “Sabbath walking.” Is there any precept in the Word of God which says people should not go for a walk on the Sabbath? No. Is there any example of walking on the Sabbath? Actually, yes, for the Lord Jesus walked through the cornfields with His disciples on the Sabbath. If a man went for a jog on the Sabbath day to train for running a marathon, we would not hesitate to say that this is most certainly not keeping the day holy. If a godly minister found it profitable to take a silent walk through the woods where he had often found it a blessing in being able to meditate on the preciousness of the Lord Jesus, would it be wrong to do this on the Lord’s day? (The late Murdoch Campbell mentions the blessing he found in such meditation.) Would he not be in the best way thankful that the day had been thus made holy to him? So to make an absolute rule that all Sabbath walking is necessarily wrong is to add to God’s Word and can end in condemning innocent people who love the Lord’s day, simply because of some supposed irregularity. What should be the rule by which Christians walk? “Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Rom. 14. 13, 14).

To summarise, there is much in this book which is good and the aim of the publishers in contending for the sanctity of the Lord’s day is commendable. But there are some things which could be more of a stumblingblock than a help.

John A. Kingham, Luton

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It is a good sign when the Lord blows off the blossoms of our forward hopes in this life, and lops the branches of our worldly joys to the very root, on purpose that they should not thrive.

*Samuel Rutherford*

## MOURNING AFTER A REVIVAL

An Octogenarian's Reflections

How solemn are the days  
 In which our lot is cast!  
 How different are the ways  
 We think of in the past!  
 The Sabbath was a day of rest;  
 In means of grace our souls were blest.

The chapels then were filled  
 With anxious hearers who  
 Much prized the gospel news,  
 And loved their Saviour too;  
 No trifling cares would then deter:  
 Some whom we knew and loved were there.

Some who in Satan's fold  
 For many years had run  
 Without concern of soul  
 Or fear of God or man,  
 Under the means of grace were met  
 And caught within the gospel net.

Some long through fear of death  
 In bondage hard had lain,  
 These heard with bated breath  
 The preacher's plaintive strain;  
 In hope of finding peace with God  
 They wait upon the Saviour's Word.

These in the Lord's own time  
 While in the means of grace,  
 See Jesus lifted high  
 Upon the gospel pole;  
 Who can describe the peace then felt?  
 With joy the broken heart does melt.

Lord bless Thy truth today,  
 And make it spring and grow;  
 Though cast in barren ground,  
 Its savour may we know;  
 Thy ministering servants bless,  
 And crown Thy gospel with success.

Rhoda A. Gosden (1872-1962)

One leak will sink a ship, and one sin will destroy a sinner.

*John Bunyan*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
DECEMBER 2018

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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 PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR

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“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour” (Acts 5. 31).

Isaiah the prophet cried out, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given” (chapter 9. 6). This ancient prophecy has been fulfilled in a wonderful way, even unto the exaltation of Jesus Christ to “the right hand of power” (Mark 14. 62) in heaven above, which is in the presence of God, our most holy Father.

Pilgrims today stand in awe and wonder at the humiliation of their Saviour, Jesus Christ, as He stooped so low in order to take on human form in our nature, without sin. If these are the “things the angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1. 12), the mystery of their Creator lying in a manger as a seemingly helpless little Babe, what can we sons of men say to these things?

“Blest angels leave their high abode,  
To learn new mysteries here, and tell  
The loves of our descending God,  
The glories of Immanuel.”

The only safe and proper way of thinking on these things is by precious faith, and this most definitely can only be by the grace of God to us; for faith is a gift of grace, as Paul wrote by divine inspiration and from personal experience, “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. For we are His workmanship” (Eph. 2. 8-10). This grace comes to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. And that holy Babe born at Bethlehem was then, and is now, Jesus Christ our Lord.

How wondrous was His humiliation to assume our nature in the womb of His mother, the virgin Mary, and become “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53. 3), that we might be saved. “Unto us a Child is born” sets forth beautifully His sacred humanity, and “unto us a Son is given” shows the glorious truth that that blessed Babe born of the virgin Mary is the true, almighty Son of God. It was in His humiliation, He lived for us and died for us. *We repeat to emphasise*, He lived for us and died for us. And having lived for us and died for us, He rose the third day for our justification. And having risen for us, He has

ascended into heaven itself to “be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2. 17), “Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7. 16). As our great High Priest at the right hand of God, He is full of wisdom and compassion, and has a full understanding of our plight and distresses.

“Touched with a sympathy within,  
He knows our feeble frame;  
He knows what sore temptations mean,  
For He has felt the same.

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

Jesus whose name is “Wonderful,” is both a wonderful Prince and a wonderful Saviour. How the Apostle Paul, together with all the apostles, greatly delighted to preach “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20. 24) in a precious Lord Jesus everywhere, according to the divine command at His ascension: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The following declaration is so worthy of our notice: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but He that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16. 15, 16). God, our most merciful and gracious Father, has exalted His well-beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, at His right hand. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2. 9-11). “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.”

“A Prince”! What a very kind, merciful and gracious Prince the Lord Jesus is in His exalted position at “the right hand of power.” Although being God He must be a sin-hating God, and a sin-punishing God, yet Immanuel, the gift of God, is so very tender and compassionate to all who draw near to His throne, confessing their sins and praying unto Him for His blessing to rest upon them. As a Prince, He has all authority over the sons of men. He exercises that authority in planning the life and leading His dear bride here below safely to her “desired haven.” Jesus has an absolute dominion over all created powers, and by His victory over sin, death and hell, He will lead His people safely on fair Zion’s way, and safely home to God. “None can stay His hand, or say unto

Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4. 35). For all powers, thrones and dominions are subject to Him. As a Prince, He looks down upon His travelling people in this world of tribulation with sympathising love and holy affection, and will perform His will revealed in His prayer to His Father: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24).

Jesus is indeed that "Prince of peace," and while it is most definitely an everlasting peace, its first beginnings are made known to His bride in the experience of her soul, while living here. Jesus said to His disciples in the upper room, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14. 27). And again, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16. 33). This is a sure word of grace to all them who trust in Him while in this world. Does not faith say in its gracious exercise:

"Reign o'er us as King, accomplish Thy will,  
And powerfully bring us forth from all ill;  
Till, falling before Thee, we laud Thy loved name,  
Ascribing the glory to God and the Lamb?"

What a blessed "Prince of peace" Jesus is. He brings into His kingdom the poor, the blind, the lame, the anxious, the guilty, the sinful, the dying, and makes peace with them. "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me" (Isa. 27. 5). How the poor who have "the gospel preached to them," live to prove that glorious truth, "And this Man shall be the peace" (Mic. 5. 5). That blessed Babe born at Bethlehem, is "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19. 16).

"A Saviour"! The angel of God bringing "good tidings of great joy" to the shepherds, "which shall be to all people," said, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (see Luke 2. 10, 11). We also read, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1. 21). This great salvation is such a complete salvation. There is nothing left for the redeemed to do, to satisfy divine justice, to make an atonement for their sins, or to make themselves righteous before God. When Jesus died at Calvary and cried out, "It is finished," the church was "complete in Him." Each redeemed son of Adam will by and by come to precious faith to trust and believe in the Lord, and this is by the Spirit of God

working in them. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6. 29). Also, Jesus Himself will carry them through life and safely bring them through death and into glory. His instruction to His bride is that she should "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6. 12), and call upon Him for all the rich supplies of grace that are in Him to an eternal fulness. "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1. 19).

In His government the Lord saves His people day by day. By His gracious operations He saves them from their sins, their sinful selves, and from all the malice and subtilty of the powers of darkness. His love saves them from their love of sin, and from all things that would destroy their souls. They are saved from the curse of the law, also from a well-deserved hell, and "from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1. 10). In Mark chapter 9, Jesus speaks of a "fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (verses 45, 46).

How the dear saints need so much saving in all their afflictions, and in all their troubles here below. We need so much saving from our hard hearts, worldly ways, fleshly minds and from a prayerless spirit, which we can so easily fall into.

"Jesus is a mighty Saviour;  
 Helpless souls have here a Friend;  
 He has borne their misbehaviour,  
 And His mercy knows no end;  
 O ye helpless,  
 Come, and on His grace depend.

"Yes, the very worst of sinners,  
 Who upon His grace rely,  
 Shall of endless bliss be winners;  
 And shall sing, beyond the sky,  
 Songs of praises  
 To the Lamb that once did die."

The Lord's dear people prove through all the days of their pilgrimage that the Lord Jesus whom they so much need is not only "faithful that promised," but is also "mighty to save." The Apostle Paul not only delighted to write, but also delighted to preach, "But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 24, 25).

"Saved is the sinner that believes,  
 The sacred gospel annals show;  
 To him repentance Jesus gives,  
 And sin's complete remission too.

“Jesus, Thy Godhead, blood, and name  
O! ’tis eternal life to know;  
Here let my soul her hold maintain,  
When pressed by conscience, wrath, or law.”

“But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation:  
ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end” (Isa. 45. 17).

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### THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION

*Substance of sermon preached by John Hervey Gosden at  
Chippenham on June 10th, 1959*

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**Text:** “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2. 14, 15).

Death is an unspeakably solemn event. It finally obliterates all human distinctions, and eternally fixes one of two states upon each individual person. Very solemn to be mortal and yet to have an immortal being that will either dwell with God for ever in holy felicity, or be in perdition under God’s wrath! It is because we are sinners that we are mortal. Death came by the sin of man, according to God’s own warning (see Gen. 2. 17), and all the inconveniences of our mortal lives are the result of our sin. It brings woe into the human race; it has brought trouble to the whole creation.

But the Scriptures show that the great and eternal God did from eternity have regard for mankind, for some part of the human race, and made provision with regard to that mortality and the sin that procured it, to remove sin’s guilt and pollution, and ultimately to obliterate sin itself, to destroy the works of Satan, and to honour man in a standing, a position, and a relationship better than before the Fall. All this is revealed in and by the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is called by the apostle in this chapter a “so great salvation.” But “who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (Isa. 53. 1). “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Heb. 2. 3). Most people do neglect it, because, as was implied in the hymn sung (“Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,” etc., 723), there is no sense of the need of it.

People who want religion may acquire some kind of religiousness that satisfies their natural bent and predilections [preferences in the mind], but there is no real, pressing sense of the need of salvation. It is

the Holy Spirit who reveals to the soul this dire necessity. It is not *religion* that will do us good, but *salvation*, and I believe that when people are brought to the point implied in our text, they will feel that. O, to be facing eternity, to be a dying mortal, soon to have to give an account to God; then to be unprepared and to die in our sins and to hear that dreadful word, “Depart from Me; I never knew you!” – can anything be more dreadful, more horrible, more despairing than that? Yet how many go through their lives apparently without any concern at all about how they will spend eternity! Better, immeasurably better – painful and mortifying as it may be – to walk through trouble and even in bondage and fear, with an anxiety before God concerning life’s last hour, than to be deceived by a false, superficial religiousness that does not give union to Christ, does not come by the Holy Ghost.

The apostle in this chapter quotes from the Psalm in considering the greatness of this provision of God for man’s salvation, and says, “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” So self-consequential and self-important are little bits of dust and polluted sinners, as we are, that we think God ought to accommodate Himself to us! But if we are rightly taught, we shall tremble at His majesty, at His holiness, at His justice, at His omniscience, His eternity, His omnipotence, and all His attributes. As taught of the Spirit, we shall not wish Him any different from what He is. O, God is righteous in all His works and ways, and yet He has revealed in the Scriptures that He can and does remain His own immutable Self in every characteristic, in every divine perfection – that without sully His holiness or in any wise affecting His character, He can be mindful of poor, sinful men, and visit them with salvation!

In order to do this He sent His own dear Son, constituted Him His righteous Servant, and provided for Him a humanity which He could inhabit and did take up into union with Himself, a personal union which is ineffable [unutterable] but very real and will never be dissolved. When the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, appeared as the Son of Man, there was a union formed between humanity and Deity in the one Person of Christ which will be the wonder of angels and the admiration of saints through eternity.

“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. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one” – that is, one nature – “for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold I and

the children which God hath given Me" (Heb. 2. 10-13). Therefore it was necessary, if God was to forgive sins and sanctify and justify and glorify His adopted children, who were sinners, that His beloved Son should obey the law, receive the imputation of sin, and consequently experience the condemnation of that imputed sin in His own Person, so as to reconcile sinners to God and to make an open channel for the outflow of divine mercy and love to those who deserved nothing better than hell.

The gospel is indeed profound. The mystery of godliness is such a deep mystery so as none can comprehend it, though as revealed by the Holy Ghost it is apprehensible to faith. This chapter sets forth in a very remarkable way the greatness of the Person of Christ who is "the wisdom of God in a mystery" (1 Cor. 2. 7), that "Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2. 16). Mysteriously, but really. He took on Him the nature of man, without the sin of man. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3. 16).

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." "Likewise" here means that He really, truly took human nature, complete human nature, body and soul, into union with His Person; but it does *not* mean that He took human nature as deriving it from natural generation. We need always to remember, and shall, as taught by the Spirit, believe and rejoice in the truth that the Lord Jesus really partook of human nature, but was ever utterly untainted by human sin; never did He partake of human sin. The mystery of this is profound, how God could and did provide for His divine Son a humanity, this same human nature as ours, but without sin. O I do bless God sometimes in my spirit for this truth, because all that the dear Redeemer ever did, all that ever He suffered, must be without any real efficacy towards salvation, had He partaken of human sin. It is a cardinal doctrine of our most holy faith which the Holy Ghost has most mercifully laid down in Scripture, that He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7. 26).

Even when the Lord Jesus was about to be born of the virgin Mary, it was declared by the Spirit that that "Holy Thing" which should be born of her was of the Holy Ghost (see Luke 1. 35). He calls it a "Holy Thing" for two reasons: one reason is what I have stated – it was not by natural generation; and the second reason is that that humanity never had a personal subsistence apart from the divine Person of the Son of God. I do not want to enter improperly or speculatively into the profound doctrines of Christ, though I believe the Lord does give His people, even

the simplest believer, to feel from time to time very thankful that, though they cannot understand, yet they do believe and love the Incarnate Mystery, which becomes food, spiritual nourishment, to their souls.

“He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” The condescension, the great and mighty stoop, the exercise of infinite grace and love and faithfulness that was manifested in the coming of the Lord Jesus, is to be admired. For, “He shall come to be ... admired in all them that believe” (2 Thess. 1. 10). Is it admired in *you*? Did you ever get a touch of this truth upon your heart, a sensation, a mollifying influence in a perception that He thus “humbled Himself” for you? O, I have, I believe, once or twice in my life, felt the influence of this upon my heart. It *does* have a softening, humbling, meekening, dissolving, sanctifying influence wherever it is made known in any measure. The Son of God stooped low. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8. 9).

“Likewise took part of the same” – experienced all the natural and unsinning infirmities of our flesh. He knew what it was to be weary, He knew what it was to be hungry and thirsty, He knew what it was to experience natural sorrow, and He knew what it was to be tempted. He knew what it was to suffer at the hands of men, and He knew what it was to suffer from God Himself. He took our nature in order to live a life of holy obedience, and to die a death of infinite merit as a Substitute, to swallow up the curse, abolish the death due to His people, and bring in an everlasting righteousness to justify the ungodly.

“He ... took part of the same, that **through death** He might ... deliver.” He must die. He came to die. All His obedience must find its climax and completion in His precious death. It was the penalty due to sin. That penalty came to Christ by the justice of God. For by divine grace He stood surety for sinners. Think of it, sinner! And then consider the manner of His death, crucifixion. He was crucified between two thieves; an ignominious death! “He was reckoned among the transgressors” (Luke 22. 37). Men reckoned Him among them. They called Him a blasphemer. O what a dreadful thing! Think of it! He who is God, God the Son, God who in His mercy and faithfulness and love and condescension came down to take our nature, and then because He claimed to be the Son of God was charged by His creatures with blasphemy, that He *made* Himself equal with God in that claim! What a mercy it is that what He claimed is true! He did not *make* Himself the Son of God, but He *was* the Son of God; the Son of God in truth and in love from all eternity. It was they who blasphemed.

But it was not what man did to Him that dealt with sin. It was what God did to Him. “He was reckoned among the transgressors” by God



Himself. That is the whole point of Christ's death. He did truly suffer from man, from His enemies and from His friends, and from the devil; but that was not enough. God Himself inflicted upon Him suffering, Himself put Him to grief. God "made Him to be sin ... who knew no sin"! O, how solemn this is! If we got a real, spiritual view of this, I am sure it would capacitate us, as nothing else can, to hate sin as it *is* sin. I have to make a confession, I do it before God often, that my nature loves sin. It really loves sin; it would revel in it if not subdued by the grace of God. No doubt there are many people who dread the punishment due to sin, may be afraid to commit outrageous evils because of that fear of punishment, who yet never repent of their sin before God, because ignorant of its nature. The only thing that can give us a right, adequate apprehension of the nature of sin, is the cross of Christ. There you see sin in its blackness. He did not spare His own Son from spitting, shame, ignominy, nor from the curse. "He hath put Him to grief." O, solemn! Yet no less than that would do for the removal of sin. Look at it, sinner, as well as you can, the Lord the Spirit helping you. O, if He conduct us to Calvary's cross, not in an external imagination of the scene but in a spiritual view of it, to see beneath the surface the transaction that was there concluded, when Jehovah made His righteous Servant, His co-equal, holy Son incarnate, "to be sin," who knew no sin, and inflicted upon Him the unmitigated wrath of divine justice, the curse due to that sin, then we shall see a little of what sin really is. And not only so, we should also see a little of what divine love is. If anything could have quenched the love of God for sinners, surely the possibility of His dear Son having thus to suffer would have quenched His love, or allowed His people to die in their sins and to be condemned. But the purpose of God in Christ Jesus was to *save* them. His electing love could never be deflected. Nothing could alter or alienate His love from those whom He chose in Christ Jesus. O, here are the perfections of Jehovah, at the cross! I am sure of this, if ever our souls are fruitful in repentance and humility and love, and zeal for the glory of God, and hatred to sin, it will be when we get such a glimpse of the Redeemer in His atoning death.

"Through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." The devil has a great power, greater than we can conceive. Mercifully, his power is not infinite; and it is a power that the eternal God will overthrow in respect to His people, because when the Lord of life and glory died, He made up the breach in the law, He honoured divine justice, and He took away the sting of death which is sin, and the devil has nothing to work upon. I like the word of Newton's in this particular; speaking of a troubled sinner who could not seem to find power to overcome Satan's stranglehold, his temptation concerning

his interest, because of his guilt, Newton makes the good man say to the Saviour:

“Tell him Thou hast paid for all,  
And that will strike him dumb.”

And it does! A friend in the interval was speaking about temptation, and reminded me of what was said about the Lord Jesus, that He suffered temptation in all points like as we do, yet without sin, and is able to succour them that are tempted because He Himself has suffered being tempted. Now that succour which He ministers to His people is not only from His own personal experience of suffering temptation from the enemy, but also from His having overcome him in His death. He destroyed him that had the power of death. He did not destroy Satan’s being. Oh, he is a very real being. Satan is the god of this world, and has apparently the majority of its inhabitants under his satanic thralldom. Only those who are regenerated by the Spirit are brought from under that thralldom; then his kingdom is overthrown in their souls. But the Lord Jesus Christ is able to deliver, and does deliver, those who through a sense of fear and guilt and unpardoned sin, and a sense of unrighteousness, are all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Now this deliverance is through faith. It is by the Holy Spirit conveying to a poor, troubled, fearful sinner the virtue of Christ’s death, the sweet fruit of His bitter sacrifice. First of all, in communicating divine remission. The remission of sin, borne into the conscience by the power of Christ’s Spirit, will remove slavish dread and the fear of death. One has said, and it really is true in doctrine and experience:

“If sin be pardoned, I’m secure;  
Death has no sting beside;  
The law gives sin its damning power,  
But Christ, my ransom, died.”

Now you cannot say that until the Holy Spirit bears witness with your spirit that it is so. You may have a hope of it; you may say feelingly, “I have no hope apart from it,” and that is not a bad place to be in. Really to say, “I must have Christ as All in all, or sink in ruin, guilt and thrall,” is a place in which I believe no finally-lost sinner was ever found. If the Lord has brought you there, and your hope is that Christ died for you, then the one thing for you, as enabled, is to wait at His footstool until He gives you that divine assurance. Then you will know what forgiveness is. It is a real, felt experience in the soul.

I do not want to bring any of you into bondage by suggesting that if you have never yet had this you are altogether wrong, but I would say tenderly this, that though it is a good thing if your hope is there, it is

better if, with that hope, you are enabled to seek the Lord to confirm that hope with His seal on your heart, so as to give you to *know*. It is a great attainment, I admit. I believe the good and great Philpot called it one of the greatest attainments a child of God could have in this life. But great things we may *ask*, though when we ask great things from the Lord in prayer, we may say, honestly, feeling it, that we do not deserve one crumb of mercy. The Lord will never disallow that. He knows we have no desert, and He does not claim any desert. What He does claim is your heart, and He will get it! He will make Himself and His forgiving love and precious blood so important to you that you will never rest until you have the experience of it in your soul. O it is a great day for one who is thus delivered from the dread of dying!

“Whither should a wretch be flying,  
But to Him who comfort gives?  
Whither, from the dread of dying,  
But to Him who ever lives?”

And you will get that, sinner! O you will be able to say, when the Lord gives you that blessing in your heart, “Now I am not afraid of death; it has no curse in it, solemn though it is. Christ, my Ransom, tasted death, overcame it, and He *lives* triumphant over the grave.” A view of a risen Christ, a touch of His love in your heart, a glimpse of His beauty, and some apprehension that He is your Forerunner, Intercessor and King in heaven, will at least allay, if it does not entirely dispel, the fear of death. For love, we read in John’s Epistle, casteth out tormenting fear (see 1 John 4. 18). What love? Only one love, the love of Christ. O when the love of Christ, the dying love of the Saviour, is shed abroad in the sinner’s heart, it fortifies that heart, it draws the affections, it gives humble courage concerning pilgrimage, to trust in the Lord, and will enable a sinner to commit his departing soul into the hands of his once-crucified but now ever-living Redeemer.

Dr. Owen speaks of the last victorious act of faith, when the departing soul commits itself into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. O what a favour it will be, if the Lord brings us to that end, to have before us what is spoken in the fourteenth of John: “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14. 2, 3). Is that what you hope for? If that hope is in your heart, and in my heart, while it lives there it will be a great power to preserve us from wilful sinning, and it will be a power to strengthen us to fight the good fight of faith against Satan, sin, the world and self. You may depend upon it, if we are full of slavish fear, there will be little fighting; but said

the psalmist, “Be of good courage” (Psa. 27. 14, 31. 24). Why? Why, because the great Captain, our Saviour, stood the test, experienced trouble, curse, death, and is risen again and enthroned above, and has said, “Where I am, there shall also My servant be” (John 12. 26). Faith can sometimes, so to speak, look right across an open grave into eternity, and see a safe passage through the death and resurrection of Christ.

It is a wonderful encouragement to a poor, trembling sinner that is so often liable to bondage, when he gets these glimpses, these touches; but though the glimpses and touches are so infrequent and so brief, the fulness of the truth, the ocean fulness of Christ in His grace and in His love and in His merit, this same fulness remains undiminishable. It is only when faith is lifted up, when faith is strengthened and enabled to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus, that thus we can triumph. There is much to combat with in this life, and the Lord knows it, and He sends help from the sanctuary to His people, and strengthens them out of Zion from time to time, by His good Spirit. Paul speaks of this in the Epistle to the Ephesians, that the Ephesian believers might be “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man”; that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that they might be “rooted and grounded in love,” and that they might “comprehend ... the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of the “love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Eph. 3. 16-19).

When you are led a little into the love of Christ, you will feel a strengthening in your heart, for nothing can separate from it. Paul was persuaded of that. Not death nor life. Death will not; life will not. Perhaps some of you know this point in experience: you have had a visit here and there, once or twice in your life, when Christ has been precious in your heart, you have felt Him to be to you the only desirable Object, all-sufficient for you, and you have told Him you did not need a creature. You committed yourself unreservedly to Him, and felt you could die, and would be glad to go, to be “absent from the body” and “present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5. 8). Now that is a victory over death by faith. We do not *live* there! No, you may sometimes feel that you are more afraid of life than of death. I do not say that lightly. Death is very solemn to me at times, though I must be getting near the end now. Only when Christ is in view, and His love is in the heart, and His atonement on the conscience, can one really feel confident about eternity. It is a wonderful mercy ever to know that.

But life – O, the pitfalls, the snares, the almost incessant temptations and the perplexities, the amazing things with which we meet, the unheard-of things that come before us! Shall we get through? Can we overcome the world? “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5. 4). O it is a wonderful conflict! The world is

alluring, the world is hostile, the world is defiling, and we are weak. I have thought sometimes, if I were left for five minutes to my own resources and the devil had his own way with me, I should fall, dishonour the Lord's name and cause, and undo all my long profession. We cannot stand, my friends, unless the Lord holds us up. O I tremble sometimes about my life when all the powers of nature fail – except sin; alas, sinful nature seems to be strong enough. But one thing is to be said; the Lord has *promised*: “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12. 9), and He is in heaven to fulfil that promise. The Lord help us to think of it and grant us the sweet assurance of it! Christ who died on the cross lives in heaven to bring His people safely there. In this very chapter that is anticipated. He said, “Behold I and the children which God hath given Me” (verse 13). He will present His people to Himself spotless, unproveable and unrebukable and holy in the great day.

That will not make you careless about your life, but it will strengthen your faith in resisting evil and praying for upholding grace down to the end. O to be kept! “Father,” said the Lord Jesus when on earth to His divine Father in heaven, “keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are” (John 17. 11). If we have an interest in that prayer, how good it will be, to be “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (1 Pet. 1. 5); for the end of faith is the salvation of the soul. It is *heaven!* And every time you get access to Him at the throne of grace with your troubles, temptations, sorrows and losses, you get a victory. O the temptations of the enemy are very severe at times. I have felt more temptation the last few months concerning some doctrines and my own case and circumstances than perhaps ever before in my long life. Satan knows a very great deal. I believe he knows more about us than we think. He knows just where to lay his snares. He knows the very vulnerable point in which to inject his arrows; and how solemn it is to feel that within us which is in alliance with Satan!

You may sometimes find an exercise like this. I was favoured to find it a few days ago under severe temptation. I found a power, not to parry [ward off] the blows of Satan or his arrows, but to turn to the Lord, and I remembered His temptations, and I got near to Him at the throne of grace, I believe, and told Him in my simple way, and blessed Him, that He had been tempted like as His people are, but that He was sinless and I am full of sin; and then it was put in my mouth, as it were, to plead His precious blood. He is not only able to succour tempted people because He has experienced temptation, but through faith in His sin-atonement death He is able to deliver His tempted people from the fear of death and from the sin to which Satan tempts them, and to which they have a natural

liability. If by the Holy Spirit's help you work that out in experience, it will make Christ very precious. There is something very practical about real religion. It is not something floating up in the air, in notion; it comes right into the soul, into the experience, and you have to live by this faith upon the Lord Jesus, struggling on, cleaving to Him as well as you can, and turning the battle to the gate by prayer and supplication.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." When we come down to our last hour, if the Lord is with us, if we hear that blessed voice of the King, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25. 34), death will be no terror then. No, it will be to meet the King of grace, and *His presence will swallow up the king of terrors*. We read in Timothy, He "abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10).

Well, this is a brief and simple word about a profound truth. I hope I have not damaged the truth by my poor word about it, but if you are inside this text, my friends, you are favoured people, though you may have trouble. Christ will be precious to you, your hope will be fixed in Him, and He will bring you through. O He will bring you through! He will not fail you. No; He says, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (see Deut. 31. 6 and Heb. 13. 5). What a mercy it is to have a faithful Friend in heaven who is the Son of God, who loves His people even to the end! Not like human friends; they change, we lose them; but He lives, ever lives to make intercession, ever lives to bring His people safely through to Himself. O what a day it will be!

May the Lord put us among His people while we are here below! Balaam wished to die the death of the righteous, but he was quite willing and anxious to live such a life as would gain the wages of unrighteousness. He had no care for God's character or a righteous life; and his desire to die the death of the righteous therefore was only a natural desire to escape trouble. But the more you believe in the Lord Jesus, the more you hope that He suffered for your sins, the more you will dread sinning against Him. I am sure that is so. People talk about the doctrines of grace leading to careless lives! I do not believe it at all, at least, unless the doctrine is merely held in a hardened conscience and judgmentally. It may then be so. But if you know in your heart something – if but a little – of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, of His love and mercy and blood-bought pardon and sweet presence, you know it makes sin your greatest trouble and you want to be as holy as He is holy. And the day is coming when that will be so, when the child of God

will be for ever done with sin. O what a blessed prospect it is, to be like Him and with Him! "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be **like Him**; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2).

May the Lord grant to us a real assurance of this blessed prospect, to help us through our journey, and to make us live tenderly in His holy fear all our days!

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## REVIVING EXPERIENCE

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Maidstone  
1933

*To Mr. J.H. Gosden*

My dear Pastor,

As far as I know my own heart, I do not want to publish my experience; but feeling lately much deep searching in soul concerning eternity, on Thursday evening God came to me and gave me such a revelation of Christ in His bitter sufferings and death; I felt it on my mind to write a few lines. It began with the verse:

"Yes, now I know 'tis He, 'tis He!  
'Tis Jesus, God's dear Son,  
Wrapped in humanity, to die  
For crimes that I had done!"

The whole hymn has been sweet to me at times, but never before have I had such a mighty power in my heart as then. I saw by precious faith my own sins – yes, mine – pierced His sacred hands and side; my sins put that crown of thorns on His precious head. O the bitterness I felt, and the hatred to sin. But it overwhelmed me with love to the Lord Jesus Christ as well as grief for being such a sinner. Then I felt that grace and peace had been multiplied, Christ made very precious, and the sweet promises of God flowed into my soul until I was quite lost to being in this poor body. Among the many precious words were those: "Rise up, My love, ... and come away"; the winter is over and gone; "the time of the singing of birds is come," etc. (see Song 2. 10-12). You may say: There is not much cause for singing in these days. This I painfully feel; but when He shines into my poor, troubled heart, then for the time being everything else is out of sight. He then is to me All in all.

Then the service on Lord's day was so confirming to my faith. If I had a thousand tongues I could not set it forth. And even with all the troubles around in the nation, but more so in the beloved church of God (which I find very few can understand), I feel it a very great mercy that

I have One in heaven who knows everything that exercises me. He is my strong refuge. To Him I can tell all my griefs and pains. His precious blood is my hope for cleansing and heaven; that heavenly robe which He wrought out for poor sinners that are naked, is my covering; and when I by faith can know by divine teaching that the sting of death was taken away by His sin-atonement death, then I hope for victory at last. I well remember once having these words applied: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15. 57). O what words for a wretched sinner! But there must be the battle before the victory, and the battlefield is the sinner's heart (as you said). And I do not know how many more battles I must fight; but I have nothing to rest upon except His faithfulness; I cannot rest without Him; He must do all for me now and to the end. But I do desire to love and fear His holy name.

I have a desire to send a trifle [a little] for the poor; after receiving so marked an answer to my poor groanings, may I not say it is a thank-offering? It is very little. The dear Lord has been so very faithful to me, an unfaithful creature. I do beg Him to keep me close to Him, trusting in His righteousness. How unworthy I do feel to have another earnest of the inheritance, a blessed foretaste of that rest which remaineth to the people of God. O this has been so very real to me. I would live without sin, for it brings such death. Yet He is above all this to me at times. Pardon all that is wrong and forgive me in taking such liberty.

Christian love,

Yours affectionately,

Rhoda Thomas

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### **CHRIST THE ROSE OF SHARON AND THE LILY OF THE VALLEYS**

*Extract from a sermon by Mr. Gerald D. Buss*

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The rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys are indeed found in the valley. And thus we read here of Christ in humiliation, in two senses. We read in Isaiah's prophesy: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Isa. 42. 2, 3). Christ lived meekly, humbly, lowly in heart; His humiliation. And just as literally if you go to pick the lily, you must go into the valley, to enjoy anything of Christ you will need to be humble too. There can be no fellowship between a proud sinner and a humble Saviour. Pride cannot enter into fellowship with Him. Hart, speaking of pride, said,



“For should it dare to enter there,  
’Twould soon be drowned in blood.”

O the wretchedness of our pride! Have we anything to be proud of? Anything to boast of? We are nothing but filthy rags. Without Him we can do nothing. But may we be willing to be meek, lowly in heart like our Saviour, like our Master, who “humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2. 8).

“I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys” (Song 2. 1). But then also it means this: these two flowers give a most sweet fragrance; the smell is sweet, attractive, pleasant. And the name of Christ is as ointment poured forth. The life of the Lord Jesus, O what a sweet savour it leaves in the hearts of God’s dear children! Does it in yours? How often our life does not leave a sweet savour, does it? When angry words have gone forth from your lips, or unjust, unkind words, and when you have behaved in an un-Christlike way, what a *bad* savour it leaves! How condemned many of us are in this – a worldly conversation, a careless walk! It leaves a bad savour. But the words of Christ left a sweet savour.

We read that when Noah came out of the ark, the first thing he did was to offer a sacrifice of clean beasts to the Lord, and we read, “The LORD smelled a sweet savour” (Gen. 8. 21). God smelled a sweet savour in the sacrifice of His dear Son; and just as the lilies of the valleys, and the rose of Sharon sent out a sweet fragrance, so the life and suffering, the death, the resurrection and the intercession of the Lord Jesus perfumed heaven itself with a sweet savour. It was that savour which perfumed His intercession, it is *that* that gives authority to His church. And so the Father looks with approbation on Him: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3. 17).

So, if any of us feel the badness of our savour, of the unsavoury walk, and the unsavoury nature of our hearts, what a mercy it is to turn from self and be given by faith a sweet smell of this rose of Sharon and lily of the valleys! How it would revive our souls and restore our spirits! It would sanctify us, wouldn’t it? “I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys.”

But then the word goes on: “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” You see, we have here a distinction – a lily surrounded by thorns. What a distinction! You see, although the Lord Jesus Christ dwelt among men as a Man, yet we read, He was “separate from sinners” (Heb. 7. 26). And O the thorny path He trod: whether it was the temptations of Satan, whether it was the antagonism of an ungodly world, or of a professing world, or whether it was the forsaking by even His own disciples! It was a thorny path. Literally a crown of thorns was forced upon His head by the Roman soldiers. And the

deepest thing of all was when that sorrowful cry went forth: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27. 46).

“As the lily among thorns.” O He had a thorny path; every step that He took seemed to have a thorn in it, one way or another. “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” You see this when He was baptized. No sooner had He come up from those waters, that Father, Son and Holy Ghost sanctified in that sacred manner, than we read: “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matt. 4. 1).

“As the lily among thorns.” Then, does the thorn change the nature of the lily? However many thorns may surround the lily, it cannot alter its nature. It is *still* a lily, and they are *still* thorns. So, my dear friends, the Lord Jesus Christ did not lose His integrity, did not lose His innocence, or His holiness, or His nature, but through it all, to His dying moments, He was still the lily, the lily of the valleys.

“As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” Look how tender, how sensitive the lily is. It only opens its petals to sunshine. What a sensitive place for it to be in – among the thorns! Yes, for the Lord Jesus Christ was sensitive. You see, sin hardens, and that is why we are hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin; but the Lord Jesus was never hardened. So how sensitive He must have been, as He lived in this world of sin! How sensitive He must have been to every arrow of the adversary, and every opposition of the world! O His sensitivity!

“That human heart He still retains,  
Though throned in highest bliss;  
And feels each tempted member’s pains;  
For our affliction’s His.”

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## REFLECTIONS ON IMMANUEL’S BIRTH

*Extract from Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

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Reader! how little did the Roman Emperor Augustus, or his deputy Cyrenius, conceive, that the over-ruling power of God so arranged the taxation, that the chief object to which it should minister, should be to bring the virgin Mary to Bethlehem, and mark the precise period of the birth of Christ! How unconscious were the Jewish shepherds, when keeping watch over their flocks by night, until the message from heaven informed them of the wonderful event of the arrival of the Saviour! And O the astonishing mystery, when God, who hath recorded from all eternity the names of His redeemed in the book of life, brings them

acquainted with the unspeakable mercy, and manifests Himself to them otherwise than He doth to the world. Reader! can you and I mark down our personal knowledge of these things, so as with Simeon or Anna declare, our eyes have seen Christ's salvation, and speak of the Lord Jesus to all them that look for redemption in Jerusalem?

Precious Lord Jesus! when I behold Thy obscure birth, Thy low circumstances and mean accommodation, a manger only to receive Thee in Thine entrance into this our world, and no room for Thee in the inn, O what a lively representation was there in this, of all the future circumstances of Thy life. Truly didst Thou say, and the truth holds equally good in all ages, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (Luke 7. 23). My soul! delight thou more and more in the sweet testimonies of thy Lord's humanity, while beholding Him at the same time possessing all the proofs of Godhead. For by both only could Jesus be suited for thee as thy Surety, Husband and Saviour. O the preciousness of that mystery, which without controversy is great, God was manifest in the flesh!

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### THE HUMBLING GRACE OF GOD

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November 9th, 1895

My dear Friend,

First I desire to rejoice with you in the Lord's goodness manifested in bringing your dear child into His fold in early life, also in encouraging you in your labour of love at B—.

I, for one, can speak of great things accomplished through your instrumentality. The last time but one you came here is a memorable one indeed, for I was delivered from one of the most awful temptations a poor soul could pass through. O how I had struggled against the hated monster, Pride; but there was a time set, and I desire to feel thankful that I have not been suffered to swell to such a degree since. Pride is still an inmate of my heart, and sometimes, even when favoured by the Lord, it will come up with its hated language; but I prove that

"Every prop will, first or last,  
Sink or fail, but Jesus Christ."

I have asked myself this week what I know of Him, not in an historical way, but by the inwrought experience of Him by the only Teacher. I cannot boast of my knowledge of Him. I say with Paul, "That I may know Him." There have been times when I have had to beg to be taught afresh what God is. O how sure I am that nature fails here. I am walking

out now answers to the honest cries of my heart in years past, to be kept loose from everything upon earth; but O the painful, crucifying means used!

Recently we were watching the Lord's hand in providence, sometimes favoured with sweet access to Himself, and sometimes feeling as low as it seemed possible to sink. One such time I cannot forget. I wondered where and how the scene would end, but the Lord's eye was upon me for good. When the furnace had had its designed effect in bringing me down to His blessed feet, He appeared to my relief, raised me out of the horrible pit, and brought forth prayer and praise from my heart. I felt so blessed and strengthened the next day (Sunday) that when friends sympathised with us in our position I needed no pity, for I felt to be the most favoured of women. O the blessed appearances of Elijah's God in our times of need! . . .

Mercy Dann

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### **JESUS, OUR SAVIOUR FROM SIN**

*An extract from Herman Witsius (1636-1708) of The Netherlands*

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Salvation consists of two parts: *freedom from all evil, and the participation of all good.*

Sin is the greatest of all evils, the spring and origin of every other misery, and sufficient of itself to render a man extremely wretched. No other evil is mentioned by the angel, when he explains the reason of the name JESUS. That sin is the sum and quintessence of all misery, is demonstrated in the following manner. The chief happiness of man consists in likeness to God. This is not only affirmed by the Apostle John, but it was even discovered by the light of nature to several of the heathen philosophers. It is a principle so evidently true, that the devil himself, in his reasoning with our first parents, took it for granted as of unquestionable certainty. Hence it follows, that he who is the most unlike to the blessed God, is in by far the most miserable state. Besides, the unspotted holiness of God is the glory of all the divine perfections; and, accordingly, He is called "glorious in holiness" (Exod. 15. 11). Sin is an evil extremely contrary to that holiness. We must conclude, therefore, that sin, which places man in a condition the most unlike, nay, diametrically opposite, to the divine blessedness, is the greatest misery of man.

The malignity of sin will still more deeply penetrate the conscience, if we consider that the three following things are in it:

1. An extreme *pollution*, which infects the whole soul, and which is directly contrary to the glorious beauty of the divine image.

2. A *power* of tyrannical dominion, by which it deprives men of all that liberty and dignity which are worthy of the sons of God, and wreathes about their neck a galling and oppressive yoke, setting no bounds or measure to their labour, but, with the daughter of the horseleach, incessantly crying, "Give, give" (Prov. 30. 15).

3. *Guilt*, which renders the sinner obnoxious [vulnerable or liable] to every kind of punishment in soul and body, to be undergone through eternity. The truth is, that unless satisfaction to divine justice arise from some other quarter, all hope of recovery being utterly cut off, there remaineth nothing to the man that has offended even in a single instance, "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10. 27). Thus all other evils and miseries may be referred to sin, because the obligation to suffer them arises from sin.

But when sin is put away, no evil can remain. Why should God punish an admirable work of His hands, in which He finds nothing contrary to His nature, or offensive to the eyes of His holiness? Hence the blessedness mentioned by David: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven" (Psa. 32. 1).

It is not intended, nevertheless, that the absence of this evil, or that freedom from misery, includes the whole of happiness; for a state of perfect happiness also comprises the possession of all that is good. But as darkness is dispelled by nothing but light, as nakedness is remedied by nothing but garments, as poverty is removed by nothing but riches, so sin can be removed, with respect to its *guilt*, only by such a righteousness as is, at the same time, the ground of a title to life; with respect to its *dominion* and *pollution*, only by the sanctification of the Spirit; with respect to the *curse* which it brings, only by the communication of the divine favour. It is because these blessings cannot be separated, that our salvation is represented as consisting in the removal of sin.

The following benefits are essential to salvation:

1. The participation of a righteousness by which we may obtain "justification of life."

2. "True holiness," in which the glories of the divine image may shine forth, which is the ornament of the house of God, and the beauty of every daughter of the king.

3. Communion with God in grace, so that we may say, "The LORD is the Portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot" (Psa. 16. 5). This communion with God includes, not only the privilege of approaching familiarly to Him, to behold Him, with open eyes, in the sanctuary of devout prayer and meditation, but also that *boldness* by which we can pour forth all the sorrows of a distressed heart

into His bosom, and confidently express our stammering requests, soliciting a richer supply of grace; that descent of divine grace, by which He kindly visits the soul whom He loves, and that loves Him in return, and by which He *speaks to the heart* in the most affectionate terms; and, in fine [to sum up], that enjoyment of God which consists in this, that the soul sweetly acquiesces in Him as its treasure, is enriched by His riches, nourished by His abundance, protected by His power, guided by His wisdom, refreshed by His goodness, replenished by His sufficiency; so that it knows nothing desirable except the full enjoyment of Him, a felicity of which in this world it has only the first fruits.

4. Then follow, peace of conscience, the “riches of the full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2. 2), and the strongest certainty with regard to the possession of perfect felicity in due season; from whence arises a “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” “In whom,” says Peter, “though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice” (1 Pet. 1. 8).

5. The perfect enjoyment of God in glory, first, in the soul after its departure from the prison of this carnal body, and then in body and soul together, when the body shall have become glorious and heavenly, after a blessed resurrection.

Such is the salvation, in reference to which the Son of God is called JESUS.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Behold the Lamb**, prayer meeting addresses by James Kidwell Popham; hardback; 329 pages; price £15 plus £2.95 postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from the Harpenden bookroom and agents.

This is a valuable book, and its value is in the priceless and glorious gospel truths that are declared in these prayer meeting addresses, by J.K. Popham. J.K. Popham is a household name among our churches (as are William Gadsby and J.C. Philpot), on account of the sweet fragrance of Christ that pervaded all his sermons and addresses. He ever sought to exalt the dear Saviour whom he loved and adored. J.K. Popham was greatly endowed with spiritual understanding and blessed with gracious skill, to exalt the dear Redeemer, Jesus Christ, very highly, and yet to bring Immanuel’s wondrous love, merit, grace and goodness, down to the spiritual wounds and sores of the poor and needy sinners in Zion. He well knew the path and experience of salvation by grace, in the struggles and temptations that pilgrims have to walk through.

It is so apparent from his utterances in the pulpit that he was favoured with much personal communion with his dear Saviour. His ministry was so very clear on the doctrine of Christ and His rich, free grace; also in setting forth the love of God, and the Holy Spirit’s effectual and comforting work in the soul. He laid

sinners low in the dust and by the Holy Ghost preached Christ to them. Much blessing attended his ministry, and his written works and published sermons and addresses have been made a blessing to many of the Lord's dear people, for his ministry was truly a ministry of the Spirit. J.K. Popham was pastor at Shaw Street, Liverpool, for just a few years, and then ministered to the flock of God at Galeed, Brighton, for nearly fifty-five years, where both the flock and himself were often watered by the "river of the water of life."

There are forty-one gospel prayer meeting addresses which take up 319 pages of the 329 pages in the book. The addresses are arranged in Scripture chronology which is very useful. The first twenty-four addresses are from the Old Testament, with thirteen of them taken from the Psalms. The remaining seventeen are taken from the New Testament. These addresses are not merely shortened sermons, but spiritual and practical expositions, from portions of Scripture. A few are spoken from one verse. Also some are taken from whole chapters or Psalms. We must emphasise the spiritual value of these addresses, together with their practical application and instruction.

We give just one example with an extract from address number 29, from John 15. 1-8:

"'Abide in Me.' How can you, without faith? Faith in Him is an abiding in Him. Faith that cleaves to Him is an abiding. They were cleaving to Him when they said, 'To whom shall we go?' That was an abiding. Many had gone back. To them He appealed; to these, His disciples, He appealed and said, 'Will ye also go away?' And then this abiding in Him in them was manifested: 'To whom shall we go?' The psalmist also was abiding in Him when he said, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.' Job was abiding in Him when he said, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,' and again when he said, 'Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!' Joseph was abiding in Him when he was walking with God in prison; when he clave to his Master and Lord and God in the midst of temptation. Poor sinner, if you have faith, you will cleave to Christ and that is abiding in Him."

There is a short preface by Matthew J. Hyde, who points out a need of prayer meeting addresses for pastorless congregations. There are a number of addresses of various ministers in pamphlet form and in manuscript form. It is a great benefit for such addresses to appear in one volume.

This is a good, timely and profitable publication by The Gospel Standard Trust. The name of J.K. Popham alone recommends the book; however we gladly and warmly recommend this book to our readers.

May it sell well.

**Galeed Chapel, Brighton, A Short History, 1868-2018**, edited by Matthew J. Hyde; paperback; 48 pages; price, free, but a contribution would be welcome; published by Galeed Chapel, Brighton; obtainable from Mr. P.A. Hills, 84 Vale Avenue, Patcham, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 8UA, email: [enquiries@galeedchapel.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@galeedchapel.co.uk).

This short but interesting booklet has been published by the church on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the chapel. It is a concise history, yet with much detail written in a gracious manner.

The history begins with a brief outline of the godly in Brighton from the time of the Reformation to the death of John Grace of The Tabernacle chapel in West Street. After his death in 1865, a small group of believers in 1867 separated to commence services on their own. This little group became the founding members of the church which is now at Galeed chapel. The chapel was built in 1868. The opening services were held on October 15th of that year.

This history, although only 48 pages, has much informative detail and is written in a way which makes it spiritually profitable. There are a number of extracts from letters and writings. It is well illustrated, with photographs of most of the pastors, and some of the deacons.

What a favoured spot Galeed has been to many souls over the years. To view the portraits brings some solemn thoughts. These godly men served the Lord in tender fear and reverential awe and trembling in their day and generation. Now they have gone to their everlasting rest, and praise Immanuel around the throne. May I, and may we each be found among that great company who shall sing the lasting song at Immanuel's feet. May the Lord be gracious still to the church at Galeed, as He opens a new chapter in their history, with the appointment of another pastor.

**The Life and Ministry of Clement Wood**, obtainable from Harpenden bookroom and agents; price £16 plus £2.95 postage. This interesting and spiritually profitable book will make a very suitable and lovely present for birthday, Christmas, new year or any occasion. We hope that it will have a large circulation. Owing to lack of space in the December number, we hope to insert a review in the January 2019 number, God willing.

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## OBITUARY

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**Thomas David Hart**, member and deacon at Blunsdon Hill Chapel and latterly a member at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, passed away on August 27th, 2012.

Our father was born on August 29th, 1930, the second son of James Albert and Mary Ann Hart, and was brought up within the Church of England. In the providence of God, his father passed away when he was just six months old. Our father felt persuaded that this was of the Lord, as his mother's later marriage to Benjamin Hayden, who attended Blunsdon Hill Strict Baptist Chapel, was the means used to bring them as a family within the Gospel Standard Strict Baptist denomination and also for Dad to have a stepfather.

In 1936 there was a very dry summer, and our grandmother had to fetch water from the village well in the centre of Blunsdon village because her own well had dried up. She had to walk past Mr. Hayden's cottage with her water pot, together with our father and his brother Jim



on their way to school. Mr. Hayden stopped her one day and said she could leave her water pot with him and collect it on her way home, as they had plenty of water in their well and it had never been known to run dry. Mr. Hayden then asked our grandmother to go with him to a special service at Blunsdon Hill Chapel, but she was very reluctant to do this for various reasons, being a regular churchgoer.

However, the Lord caused this word to follow her about: "And they all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14. 18). Thus she felt constrained to go, and the Lord blessed the Word to her, such that she gave up her churchgoing and regularly attended Blunsdon Hill Chapel with Mr. Hayden.

On September 6th, 1952, our father visited the Farnborough Airshow with his brother. He witnessed the prototype jet aircraft de Havilland DH 110 WG236 go through the sound barrier in a steep dive from 40,000 feet and pass in front of them. The aircraft then circled around and as it approached the watching crowd, attempted to go into a steep climb. It was at this point the aircraft broke up, with one jet engine travelling harmlessly away from the crowd but the other travelled over their heads and into the watching crowd on a slight hill behind them. They were standing about thirty to forty feet back from the front of the crowd, and although so many were killed and injured, the Lord in mercy preserved him and his brother.

Our father married Elisabeth Mary Hanks on October 11th, 1958 at Rehoboth Chapel, Swindon. They attended Blunsdon Hill Chapel until Dad had his stroke. They were favoured with four sons.

The following is what our father wrote to my brother John:

"I thought it right that I should attempt to reply in some humble measure and tell you a little of my leadings and exercises prior to my being baptized.

"As you said in your letter, beginnings are not easy to pinpoint, but the Lord by the Holy Spirit brings things into our lives to make us *stop and think* and sometimes *tremble*. One such instance was when Mr. Durbidge was at Blunsdon Hill. He looked at the chapel wall and said, 'Could you since you have been in this house of God bear to see your thoughts in bold type printed on the chapel wall for all to read?' Well, I thought *I could not*. Then he said that he could not bear to see his thoughts there. This was solemn to me, thinking the minister's thoughts must be good as his mind must be on the matter he has in mind to preach from, but we have to learn that, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' (Jer. 17. 9). Well, he evidently knew it, but I was still learning what indwelling sin was within my heart.

“At another time when at work on the tractor, the last verse of hymn 698 came with much force, and made me *think and tremble*. The whole verse:

‘But, if still a total stranger  
To His precious name and blood,  
Thou art on the brink of danger;  
Canst thou face a holy God?  
Think and tremble,  
Death is now upon the road.’

“These are two instances which stand out in my mind which cannot be forgotten. I cannot put a date to them, but it was before 1982.

“The year 1982, the centenary year of Rehoboth Chapel, Swindon, was a time I shall always remember. I was much tried, feeling what a sinner I was, that is indwelling sin. Thankfully I have been kept from much outward sin, but I felt much like Legion, the man of the Gadarenes whom no man could tame. My sins were such that no man could tame or cure, and Jesus alone could cast them out as He did for Legion. I did so crave the blessing he had, that is, to be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in my right mind.

“I went to the centenary services at Swindon with my eyes up to the Lord in prayer that this subject would be brought forth and blessed to my soul. Mr. R.C.T. Warboys preached in the afternoon, and I could agree with the things he brought forth, but there was nothing for me. Again, in the evening Mr. L.S.B. Hyde preached, and it seemed it would not come, but when getting near the end of his discourse he went right through the whole narrative. He did not stop where I did, that is to be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, but went on to say how he wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus told him to go and tell his friends what great things God had done for him. This greatly melted me down at Jesus’ feet feeling much of His forgiving love in my poor heart, but to ‘tell to sinners round what a dear Saviour I had found,’ I just could not at that time.

“Then in the autumn of 1982 when out on the tractor cutting the hedges, I was much exercised about my many sins and mourning over many outbursts of sin at things which went wrong at work. I was feeling within that I must do better and pull myself together and try to make myself better, when with much power two verses of hymn 144 came to me and the right tune and I began to sing,

‘The more I strove against its power,  
I sinned and stumbled but the more;  
Till late I heard my Saviour say,  
“Come hither, soul, I AM THE WAY.”’

‘Lo! glad I come; and Thou, blest Lamb,  
Shalt take me to Thee as I am;  
Nothing but sin I Thee can give;  
Nothing but love shall I receive.’

“I sang these two verses with tears streaming from my eyes and had to stop the tractor because I could not see what I was doing. It proved to me I could do nothing to make myself better, and the love of Jesus shed abroad in my poor heart removed all my guilt and sin. Well, when I got home, I looked up the hymn and found that the next verse read:

‘Then will I 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.”’

“Again, I felt I just could not do this and found it impossible to speak to others about these things, though I did enjoy the sweet peace that passeth all understanding in my soul for several days.

“Well, time passed on and I heard many sermons with reference concerning baptism, but nothing moved me at all. One minister said on one occasion he felt sure there was someone before him who ought to come before the church, but I shrank from the thought of such a solemn step.

“In 1984 I had to stay home from work for three months with back trouble, the sciatica pain being most acute in my left leg. I felt sure this was the chastening work of the Lord, but inwardly felt very rebellious and said once or twice, ‘What have I done to deserve this?’ when knowing all the time the real reason. It took a long time with much patience before I was able to resume my work as I then had to go into hospital. While in hospital, I had a nice letter from dear Mr. Jefferys which I treasure now and I did feel a little sweet nearness to the Lord in trying to answer it. The eighty-eighth hymn was made sweet to me at that time, telling Mr. Jefferys of our holiday in the Lake District, how those wonderful views as we climbed the hills reminded me of that hymn and how those wonders were ‘little works compared with one’ (the wonders of redeeming love) – verse 7 being made very special.

“Once again I heard more sermons with the pathway of baptism spoken of many times. Mr. J.A. Short came one Friday evening and speaking on this subject said, ‘There may be someone here who finds it a great barrier to go before the church, that he will have to stand and speak in public prayer at the prayer meetings.’ Then he told us how he first spoke in prayer in public with much fear and trembling with very few words. This was an encouragement to me, for he by the Holy Spirit put his finger right on my case.

“Then at a prayer meeting conducted by Mr. G.D. Buss at Blunsdon Hill, he spoke from Numbers 10 verses 29 to 32, but dwelt much on the second half of the twenty-ninth verse: “Come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.” This was a great encouragement to this poor sinner, and I did feel drawn with the love of Jesus and a love to His people and longing inwardly to join them, though so unworthy.

“Having heard that you had gone before the church and given your testimony and were received unanimously by them, this we heard with great joy in our hearts and an inward longing in my heart to do the same. We came to your baptizing service and were seated at the front, my seat being nearest the aisle. This service meant much more to me than others I had witnessed in the past. When it was over and you were gone into the vestry, the deacon turned round to me and spoke and said, ‘There is a word for you also – “Go and do thou likewise.”’ I could not answer him, but it did increase my exercises at that time.

“I did not want to go and see Mr. H. Mercer without some confirmation from the Lord that what I was about to do was the right thing in His sight, so thought it best to write a letter to hand to him after the Thursday evening service at Swindon. Mr. G.D. Buss was expected to preach. I went to that service with my letter in my pocket and my eyes up to the Lord for a word of confirmation and the devil close at hand suggesting I should tear it up and forget about it. Well, Mr. Buss read two Psalms, 42 and 77, and took his text from the seventy-seventh Psalm verse 10: ‘And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.’

“This service was a most blessed confirmation to me; he said among other things, there may be someone who has been remembering what the Lord has done for their soul here tonight. That someone was this poor sinner.

“After the service, I looked for Mr. H. Mercer but he was not there; he said afterwards he had a cold and was unable to come.

“We had a service at Blunsdon Hill on Friday evening and Mr. L.S.B. Hyde was expected to preach. Well, I thought I have had the fleece made wet at Swindon, it would be wonderful to have it made dry at Blunsdon Hill. The devil said, ‘You can still tear up that letter and no one will know anything about it,’ but I did try to look upward to the God of all mercies and beg of Him to appear for me. Mr. Hyde read the eighteenth chapter of Exodus where Moses sat to judge the people and Moses’ father in law came and saw all he did and gave him advice concerning the matter, in easing his burden in the decisions he had to take with the people when they came to enquire of God. He preached from Deuteronomy 18. 15 and said twice during the service, ‘It may be

a time of decision for someone here tonight.' I was sure that someone was me, and I felt melted down to nothing at Jesus' feet. I was well able to hand my letter to Mr. H. Mercer after the service and tell him it was a time of decision for me.

"That evening we travelled to spend the weekend together and witnessed you being received into the church on the Sunday, a most blessed time for me.

"All the time during these more recent exercises, I had been suffering back pain and I felt persuaded it would get worse if I kept back any longer. Well, it was completely removed by the time I was baptized, which was no small mercy to one so unworthy.

"We had Mr. H. Jempson at Blunsdon Hill just before I was baptized, and he spoke of those that were bidden to the marriage and would not come and those that were compelled to come from the highways and hedges. I found this so applicable to my case.

"Well, I have rambled on, not intending to write so much as this. My one aim is that God may have all the glory, for what He has done for this poor sinner.

"It is vital that we must have an experience, for as the hymnwriter says:

'True religion's more than notion;  
Something *must* be known and felt.'

Here our father's writing ends.

When Dad told me that he had come forward to join the church at Blunsdon Hill, it was, he said, out of love to the Lord Jesus. Mr. H. Mercer received our father into the church and gave him the words in Exodus 33. 14: "My presence shall go with thee."

Father was appointed a deacon at Blunsdon Hill Chapel in April 1991.

From January 1988 to the beginning of February 2008, he acted as chapel groundskeeper. I believe it was a labour of love for him to see the area around the chapel kept tidy and well cared for.

The services on the second Lord's day in February 2008 were the last our father attended at Blunsdon Hill Chapel. Mr. H.A. Wallis preached in the afternoon from Psalm 107. 7: "And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." As the minister was unable to suggest a suitable hymn to close the service with, our father gave out hymn number 232, little realising what lay before him later in the week:

"Begone, unbelief, my Saviour is near,  
And for my relief will surely appear;

By prayer let me wrestle, and He will perform;  
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm,”

Our father went to the Tuesday evening prayer meeting. Then on Thursday, February 14th, 2008, just before 10 p.m., he had a stroke. While being cared for in hospital, he also had a heart attack which greatly weakened him. When I visited Dad, he said that hymn 232 had been going round and round in his mind as he lay in hospital. He little thought he would so soon have to walk out what they sang about in the closing hymn on that Lord’s day afternoon. I asked him if there was any particular portion of Scripture he would like me to read, and he said Psalm 41, because the psalmist speaks of being on a bed of languishing, which was where he felt to be. The Lord in mercy raised Dad up in health sufficiently for him to return home after three months in hospital. He was no longer able to drive his car, which took quite a while for him to accept.

Our parents moved into the Brighton and Hove Bethesda Home permanently in early December 2009. One day when returning from visiting family who live in Sussex, our father was heard to say, “Home, sweet home,” as they pulled up outside the front door of the Home. He felt able to transfer his membership to Galeed, Brighton, where he felt a union with them. He also tried to attend as many of the Lord’s day and weeknight services as health and strength were given him to do. When we visited Dad and Mum in the Home, they were always very grateful for the care and attention they received from everyone.

Our father’s end came quite suddenly. We visited him on Saturday, August 25th, 2012, and he said he did not feel very well at all, and when we said goodbye, the look he gave me said, “You realise you won’t see me again.” His brother came to see him Monday 27th, and they spent the afternoon together, but at teatime Dad had a severe heart attack and an ambulance was called for. The paramedics started to take him to hospital, but he had another heart attack in the ambulance and passed away. We received a call from the Bethesda Home just after we arrived home to tell us the sad news.

The funeral service was held on September 13th, 2012 with Mr. G.D. Buss officiating, at the Brighton and Hove Bethesda Home and the interment at Hove cemetery.

David Hart

*Note by Mr. G.D. Buss*

It was my privilege and pleasure to know our late friend from my earliest days in Wiltshire. His quiet and unassuming manner as a deacon, his sincerity in prayer in the vestry, and his consistent walk as a believer

in our Lord Jesus Christ, set a gracious example both in his family and among the friends at Blunsdon Hill. Always ready to be a doorkeeper in the house of his God, in a practical and spiritual way his love for the cause of God and of truth went deep. It was one's privilege both to baptize him and then at the end of his race to bury him in sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints" (Psa. 116. 15).

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**"THE SECOND MAN IS THE LORD FROM HEAVEN"**

*(1 Cor. 15. 47)*

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The second Adam, sovereign Lord of all,  
 Did, by His Father's authorising call,  
 From bosom of eternal love descend  
 To save the guilty race that did offend;  
 To make an everlasting peace for those  
 Who were and ever would have been His foes.

His errand never-ending life to give  
 To them whose malice would not let Him live;  
 To make a match with rebels, and espouse  
 The brat which at His love her spite avows.  
 Himself He humbled to depress her pride  
 And make His mortal foe His winning bride.

But, ere the marriage can be solemnised,  
 All lets must be removed, all parties pleased:  
 Law-righteousness required must be procured,  
 Law-vengeance threatened must be full endured;  
 Stern justice must have full credit by the match,  
 Sweet mercy by the heart the bride must catch.

Poor bankrupt! all her debt must first be paid,  
 Her former husband in the grave be laid:  
 Her present Lover must be at the cost  
 To save and ransom to the uttermost.  
 If all these things this Suitor kind can do,  
 Then He may win her, and her blessing too.

Hard terms indeed! while death's the first demand.  
 But love is strong as death and will not stand  
 To carry on the suit and make it good,  
 Though at the dearest rate of wounds and blood.  
 The burden's heavy but the back is broad,  
 The glorious Lover is the mighty God!

Kind bowels yearning in the eternal Son,  
 He left His Father's court, His heavenly throne:  
 Aside He threw His most divine array  
 And wrapped His Godhead in a veil of clay.  
 Angelic armies, who in glory crowned,  
 With joyful harps His awful throne surround,

Down to the crystal frontier of the sky  
 To see the Saviour born, did eager fly;  
 And ever since behold with wonder fresh  
 Their Sovereign and our Saviour wrapped in flesh;  
 Who in His garb did mighty love display,  
 Restoring what He never took away:—

To God His glory, to the law its due,  
 To heaven its honour, to the earth its hue,  
 To man a righteousness divine complete,  
 A royal robe to suit the nuptial rite.  
 He, in her favour whom He loved so well,  
 At once did purchase heaven and vanquish hell.

O unexampled love! so vast, so strong,  
 So great, so high, so deep, so broad, so long!  
 Can finite thought this ocean huge explore,  
 Unconscious of a bottom or a shore?  
 His love admits no parallel – for why?  
 At one great draught of love He drank hell dry.

Ralph Erskine (1685-1752)

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## NOTICE OF DEATH

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**William Charles Chewter**, a faithful deacon at Rehoboth Chapel, Jarvis Brook, for over forty years, passed peacefully away into eternal rest on Sunday, September 30th, 2018, aged 94 years. “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matt. 25. 21).

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He does well that discourses of Christ, but he does infinitely better that by experimental knowledge feeds and lives on Christ.

*Thomas Brooks*



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## OUR MAGAZINES

We acknowledge the Lord’s merciful help through another year. Although we live in difficult times, we prove like the psalmist, “My help cometh from the LORD.” May our prayer ever be, “Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.” May the Lord Jesus be glorified in all things. We express our appreciation to all who help in various ways. “Brethren, pray for us.”

The Editor