

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JANUARY 2020

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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

To the readers of the *Gospel Standard*

“Time! what an empty vapour ’tis!  
And days how swift they are!  
Swift as an Indian arrow flies,  
Or like a shooting star.

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

“Yet, mighty God! our fleeting days  
Thy lasting favours share;  
Yet with the bounties of Thy grace,  
Thou load’st the rolling year.”

It will be wonderful indeed if we enter in at last with the experience of this last verse:

“Thus we begin the lasting song,  
And, when we close our eyes,  
Let the next age Thy praise prolong  
Till time and nature dies.”

(H. 498)

As preserved by Almighty God we have been favoured and spared to pass over the threshold of yet another year. Another year of our short lives has passed away, never to return. Great have been the many, many mercies of our longsuffering and gracious Friend of sinners in heaven. How great also have been our shameful sins. How good if we can trace out over the passing years, the blessing of rich grace interwoven with divine providence. Many prayers have been answered in rich grace as we look back, and yet we still have so many prayers that we need to be answered, according to the Lord’s good will. So many healings, so many restorations of soul from backslidings; so many deliverances granted, so many favours bestowed.

We do need “this same Jesus” (Acts 1. 11), now in heaven, still to be our great Saviour and Deliverer as we continue through this dangerous world of sin, woe, disappointment and death. What a glorious truth it is, that the Lord is unchangeable in all His covenant love and grace to His

dear people, in spite of all that they are by nature: "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3. 6). The Apostle Paul reminds us of the conversation of the pilgrims of old, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8). By the Holy Ghost's teaching, Jesus means the same to His people today as He meant to the ancients who have passed before us, and will mean the same to the generation to come. Jesus is always the same in His great love to His people in all generations, and will be to the end of time, for He loves each of them "with an everlasting love."

What confusion has taken place in our parliament during the last year. The now retired speaker of the House of Commons has demeaned his office by political motivation, and therefore became partial in judgment. We remember some excellent speakers, such as Dr. Horace King and George Thomas whom we have witnessed operating below us from the Strangers' Gallery. Also, later, Betty Boothroyd was another good speaker. These speakers commanded much respect and admiration from the members of the House. We do hope that the new speaker will bring back respect and dignity to the Chair of the House of Commons. We do not know the outcome of the General Election at the time of writing, but may the Lord be pleased to favour us with a stable and good government.

The real and primary reason for the political crisis and confusion in our land, is because we have turned our back upon God, we have forsaken the scriptural way of life. What a good and great influence the Word of God has had in our land. In recent years we have overthrown God's law to keep the Sabbath day, and to lay aside all unnecessary labour and to worship the Lord. We have also overthrown the creation law of marriage, between one man and one woman. We also have to face a society where the gender of male and female is being exchanged. This is frightening confusion. What will our dear young folks have to live with in the future years? May we pray earnestly for them, that they may be "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3. 1). The Lord be very merciful to them and save them "from this untoward [perverse] generation" (Acts 2. 40).

When those who fear God live in a day like this, and are so often "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Pet. 2. 7), it is good and salutary to remember that "The LORD reigneth" to unfold His purposes of grace and love to His church, while they live in this dying and sin-cursed world. His wondrous work of salvation still goes on in sinners' hearts and lives. God is still gathering in His elect from "the four corners of the earth" (Rev. 7. 1), as the prophet declared, "I will work, and who shall let it?" [turn it back] (Isa. 43. 13). The great God of heaven is building Himself a church which is termed "the household of faith" (Gal. 6. 10). This "household of faith" is built upon the sure

foundation of Jesus, as we read, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 11). The "household of faith" consists of those people that walk after the pattern of the faith of Abraham, who "believed in the LORD" (Gen. 15. 6). To this spiritual household of faith, both Jews and Gentiles, are given numerous and exceeding precious promises, sealed by the blood of the Lord Jesus, "the Lamb of God" (John 1. 29).

There are two glorious truths with precious promise upon my mind setting forth God's love and relationship to His church here below.

1. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine" (Exod. 19. 4, 5). This sacred word was spoken to Israel in the wilderness of Sinai as they journeyed.

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians." Ye see how I delivered you from your enemy, and broke the yoke of his dominion. It was completely miraculous; it was God's work alone. They were God's wonders in Egypt. Apart from divine intervention, they could not have escaped. So it is with believers today. The call by grace, the awakening and quickening into eternal life, is nothing short of a miracle. It is God's work alone to bless His people with eternal life.

"The appointed time rolls on apace,  
Not to propose but call by grace;  
To change the heart, renew the will,  
And turn the feet to Zion's hill." (H. 76)

Of those that receive Him, the Holy Ghost says, "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). Again we read of God's work, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4. 6).

"How I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." Bearing them on eagles' wings shows how the Lord made them to endure safely through all their grievous afflictions in Egypt, and carried them out in an amazing way. As an eagle soars, so they flew away safely from the Egyptians. It speaks of God's power and might, a wonderful and complete deliverance. They saw Pharaoh and his army no more, after they perished in the Red Sea. By God's gracious power, the Lord's people forsake all, take up their cross, denying themselves, to follow Christ (see Matt. 16. 24). The Lord brings all His pilgrims to Himself, first, to know and to experience something of the riches of His great grace, His great love, and His great help. They are brought in this lower world to "worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4. 24). Each believer is brought to serve Him in their day and generation. They are brought to begin to love and serve and value Him.

“Sinners are high in His esteem,  
And sinners highly value Him.” (H. 89)

They are then brought finally to go in to see the Lord Jesus face to face, to “see the King in His beauty” (Isa. 33. 17), into the “holiest of all” (Heb. 9. 8), which is the presence of God. This is the full fruition of the blessing that Jesus spoke of to Philip: “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14. 9). As the church triumphant gazes upon Jesus in His excellent eternal glory, they gaze upon God. As Jesus taught, “I am in the Father, and the Father in Me” (John 14. 10). May the Lord in His rich grace bear us each on eagles’ wings and bring us into the house above, “eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5. 1).

“Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant.” Israel’s record was a record of obedience and disobedience! They could not keep His covenant as God required. We have to come to the blessed Lamb of God to see how the voice of God and covenant command of God are fully and justly kept and obeyed, as God requires. Without this satisfaction there is no mercy, no peace, no redemption. All is completed to satisfaction, by the sinless, lovely life and vicarious death of the Lord Jesus. Jesus rose the third day for our justification. God’s anger has been emptied and poured out upon the Lord Jesus. He died in victory, and an everlasting righteousness was brought in that can never be abolished. None can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect, for Christ died and rose for them (see Rom. 8. 33).

“Then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people.” The bride of Christ is God’s peculiar treasure. His bride – all His people – are verily invaluable to Him, for He loves them all with an everlasting love. His kingdom cannot be complete without them all, body and soul, being with Him and reigning with Him for ever and ever (see Rev. 11. 15 and 22. 5). We understand that there is another sense to the words “peculiar treasure,” which is, “Mine own property.” They are His beloved bride, “the Lamb’s wife” (Rev. 21. 9), and “the sheep of His pasture” (Psa. 100. 3). The church belongs to Christ. His love and knowledge of us now, is exactly and fully the same as it will be in glory above, for Jesus is eternally the same. But here below we only see, love and know in part. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Cor. 13. 12). Hereafter the glorified bride will be able to love God in the full capacity of her glorified life.

“There shall your eyes with rapture view  
The glorious Friend that died for you,  
That died to ransom, died to raise  
To crowns of joy and songs of praise.” (H. 257)

“For all the earth is Mine.” As all “the earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof” (Psa. 24. 1), Immanuel rules His dear people in holy

affection and with omnipotent power. He numbers the hairs of their heads, and performs in all details His wonderful thoughts toward them, that they may pass on safely through this world of sin and distress and “go to a city of habitation” (Psa. 107. 7). Not a hoof of one of God’s dear people shall be left behind to perish in Egypt. They shall all enter in at last (see Exod. 10. 26). “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it” (1 Cor. 3. 13). “And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads” (Rev. 22. 4).

2. “For thy Maker is thine Husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and Thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called” (Isa. 54. 5). Is it not exceedingly wonderful that our Maker should declare Himself as our Husband? We have solemnly rebelled from our Creator and bowed down to the prince of the devils, and let him have dominion over us. Until the visitation by our Maker and Redeemer, we loved Satan’s service well. But the visiting of Immanuel began to make such a difference. We then began to be in want, with strong desires springing up to obtain His favours and rich blessing. The ministry of reconciliation began to be cheering news with encouragement to press toward the Lord Jesus, and the mark of His high calling. As the Holy Ghost made Christ precious to us, we began to know Him as our Husband. It is when the Lord Jesus blesses us with His great love and pardon, and brings peace with it, that He visits us as our Husband. He kisses the souls of His dear bride. The spouse longed to know more of it when she said, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine” (Song 1. 2). “As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isa. 62. 5).

“Fear thou not, nor be ashamed;  
 All thy sorrows soon shall end,  
 I, who heaven and earth have framed,  
 Am thy Husband and thy Friend;  
 I, the High and Holy One,  
 Israel’s God, by all adored,  
 As thy Saviour will be known,  
 Thy Redeemer and thy Lord.” (H. 273)

“The LORD of hosts is His name.” This sets forth His absolute dominion and power. The Lord does as He pleases in the counsels of heaven. The angels fly at His command to carry out His purposes. Daniel confesses, “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him” (chapter 2. 20-22). Even Nebuchadnezzar owned of “the LORD of hosts”: “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as

nothing: and He doeth 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). "The LORD of hosts" is "The LORD God of armies." "The LORD of hosts" will bring all His dear people safely out of this "great tribulation" and bring them "before the throne of God" where they shall "serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. 7. 15).

"Thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel." Redeeming His dear people back to God is Immanuel's greatest work. In creation, "He spake, and it was done" (Psa. 33. 9). In redemption, Immanuel "was wounded" – margin: tormented – "for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53. 5), and again, "He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53. 12). To redeem us from all evil, the Lord Jesus was brought so low when He was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (verse 4). "For when we were yet without strength ... Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6), and again, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4. 25). Therefore this glorious Redeemer will "lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7. 17).

"The God of the whole earth shall He be called." This declaration bears the same import as "for all the earth is Mine," which we have already briefly considered. This is promising truth to give comfort to the tried and sorrowing believers here below. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8. 28). The Lord will care and provide for the people He loves. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4. 19). This great "God of the whole earth," speaking by the psalmist says, "For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine" (Psa. 50. 10, 11). When the Lord encouraged the Jews to continue to rebuild the second temple, He said, "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine" (Hag. 2. 8). "The God of the whole earth" has all things at His disposal: therefore will He not clothe His dear people as He clothes the "fowls of the air" and "the lilies of the field"? "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 6. 30). Therefore it is true of every believer, "He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5. 7).

We are clearly living in days when the Holy Ghost is much withdrawn from Zion, both in the pulpit and in the pew. Those ministers who have the Spirit of God with them, sense very solemnly, that there is not much of an appetite with some for sound doctrine, teaching, and a

setting forth of the life of God in the soul. We can have a form of godliness without the power. Where there is not eternal life in the soul, there is no real need, no sense of urgency. The spiritual hearers of the Word long for application, even if only a few crumbs from the Master's table, and they discern by faith the dew and unction of the Spirit in the preaching, how ever simply set forth. May there be that cry in the heart, from the living among us in Zion, both ministers and hearers alike: "Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? Shew us Thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us Thy salvation" (Psa. 85. 6, 7).

In spite of the spiritual dearth, it is still a gracious token to us that the Lord's work does continue in the churches. In the last year there have been a number of friends who have been favoured in soul, and constrained by the love of Christ to walk in gospel ordinances, of believers' baptism, and to sit at the Lord's table to eat the bread and drink the wine, and to do it in the remembrance of a precious Christ. We also notice that gospel ministers are still being sent out from the churches. We wish them the Lord's gracious help, and that they may be made faithful ministers of the New Testament. We pray that secret disciples may be made manifest in due time. Living, exercised people long to see the Lord's work appearing in the church. Mr. J.H. Gosden said that the Lord's people are firstly exercised about their own souls, and secondly, the souls of others, especially those friends in their own congregation. May we also be favoured to see people living in the vicinity of the churches, brought in by the hand of God, to receive the Lord's blessing in their souls.

Chapel closures are a great grief to lovers of Zion. They continue apace and we really wonder where the scene will end. We would especially mention the "twos and the threes" who meet for worship. The Lord Jesus Himself has made special mention of them. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). A number of our ministers can truly testify that when preaching to two or three, the Lord's promised presence has been there and felt, conducive to a true spirit of worship, both in pulpit and in pew.

Many dear brethren in Zion are afflicted in various ways. They need much support and help from God. Some dear friends have known afflictions more or less through all their days. We especially think of our dear friend Mr. Clifford Woodhouse, pastor of Bethel, South Chard. May the Lord be with him still on his bed of languishing, and especially support and strengthen his dear wife in all her loving, yet heavy, full time care of him. The Lord grant much gracious help. It is good for us to lay to heart prayerfully our own declining days, for none of us know the circumstances or the nature of the affliction, as we draw near to the time of our departure, and die away from this lower world.

We also think of widows and widowers. Some have been widowed for many years. They still miss their loved ones, but may the Lord be as a husband to them. The Lord knows their lonely pathway. The merciful Lord Jesus knows all the concerns of the fatherless and the widow.

Three of our ministers have been taken home “to be with Christ” in this last year: Mr. Philip B. Pont, pastor of Zoar, Norwich, in March; Mr. Hedley D.C. Taylor, pastor of Rehoboth, Bromley, in May; Mr. Jay K. Stehouwer, pastor of Zion, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., in November. We pray for the bereaved churches. May the Lord supply their every need. Visiting friends and ministers from these shores over to Grand Rapids remember the warm and gracious hospitality, together with the savoury conversation, of friend Jay Stehouwer, a brother beloved. Faithful deacons and a number of godly friends have been safely gathered in to the paradise above. They now possess the land that they long sought after. May we ourselves seek to enter in, for the promise is sure, “But he that putteth his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain” (Isa. 57. 13).

“Then let me mount and soar away  
To the bright world of endless day,  
And sing with rapture and surprise,  
His loving-kindness in the skies.” (H. 9)

We are thankful to write that our dear friend Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, the retired Editor of this magazine, is keeping fairly well, although he feels the infirmities natural to his great age, and that he has been spared to us for so long. We pray that both he and Mrs. Ramsbottom may be favoured with a sweet sense of the Lord’s presence with them as they live out their remaining days upon earth. The Lord grant them an abundant entrance at last into His everlasting kingdom.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the death of John Kershaw of Rochdale, Lancashire. John Kershaw is considered to be one of the founders of our group of churches, which sought after sound doctrine, and an application of it to the soul with gracious experience. The gospel preached by such men as John Kershaw, William Gadsby and John Warburton had such a profound effect in Lancashire in the early nineteenth century. Our churches did not spring from human organisation, but from the work of the Holy Ghost in sinners’ hearts and lives, which brought about a unity of the spirit and a desire for a living, gospel ministry. We would encourage readers to obtain the excellent book written by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, entitled, *John Kershaw and Blessing over the Moors*, if not obtained already. It is an excellent and profitable book.

We also remember the brethren and the churches in Australia, Canada and the United States of America. Unlike us here in England, they are separated from one another by long distances. The Lord’s



richest blessing rest upon them, and may His gracious work appear among them.

We thank our readers for their forbearance through another year. We must acknowledge the Lord's gracious help, without which we could not have continued. May we each, in these days of great evils, with the rapid advance of antichrist, follow the example of David in his conflicts when the people spake of stoning him: "But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God" (1 Sam. 30. 6).

"I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20. 32).

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

Maidstone

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## GRACIOUS WARNING AND INSTRUCTION FROM OUR RETIRED EDITOR

*An extract from the New Year Address in 1995 by B.A. Ramsbottom*

We are concerned about the spirit of Sandemanianism which is beginning to infiltrate among us. It was Sandemanianism that William Gadsby and John Kershaw wrote so strongly against. The Sandemanians were a Baptist denomination, strong in Calvinistic doctrine, with their roots in Scotland. They believed that the essence of true faith was merely to believe the account given in Scripture, that Jesus died to atone for sin, and rose again, and ascended into heaven. There was no gracious experience, no need for the Holy Spirit's enabling, no element of trust! The Sandemanian denomination has long ago died out, and the word is not well known today, but the error *in spirit* is spreading – first, in evangelical churches, and then touching ours. Even Dr. Lloyd-Jones (with whom on many things we cannot agree) solemnly warned before his death of the dangers of a resurgence of Sandemanianism. "Easy believism" is often the term used, a discounting of gracious experience.

We would never set the hurdle so high that only the goats can jump over it; but we do not want our young people to be deceived. "The devils also believe, and tremble" says James (chapter 2. 19). The devil believes the letter and doctrines of truth as clearly as any – he has no doubt concerning them – but it does him no good. We need a better faith than that of devils – a faith that looks to Calvary and there "beholds a scene

of matchless grace, 'tis Jesus in the sinners place" (see H. 536). As a young person said to us recently, "Surely we need to feel the burden of sin, and to seek for that burden to be rolled away at the cross." We need real things. And real faith will work by love (see Gal. 5. 6), purify the heart (see Acts 15. 9), overcome the world (see 1 John 5. 4).

But may the Lord give us much grace in any stand we have to take. "Because iniquity abounds, the love of many shall wax cold" (see Matt. 24. 12). If left to contend for our own way (under the excuse of truth) or if left to our own spirit, God is not honoured. It is not a spirit of gracious discernment to cut off the righteous with the wicked, ministers of the Spirit along with ministers of the letter. We are to separate the precious from the vile. It is not discernment to count all as vile.

What a beautiful example of gracious discernment we have in J.C. Philpot! He cuts away, cuts away, at all error and all fleshly religion; but as soon as he reaches the feeblest blade of grace, he lays aside the sword and begins to water it. So with Gadsby. And so, in more recent days, with J.K. Popham, J.H. Gosden, and many others who could be named. "Speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4. 15), and the honour of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was their chief desire. If we do not stand for the truth, this is compromise; if we do not stand for the truth in love, this dishonours God.

The danger is that in days of darkness, spiritual declension, and departure from the truth, persons may arise and assume a false authority, and many blindly follow. May the Lord deliver us from this.

One problem has been that, in this day of small things, men can easily go out to preach. We have always contended for the independence of the local church – but it does not seem scriptural that a small church composed largely of ladies, or of members of the same family, should take it upon themselves to sanction a man for the solemn work of the ministry. J.K. Popham contended that this should be by a presbytery; and we strongly advise our small churches, especially pastorless churches, to call in a few godly ministers if they have to deal with sanctioning a member to preach. This, of course, is often done.

This, again, raises the question of pastorless churches. May the Lord in mercy return to Zion in this. His promise still stands: "I will give you pastors according to Mine heart" (Jer. 3. 15).

*We also include an extract from the New Year Address in 1974*

We live in a day of lowering standards and this begins to infiltrate into the churches. Things clearly condemned by the Word of God are increasingly accepted (to our peril!): modern, immodest fashions; the wearing of long hair by boys and short hair by girls; the wearing of trousers by women (see 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4; 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10; Deut. 22. 5; 1 Cor 11. 14, 15). These things are forbidden by the command of God. We

commend to our readers Bernard Gilpin's affectionate words when writing to one of his hearers on such a matter: "Let her not despise these hints as only referring to an external matter. I insist upon them because I see God has insisted upon them very strongly both in the Old Testament and in the New; and if we begin to despise one of the least commandments, we know not to what we shall be left." Other things that might be mentioned are careless dress in the house of God which would not be tolerated in the presence of an earthly sovereign and the practice of arranging holidays without thought of how the Sabbath will be spent or the possibility of hearing a minister of truth.

Very solemnly and sadly this lowering of standards continues apace. "Brethren, these things ought not so to be" (Jas. 3. 10). May we humble ourselves and turn to the Lord. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5. 23). *Ed.*

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### **GOD'S HAND UPON THEM THAT SEEK HIM**

*Sermon preached by Clement Arthur Wood at Zoar Chapel, Ashwell,  
date unknown.*

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**Text:** "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him" (Ezra 8. 22).

In attempting to speak from these words tonight, praying for the help of God, praying for a teachable spirit, I venture to bring before you instruction for the church of God collectively and believers individually even today.

It may be helpful, and I trust profitable, particularly for our younger friends, if we spend just a little while considering the historical background at this time. God's purposes, God's promise will always be fulfilled. In the days of Isaiah, God said that He would raise up a man, a king called Cyrus – even his name is given – a heathen king who would give permission and make a way for the Jews in captivity to return to Jerusalem. (See Isaiah chapters 44-45.) And so it was (I think I am right in saying one-hundred-and-eighty years had passed by) King Cyrus gave permission for all that were willing to return to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of God. The way thus being opened, many of the Jews returned from Babylon to Jerusalem. Before they commenced building, they built the altar to offer sacrifices before God according to the Word of God. Before this work was commenced, there was this solemn act of worship, setting forth the sense of the need of the forgiving love of God and prayer for God's help and blessing.

You will remember that the foundation of the temple was laid, and when completed, the people gathered together to praise God for His great goodness. They sang this chorus in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord: "He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel" (Ezra 3. 11). All the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of God was laid, but there were those older Jews that remembered the first temple and though the foundation of this second temple was laid, it was nothing to be compared in their eyes to the first temple, and so they wept. They "wept with a loud voice" (Ezra 3. 12). There was this mingled emotion, those weeping aloud and those shouting aloud for joy. It does just lead us to this – the mingled cup, mingled experience; times of sorrow, times of joy; and the two so closely intertwined together; when you have been in times of sorrow, trial, trouble and distress, and yet in it there has been a blessing, sorrow in our hearts and thanksgiving to God for His mercies.

What took place after the foundation was laid? Enemies! Ever remember when God's work is being accomplished, the devil will oppose it, man will oppose it, and so it was at this time. So much so that authority was given by the king at the request of the enemies of the Jews, that the work should cease. And the work ceased. There was the temple foundation laid, and then all ceased, all came to a stop.

It was at this time that God raised up Haggai and Zechariah – prophets of God – and these two men, with the Word of God, encouraged the Jews to return. The Jews after a period of twelve years or more now had got into a state of indifference and unconcern – cast down, felt the opposition was too great, they were too weak to continue the work, but God spake to them, and God bade them to go back to the work. If you look at the short prophecy of Haggai, you will find in the space of three months and twenty-four days, five times the word of the Lord came; it came with the power of the Spirit. The transformation! The people were aroused from their lethargy, their indifference, their unconcern, and with a mind to work, and with the promise that God would be with them and His Spirit remain among them, although there were obstacles, as Zechariah said, "Who art thou, O thou great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain" (Zech. 4. 7). The Jews then returned.

Just a point here. There are times when ministers, when God's people, get very discouraged and very cast down. "Who hath believed our report?" (Isa. 53. 1). "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5. 5). Now I have often observed, and I name it in passing, Jesus said, "Let down your nets" with an "s" on it. No wonder it broke! But my friends, here is our encouragement:

“Jesus Christ, your Father’s Son,  
Bids you undismayed go on.” (H. 267)

This reminds us too in passing of Elijah under the juniper tree. How tenderly the Lord dealt with him! With what compassion that angel touched him and touched him for the second time! “The journey is too great for thee” (1 Kings 19. 7). There were the demonstrations of God’s power – the wind that brake in pieces the rocks; the earthquake and the fire – demonstrations of the power of God, but the power of God was felt by Elijah in a still small voice (see verses 11-13). We sometimes fear that it is only, as it were, by outstanding judgments from heaven that God will work, but sometimes He uses gentle means, but they are just as powerful. God said to Elijah, “Go, return,” go back Elijah, there is a work still for you to do.

So then the temple was built, and the people gave thanks for it. Years after, the king Artaxerxes gave Ezra a commission, Ezra who had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and we pray for this in the ministry, not only to seek it, but to do it, and to teach it. Seek it! Do it! Teach it! I said ministers; not only ministers – all who fear God. Our younger friends – and I hope you fear God – that you may seek the law of God, that you may pray for grace to do it and to teach it. You may say, “I have no ability to speak of the Bible.” You will find that you are a witness, even a silent witness, if you have a clear distinction from a world that lies in wickedness.

We read here and so often in the Book of Ezra, as we do in the Book of Nehemiah, of the hand of God. We read, “They strengthened their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel” (see Neh. 2. 18). This king, as we read, made all provision, all that was needful for the sacrifices, for the temple services and for Ezra to go with them and set in authority magistrates and judges that would fear God and would teach the laws of God. Wouldn’t this be wonderful if this was found in our land today!

Now coming particularly to the chapter from which our text is taken, Ezra with the people gathered together. They were to prepare for the long journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. I think from memory, about nine hundred miles – a long journey! Now this people would be carrying with them much of value: “vessels of silver, with gold, with goods ... and with precious things” (Ezra 1. 6). What a journey. Think of the perils, think of the robbers, think of the dangers, think of the defenceless Jews carrying rich treasure.

As Ezra is preparing to return, he finds that whilst there is a good number of Jews with him, there were none of the sons of Levi. This greatly concerned him. He did not feel that they should venture without these ministers. So he sent to enquire as to whether there would be those

that would be willing to unite with them on this dangerous journey, to be spiritual guides and to direct them, and we read that “By the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding” (Ezra 8. 18). I want you to observe this: “by the good hand of our God.” Just in passing here, how one would desire to view this in our churches, particularly with the provision of a pastor or with visiting ministers. “The good hand of our God,” to bring men of spiritual understanding, not that within ourselves, but praying to be taught of God to teach others. It is a wonderful provision that God makes – the under shepherd of the flock.

So then there were these men that were brought together, the Nethinims, that did the lesser work in the temple, as you doubtless will know. So they are now preparing, they are nearly ready to return to Jerusalem. We read that before they moved away, this dear man “proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava” where they gathered together ready to set out on their journey, “that we might afflict ourselves before our God” (Ezra 8. 21).

What do we understand by this fasting and afflicting ourselves before our God? I believe that this means – not to abstain entirely from eating or drinking, but I do consider this, that when our spirit is burdened, when we are deeply concerned over what to do, how to do it, what path to take, or when under the burden of sin and needing a revival, we may abstain from all that is unnecessary and devote ourselves to reading and prayer and confession of our sin before our God. I believe that such spiritual fasting, godly sorrow for sin, repentance before God, with the work of the Spirit in the heart, would be a forerunner of a revival in our midst. O how one prays for it! Do we feel to need it personally?

What was their concern? It was “to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.” What is our concern? Doubtless many concerns. Our young friends have got concerns too, haven’t they? Even school, their lessons, success in it. Perhaps the ones at school find it very hard, very lonely. They do not do what others do. They do not have what others have. It is not easy.

“Dare to be a Daniel!  
Dare to stand alone!  
Dare to say the Bible’s true!  
Dare to make it known!”

There were two little girls that went to Sunday School (the chapel too). They were so persecuted by their school mates in the playground, they were so teased, when they got away from their persecutors one just said to the other, “Let’s tell Jesus all about it.” I believe in their simple way they did. What a lesson, what teaching for us that are older when

we may have wounds, when we may be persecuted! When we may be ridiculed, despised, tell it to Jesus. So the school boy or girl has that need to pray for God's help.

One step further: there is future employment. Certain gifts, certain talents are bestowed. How we need a way to be opened, a way to be made clear. How are we going to do it? How are the young people going to do it? I hope and pray that those of you who are younger will seek of God that right way. God can open the door or close the door. It may be that something is very attractive, something that looks just right. There is something about it that you are not happy about. Does it take you away from a cause of truth? Am I supposed to work on a Sunday? Now I know that there are lawful duties on a Sunday, but it needs weighing up.

Lot, righteous Lot, lifted up his eyes and looked at the well-watered plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was "even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt" (Gen. 13. 10), and he went that way; he did not pray about it. I know God was with him. I know that God delivered him, but O the trouble that man went through! May our dear young friends be helped to seek that right way. It may even call for sacrifice. You may say, "If I give that other one up, then I won't earn so much money." You will never be the loser, never! "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. 2. 30).

Then what about marriage? When you seek a husband or a wife, how do you go about it? I like that young man or that young woman; she is very attractive – is that all? Here we have to seek of Him the right way, to pray your way along, to pray that you will be directed to a husband or a wife that you can walk together with, not only with natural affection and love, but to go to God's house together, united in the things of God, your hearts knit together in love and praise to God, heirs together of the grace of God. "A right way for us."

Then in life's journey as you get older, parents have their perplexities, grandparents too. Decisions have to be made to seek a right way, to pray, "Show me what I have to do; keep us from choosing our own path. Help me and give me grace to know and to do Thy will in all things." I have said about younger friends. O the prayers of parents – how they will enter very feelingly into this, to seek of God "a right way for us, and for our little ones." O the prayers for that infant as God gives you a little child.

"And for all our substance." Now says the dear man, "I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen." "Seek of Him a right way for us ... and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him."

So the dear man says, “I have professed this, I acknowledge this, I believe this, I believe that the hand of our God is upon all them that seek Him.” The king would have given a convoy to protect them, but Ezra here says, “No.” Our God is a wall of fire round about us; our God will watch over us; our God will take care of us. We go forth in faith; we go forth trusting in our God, because we testify that, “The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him.”

That brings us to the Gadsby’s hymn 552 that we have just sung:

“The Lord’s my Helper and Support,  
My Saviour and my Friend;  
He bears my sinking spirits up,  
And will my soul defend.

“Though earth, and hell, and sin agree,  
My comfort to destroy,  
The Lord of glory fights for me,  
Nor will He let me die.”

Now I know there is a very narrow line between faith and presumption. Here I believe the dear man had a complete, unreserved trust in God that He would honour his testimony. It does not mean that we should be careless, or tempt God, or be indifferent, or fail in some cases to take lawful steps. Let me just say this. Paul on one occasion said, “Neither count I my life dear unto myself” (Acts 20. 24), meaning that his one concern was to preach Christ – as we read, “Ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12. 1). But he took it very seriously to preserve his life. There is a right balance, but why I am naming it is this: I believe that if a Christian is led to take a step in faith, it will not be careless. It will not be, “O well, I believe God; therefore everything will be alright.” It will be after much exercise of soul, waiting upon God in prayer for that faith to be strengthened, that grace to go forward. There are times when we venture forth when there is none to help; we venture forth in faith upon our God. We read it in the closing portion of our reading, that they departed on the twelfth day of the first month and their comfort by faith, was: “The hand of our God was upon us” (verse 31). They did not say, “Look, we just set a watch and it was alright.” They saw it was the hand of God that preserved them, and no enemy was permitted to attack them, to molest them or to do them harm, or to rob them. It was the unseen shield.

A very dear friend of mine years ago worked for the gas board. On one occasion, and this was some years ago, so the amount of money then was tremendous which he had to take to the bank – I think it was about £30,000. Somebody in the office said, “I wouldn’t be in your shoes.” This made him think, almost fear, but he said, “Do you know what came? ‘A sovereign Protector I have, unseen, yet for ever at hand’” (H. 346).



He did not say that lightly, friends. It was in faith; it was trusting in God. I do hope that I have made this clear. We are not to take any rash or foolish steps in life. We are to take all the care that we can, but there are times when there is a real venturing in faith and trusting in God.

Just one more thought here. When the Jews got back after counting everything out, they ensured that nothing was missing, and this is to teach us, the church of God, that we are accountable for every penny in our income, to teach us in our daily life in the fear of God to act honourably and trustworthily in all our transactions. I have in a little way spoken of this clause: "The hand of" – I like it – "our God." I look upon you all. Are you under this: "Our God"? It is a great word isn't it?

Do you remember when Daniel was in the den of lions and the king said to Daniel, "Is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (Dan. 6. 20). You see, Darius could not say, "My God." Darius could not say, "Our God." He could only say, "Thy God." We can sit in chapel and look at others and say, "I know that they are God's people. Am I one?" "Our God." Daniel could say, "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths."

"The hand of our God." We know God is a Spirit, but He is pleased to make Himself known and understood by using these human terms. How solemn, when we think of the finger of God, if that is against you. The magicians, when they could not perform what Moses had performed, said, "This is the finger of God" (Exod. 8. 19). Jesus said, "If I with the finger of God cast out devils" (Luke 11. 20). The power of that hand! This hand that upheld all things, the hand that formed the world, the earth, the sky, the sea, the hand once nailed at Calvary, that hand is holding me. The hand that provides, the hand that protects, the hand that guides, the hand that chastens, the hand that in love takes away sometimes, that hand that brings you into the valley of the shadow of death and supports you in it – the hand of our God. As we think of His hand, "Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psa. 139. 10). Not only lead me, but hold me. He will supply my every need. He will support me when I begin to sink and faint. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength" (Isa. 40. 29). Even there, "I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isa. 41. 13).

It is a wonderful thing when you perhaps cannot express a word and you are in trouble; you cannot express anything, and then there is from a friend the warmth of a handshake! A word is not uttered, but a feeling sense of sympathy, of love and prayer and compassion in that hand, and just like a child afraid, and yet as soon as its mother's or father's hand is there, that fear is removed.

This hand. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10. 28) – what a precious word that is!

Though sometimes we begin to sink, as with Peter the hand of Jesus is stretched forth. “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33. 27). “The hand of God.” We think of the hands of Jesus that took little children and blessed them, the hand that touched the leper, and the hand that brake the bread, the hands crucified on the cross. You are graven upon the palms of His hands (see Isa. 49. 16). “O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me” (Isa. 44. 21).

“The hand of our God is upon **all** them for good that seek Him.” The seeking soul, the coming sinner – sinner, I perhaps have stressed the providential aspect tonight, but is that all you ask for? What will you ask God for? What about your sin? What about salvation? What about your soul? What about eternity? Is there a seeking of the Saviour? Is there a confession of your sin? Is there a longing for the blessing of His love, to know this Jesus as your Saviour and your Friend?

“Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55. 6, 7). “The hand of our God is upon all them for good.” You may not see it, you cannot see good in that bitter cup, you cannot see good in that thorn in the flesh, you cannot see good in that painful affliction, you cannot see good in that path of great trial, that bereavement, that increased burden of sin, but the Lord can support and you will prove it – yes, for good. Dear Joseph said, “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Gen. 50. 20). The Lord bless His word.

“God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.” (H. 320)

Amen.

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## BROTHERLY COMMUNION

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Welwyn.  
December 1938.

*To Mr. J.H. Gosden*  
My dear Mr. Gosden,

There has been an unaccountable constraint upon my mind for several days to write to you, but I have resisted this, knowing the pressure of duties upon your strength and time, and being unwilling to add by needlessly occupying any of that time. But this evening the mind

is continually turned toward you, with I trust a prayerful desire on your behalf.

I am afraid the subject of unfulfilled prophecy has not exercised my mind to a great extent. I am not indifferent to it, but I feel that whatever God has designed for the future of the world in general, a saving knowledge of Christ and a living exercise in that knowledge will preserve the soul amidst it all. To be immersed in the study of prophecy and not know the blessing and favour of Him whose decrees are revealed in prophecy, is a condition too dangerous to contemplate. There is a subtle attraction about such a study which makes one fear to speak much of it to the young people here. But if the heart is exercised rightly by the grace of God, a sober, prayerful study will doubtless bring a deeper desire to know the witness of the Holy Spirit that one is born of God. But it appears to me a very narrow line. Revelation 19. 10 ("Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy") seems to provide the best object in such a study.

There has been much exercise in my mind of late concerning the savour and fragrance of the name of Christ in my ministry; that one might be so taught, and led, and helped, that the ministry may really savour of Christ by the unction of His Spirit. This may seem to you an elementary exercise, but to me there seems such difficulty in tracing the effectual application of Christ's things to the souls of the hearers. I do not think this is entirely absent, but when needy souls are unsatisfied, and those in darkness are not brought out, it brings a concern, which increases as time goes on, as to whether the Holy Ghost really takes of the things of Jesus and makes them as life and savour in the souls of the hearers. If this is not done, I know it is not because of any lack of grace or power in God, but the proof of my commission in the ministry is absent. The Lord has, I trust, been graciously pleased to grant at times a sweet persuasion in my own soul that He has called me to the work of the ministry, and given some outward testimony too; but, Oh, how little effect the continual preaching seems to have! My heart often trembles at the thought of having to preach; and the weight of immortal souls and one's accountability to God, brings me at times to a stand. Oh, if one could be emptied, searched and taught, so that the glory of God, the honour of His name, the preciousness of Christ, and the power of the Spirit might fill one's ministry! Sometimes I feel that I could embrace with all my heart the word of John: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3. 30). I feel to come more and more to want a particular experience of particular things.

The Lord Himself strengthen you day by day, and grant you much of His Spirit.

William Hadow

## THE PROOF OF LOVE

*Notes of a sermon preached by John Booth at Zoar Chapel, Bradford,  
on Lord's day morning, December 4th, 1921 (followed by the  
ordination of believers' baptism).*

**Text:** "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14. 15).

While your Bible is still open, refer to the twenty-first verse and also part of the twenty-third. In the first place, the text is an exhortation to prove love. It is a test question. Secondly, the text is a discrimination of character. You cannot keep a thing unless you have it. It would be foolishness to ask you to keep what you do not possess. You must have the word and commandment in your soul. If you have such a word, it is yours to show it. If there is no love, there is no real religion. It was essential in the law of commandments. It was the highest duty of man to God, greater than all burnt offerings. When Christ was asked for the commandment, He refers to this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and love thy neighbour," etc. How can we love God? I thought this morning of the text, Deuteronomy 30. 6. If the Lord does not circumcise our hearts, we cannot love. A circumcised heart loves and lives. So great is love, Paul lifted it high above all things (see 1 Cor. 13). We see how he thought love a great thing, a priceless possession. Have we love? There are some people you do not feel drawn to; they are cold as ice. I want to emphasise this truth. It is more than all burnt offerings. You cannot have a better thing than love to help you to bear things in your family.

"Love is the golden chain that binds  
The happy souls above."

(H. 1082)

We would emphasise this love Christ speaks of. We would rather have love than gold. It is the greatest thing. Did you ever try to analyse or describe it? We can see love often in acts, but try to define it! It is what a miser feels for his gold, what a mother feels for her child. All that it is, but infinitely more. If we love a person, we have esteem for them and regard. We cannot love if we do not esteem. We esteem some for their works' sake. We cannot esteem anything ugly or brutal. Before we esteem, there must be something to draw out. "Many waters cannot quench love" (Song 8. 7). It cannot be purchased with money.

Notice the wording of the text. "If" is a little word, but a big barrier. We are thankful there is no "if" in the covenant. Can we get past this "if"? Can we sweep it out of the way? We do not care for "ifs"; we want something more encouraging. Still it has its uses. The eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8. 36, 37). It is a very useful word.

Look at the gulf between Christ and man! Look at the Person speaking. Is He not Chief of all things? Follow Him in thought, if not in walk. He came and tabernacled here below; He was found in fashion as a man. He submitted to the rebuffs and scorn of men. See Him in Gethsemane, a real Man sweating blood! See Him in the judgment hall. Men spit on Him. Follow Him to the cross. He is laid in the tomb and rises again. Hear Him speak. "All hail!" Have faith to see Him at the Father's right hand. See the great work wrought, the debt paid!

If there is no glowing in the heart, you are in a very sorry position. If you have no love, He does not ask you to keep His commandments. Poor, earthly worms, who brought the Father's wrath upon Him, yet He says, "If ye love Me." Why does He say, "If ye love Me"? He might have said other words. He said to Peter, "Lovest thou Me?" Peter had said he never knew Him. It would have been an appropriate question to put to Peter: "Dost thou know Me, Peter?" But no, it is, "Lovest thou Me?" Why? Because love is the only thing of any value that comes out of the heart. Simon Magus wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost, but had no love. What do you admire most in David? His great love to God and also to Jonathan – passing the love of women.

Christ says, "If ye love **Me**." Is there any word He ever spoke that you love? any act that He did you love? Is there any esteem, any attachment, any clinging? If there is, there must be some love in the heart, and you would not hear any such character speak hardly of Christ. We know the hymn: "'Tis a point I long to know" (H. 283). Yes, we know that exercise, yet we are trying to get past that. If there is any attachment it grows out of love. Christ does not say, "Ye disciples, if ye think I am the Messiah, keep My commandments." No; the one necessary thing is, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Turn it another way, and test your love. Ask yourself, "Do I keep His commandments? Is anything done which He commands and sets before me?" When put that way, there is always Mr. Legality at our heels. Hundreds may think they keep His commandments, but they may have no religion at all. Where love is, there is no formality or legality. We have forms we want to walk in, yet want to walk in love. When a man comes to the house of God, we want him to come in love. If he takes a sitting, or joins the church, or engages in any part at all, we want it to be because of love.

The Lord gives commands to be baptized, to meet around His table, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. We could tell you to do all this, and bring you into bondage; but, "He that hath My commandments is he that loveth Me" (see verse 21). What we value or love, we treasure, we hoard it up, we put it under lock and key. If ye love Me, treasure My commandments. Keep them in your heart, love

them in your soul. That is the way to keep commandments, lifting it out of a sphere of legality. The man who never treasures anything that came from the Redeemer's lips has no love. How do the commands and precepts affect you? Do you say with David, "O how love I Thy law"? (Psa. 119. 97). Can you say with Job, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food"? (Job 23. 12). These men were keeping His commandments. They were attached to them, they loved them, they cleaved to them. Can we say we have so treasured the Word as to keep it? Also, in walking in the ways of His commandments there is great reward.

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." Be careful what you do with what God gives you. If things are laid on your mind, be careful how you act. If you have a commandment, see you keep it. What was the commandment He was teaching them to observe? There must be teaching in preaching. A most sacred command Christ gave at the table, when bread was broken, wine poured out, and He gave them to His disciples, with a command to all believers: "Do this in remembrance of Me." If ye love Me, be baptized. If ye love Me, meet around My table. As Strict and Particular Baptists, we believe no person should come to the Lord's table unless they have been baptized and confessed Him before men. We do not want to break down any barriers. If ye love Me, if ye do treasure My word in your hearts, walk in My commandments.

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### ALL THINGS WORKING FOR GOOD

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Eastlea,  
Hugletts Lane,  
Heathfield,  
Sussex. TN21 9BX

April 14th, 1982

Dear Mrs. F.,

At last a little quiet to be able to reply to your kind letter of April 7th. Pleased to hear that one's labours were not in vain on the day, as we often fear they are. Conflict and distress are a sign of life in the soul, and how can any be comforted without first going through some of these experiences?

Trouble is also a good thing for any of us, although we cannot see it or certainly like it at the time.

I believe I have had plenty of this in times past, and found to my shame I was very rebellious about the Lord's dealings with my soul in

such a way, but when it was at last made clear to me that there was good teaching in it all, I was able to see it very clearly, it was all so necessary and good for my soul. Now on looking back I am able to say, "My Jesus has done all things well" (H. 410), and I can even praise Him for bringing me into all the pain and grief.

Do not forget to consider whom we profess to follow!

Many people trust in a religion in the head, but real religion is "more than notion."

I do hope you will see how the Lord's hand is guiding you in your pathway, and also you may be able to get to Swanwick at times, and I certainly know how welcome you will be to them.

Well, I had better close now, as writing is getting scraggly due to some arthritis in joints – so please excuse it.

The Lord be with you.

Yours sincerely,

Ernest Moore

## LIVING WATER GIVES SATISFACTION

*By Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)*

One other quality of the life-giving water of grace yet remains to be noticed – we allude to its *satisfying nature*. Can this be affirmed of any other bliss? Is this an ingredient in the thousand cups of creature good which men so eagerly put to their lips? Select your choicest, fondest, sweetest, temporal mercy, and say, is it satisfying to thy soul? Does it, in its fullest enjoyment, leave no want unsupplied, no desire unmet, no void unfilled? Does it meet the cravings of the mind? Go into the garden of creature blessing, and pluck the loveliest flower, and taste the sweetest fruit; repair to the cabinet of friendship, and select from thence its choicest pearl; pass round the wide circle of earth-born joy, and place thy hand upon the chief and the best – is it the feeling of your heart, and the language of your lips: "I am *satisfied*, I want no more?" Does it quench the spirit's thirst? does it soothe the heart's sorrow? does it meet the mind's cravings? does it quiet the troubled conscience and lift the burden from the aching heart? O no! The height, the depth, the length, the breadth, exclaim, "It is not in me – am I in God's stead?"

But how blessed is that which *truly satisfies*! Listen to the gracious words of the Saviour. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life" (John 4. 14). Did language ever utter a sentiment more true than this! Jesus is an

all-satisfying Portion. They who have tried Him can testify that it is so. His is not a satisfaction in name, but in reality and in truth. There is a felt, a realised sense of holy satiety. The *mind* is content. The believer wanders no more in quest of happiness or of rest. He has found them both in Jesus. He is satisfied to stake his eternal all upon the finished work of Immanuel – to live upon His smile, to abide in His love, to draw upon His grace, to submit to His will, to bear His cross, to be guided by His counsel, and afterwards to be received by Him, and to Him, into glory. “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee” (Psa. 73. 25). “My heart is **fixed**, O God, my **heart is fixed**: I will sing and give praise” (Psa. 57. 7) are the breathings of his adoring, loving, fixed heart. Who that has fully received Christ into his heart, finds that heart sighing to return again to the bondage and the flesh-pots of Egypt? No man, having tasted of the old wine of God’s everlasting love in Jesus, straightway desires the new wine of the world’s ever-changing joys. Satisfied with what he has through grace thus found, he exclaims, “The old is better” (Luke 5. 39).

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Ernest Roe Sermons, 1917-1931**, in a two volume set; hardback; approximately 425 pages per volume; price £16 plus postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from Harpenden bookroom and agents.

Ernest Roe preached among the Strict Baptist churches for over sixty-five years. He was born at March, Cambridgeshire, in a humble cottage by the River Nene, on December 19th, 1883. March had a large freight marshalling yard where Mr. Roe worked in his early days. When the Lord began to deal with him, he came under some solemn convictions of a broken law, and had some savage assaults from Satan. His lowest point came when in attempting to climb up steps on a bank to his office, he slipped and tumbled to the bottom. He immediately gave vent to his feelings. Thankfully, like Peter in the judgment hall, we do not know what he said. This was at 6 p.m., at the beginning of his shift. His feelings were indescribable, and by the approach of midnight, sitting solitarily in a brake van, he concluded that all he could do was to end his life. He was so wicked. He climbed out of the van and stood on the rail with his back against the buffer, facing trucks being pushed slowly toward him. The Lord remarkably delivered him and spoke in his soul, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD” (Psa. 118. 17). Christ shone into his heart. He immediately clambered back into the brake van, and worshipped his blessed Saviour. Some time later, he felt sweet pardon from the words, “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2. 13). We write of his early experience as a background to show his preparations for the gospel ministry. The Lord prepared this gospel preacher in what some have termed “the



school of Christ,” which is the vital experience of being lost and saved, knowing the difference between law and gospel.

Mr. Roe preached his first sermon at a chapel at Tips End, near Welney, when seventeen years of age. The eighty-six sermons republished in these two volumes were preached between 1917 and 1931. With the exception of one sermon, they were all preached at Brixton Tabernacle, in London. At the end of volume two, there are six published prayers, between Scripture reading and sermon. Published prayers are unusual, but not wrong, if carefully selected. Ernest Roe had a number of pastorates, in God’s providence, of which we name three: Surrey Tabernacle and Brixton Tabernacle; Ebenezer, Matfield Green, Kent; and Providence, East Peckham, Kent. It was in his latter pastorate in Kent that one first heard of Mr. Roe as a local pastor before he moved in December 1953 to spend his last years at Fenstanton in Huntingdonshire. He suddenly passed away into eternal rest on Saturday, February 4th, 1967.

These published sermons are full of sound doctrinal matter. He ever desired to exalt the Lord Jesus, that Jesus who had been made precious to him. He would insist on a work of grace, whilst always preaching to encourage needy and seeking souls, pointing out the precious promises which are in Christ Jesus. There are also some solemn warnings against carelessness and a form of godliness. Ernest Roe delighted to preach salvation by grace. His ministry sought to encourage the tried and tempted believer. Mr. Roe’s expounding of Scripture truths is both plain and accurate. The ministerial style of Ernest Roe is plain, straightforward and to the point. Direct speaking is a characteristic of Fenland folks where “a spade is a spade” and nothing else. This plain and direct style of preaching makes his sermons truly profitable, and especially when truth is unfolded in a most gracious way. Sacred and saving gospel truth is set before us.

We feel that many of these sermons are suitable for public reading. We warmly recommend this book as another profitable book from Gospel Standard Trust Publications.

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## OBITUARY

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**Marjorie May Woodhams**, a member at Jireh Chapel, Haywards Heath and latterly at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, was called home on Friday, September 6th, 2019, aged 93 years.

Marjorie was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Wallis. Mr. Wallis was pastor at Providence Chapel, Burgess Hill, and most of her years of chapel attendance were spent at Burgess Hill.

Marjorie was a sinner, but a sinner saved by grace. Although the daughter of a Strict Baptist minister, Marjorie was a descendant of Adam, and as all children are, she described herself as being a naughty child. Following in the paths of many, the next turn was for her to become what she described as a “goody-goody.” She wrote, “I wanted to do my best and thought I would always be a Strict Baptist.”

Her account continues. "I started work at fifteen. Because of my naivety and credulity, and being as 'green as the grass,' I eventually fell into deep snares of the devil. This involved lies, deceit (a double life) and bad language, also a clandestine relationship [with a married man] which almost appeared to be 'meant' for us with what appeared a spiritual side. I was skating on the thin ice of lies and deception. If only I had the light and knowledge which I now have, I would have left the place and escaped that snare.

"I shudder and recoil at the remembrance of the sins of my youth and (sad to say) more recent years. One wonders why God did not hedge up my way and prevent all this which He could foresee. God knows best. Could it be for His honour and glory in saving such a vile, filthy, guilty sinner?

"When in my youth, I thought the field the other side of the hedge seemed richer with plenty of freedom and pleasure and refusing to believe there was the bottomless pit at the end. My views were universalist, and I comforted myself with the belief that only a few believed in election, after all."

Marjorie never appears to have given up religion. She left her father's ministry because she could not accept his Calvinism, preferring the fleshly religion of Arminianism, and so joined the Church of England. (In her later years, having been brought back, she emphatically delighted in the doctrines of grace and often quoted the five points of Calvinism when I visited her.) She was sprinkled in December 1949, subsequently confirmed in February 1950, and embraced religious life to the full, taking part in many church activities, teaching in the Sunday School and singing in the choir. Yet, despite all the outward religiosity, she writes, "I felt generally unsettled. I wanted to achieve and do good in life." Consequently, having had several jobs, she took a post at Dr. Barnardo's, but this appears to have ended in failure. She eventually took a job at County Hall, Lewes, in 1975, where she worked for the rest of her career.

The next year she was invited by an acquaintance to go with others on a Christian holiday in Yorkshire. The meetings there were very different from the Church of England. They were warned of the need to be saved and the reality of hell. When asked whether she was saved, she was indignant, but it created a concern about eternity and she tried to pray. She went on Christian holidays the following year, and also the next year. She found these meetings solemn and they convinced her more of her need of true repentance and her inability just to accept the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. She wrote, "There were some people who had an assurance that they were born again, and I envied them. I used to

go away by myself and kneel down. I tried to pray and accept Christ as my Saviour, but nothing was forthcoming. I wanted to repent of all my actual sins – these seemed to stand out – and of all my original sin. I needed to be cleansed and washed in the blood of the Lamb.”

Back at Lewes, she met with some other colleagues weekly for prayer. She records, “Although I did not have assurance, I felt a love and a drawing to the Lord Jesus. My one desire was to know that I was saved. I did not mind what lowly position I held in life or if people thought I was stupid, etc. I was not even bothered about getting married. Nothing mattered.” For Marjorie there was but one thing needful.

“When I was hoping to get some assurance of salvation I was plagued with vile, blasphemous thoughts and feared that I had committed the unpardonable sin. The only thing to do was to cry unto the Lord. My father reminded me of Christian in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* who experienced such things.”

After she was christened, confirmed and had been teaching some time in the Sabbath School, Marjorie became deeply convicted of the clandestine relationship of earlier years and she felt unworthy to be teaching, and compelled to confess to the ministers in the church, whom she had deceived, and tell them the truth. Marjorie was enabled to do this and was kindly received. She felt a measure of relief and forgiveness. However, she always regretted that she did not confess to her parents at the same time about her lies and deception, and exclaimed, “What a diabolical, heinous thing it is to lie and deceive.”

Marjorie continued teaching in the Sunday School for a while. Then a new vicar arrived. He did not adhere to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the church, and Marjorie became more and more dissatisfied with his ministry and the Church of England. The result was that she eventually left the church and returned to her father’s ministry at Providence Chapel, Burgess Hill. It was evidently a profitable time spiritually, because Marjorie notes, “Needless to say, the drawing power I experienced then did not last for ever. It was replaced by deadness and carnality which caused me concern.”

About this time Marjorie began to pray that the Lord would grant her a husband, one, she said, who would “lovingly overlook the sins of my youth.” This prayer was wonderfully answered when she married Mr. Ebenezer John Woodhams (generally called John) on September 9th, 1967.

On the first Lord’s day of October 1971, Marjorie and her husband attended the services at Shoreham. Marjorie records, “Mr. David Lawrence was preaching, and I was drinking in the service and repenting of my sins. As I witnessed the ordinance, I felt something which was difficult to describe. It was as if the Lord Jesus was by me and was

showing pity and compassion towards me, dying for my sins, and it gave a hope of forgiveness. This cheered me for a few days.

“One afternoon, while John was at work, the deacon from the chapel called to tell me I was pedalling the organ wrongly. This churned up the wrong spirit within me and I let him know that I was upset! I had yet to learn the spirit of meekness! The joy was gone and I to ‘my own sad place returned.’ There followed a state of backsliding, gross sins and carnality.”

It would appear that the blessed feeling of forgiveness received at Shoreham was lost by this event. For many years afterwards, Marjorie appeared to be groping for evidences of the Lord’s love and mercy towards her, although nothing could entirely erase the blessing of forgiveness she felt on that Lord’s day at Shoreham.

Marjorie continues: “When working in the garden, the devil was trying to get in between John and me. I felt horrible and a certain hymn fitted my case: ‘Show pity, Lord; O Lord, forgive; let a repenting rebel live,’ etc. (H. 761). Shortly after that, I dreamed I was playing that hymn, in the school room at Burgess Hill chapel, to the tune Baca. The very next time, being the Sunday, Philip Mariner gave out that hymn. That did indeed bring tears to my eyes.

“Getting ready for Burgess Hill chapel one morning, I was in a bad state – murmuring and feeling even at enmity with the Lord because of the exercise (no car) and prayers which did not seem to be answered. I was rushing against time to be ready to entertain the minister. Afterwards felt a sense of guilt. Tried to confess my sin to the Lord. The text in the evening was taken from Psalm 73. 23, 24. Though ‘foolish ... and ignorant ... as a beast before Thee,’ God was kind to Asaph, and is to His people despite their questioning.

“In October 1994, when reading a booklet, I was reminded that when in the Church of England I took communion, eating and drinking unworthily. I felt convicted. How could one even contemplate becoming a member of a church now? I felt I must be content with just witnessing the ordinance for the rest of my life.

“A service was held at Burgess Hill in the afternoon in the schoolroom on October 9th. Mr. Philip Mercer read Acts 2 and took for his text verse 41: ‘Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.’ The theme was baptism and the last hymn, chosen by the minister, was 428 [on the subject of baptism]. (John queried it before the service, but Mr. Mercer still kept to that hymn.) It all seemed far away, and I wondered if it was meant for somebody. In the evening Mr. Michael Pickett preached with authority and power. The reading was Luke 7 verse 19 to end. The text was Luke 15. 2, ‘The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth

with them.’ That sounded encouraging. Was this meant especially for me? I asked. There were not many people present. Much was mentioned about the woman, who was such a sinner, in Simon the Pharisee’s house. The greatest debtor – owed much – loved much. It was emphasised that no sin was too great to be washed away through the blood of the Lamb. Just lately I had been turning to the account of that woman, and had longed to be like her, with that same Holy Ghost repentance, with love to the Lord welling up within, and then to be told straight from the Lord, ‘Thy sins are forgiven.’ In November 1994, Mr. Timothy Pocock preached at Burgess Hill, and also read Luke 7 verse 19 to the end and took for his text verse 41 and 42. The same text morning and evening: ‘There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?’

“September 19th, 1998. I had just woken up (or was waking up) when these words dropped, I trust, into my heart, to the tune Rivaulx.

‘There shall your eyes with rapture view  
The glorious Friend that died for you.’ (H. 257)

“It was overwhelming, I do want a confirmation of this, and to know Christ precious, and my sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb.” (The hymn was sung at her funeral.)

Burgess Hill Chapel closed in 1999, and Marjorie and her husband moved to attend Jireh Chapel, Haywards Heath. In a notebook she recorded the following blessing which she spoke of on almost every occasion I visited her.

“Saturday, July 7th, 2001. After a busy day preparing for the Sabbath, John having gone to bed, I was about to follow. Was desiring that the Lord would speak to me and reveal Himself to me. When in bed, I groped for my Bible and torch, hoping that Jesus would speak through His Word and/or that I might be fed. Making it a matter of prayer, I decided to open (maybe for reproof or instruction). My eyes fell straight on one verse, with which one was not familiar: Zephaniah 3. 17. What a beautiful verse. I did not think one would retain it at this time of night (but would store it up and read it again and again). However, I went to sleep after reading the first clause, ‘The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save.’ On the next morning, there was a read sermon by Mr. Frost which took that very verse and the first part only as the text, ‘the LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save.’ It was so remarkable. May God have the glory.” She often marvelled that the promise, “He will joy over thee with singing,” should be true of her.

Marjorie was bereaved of her husband on September 6th, 2002, but she felt the Lord's teaching in it. She felt the bereavement was because of her sin, and through this learnt meekness, being able to forgive others – her inability to forgive others was something which had long plagued her and was the cause of much prayer as she felt it was a barrier to the Lord blessing her.

In reading the *Gospel Standard* for October 2007, she read that sometimes there is blessing the other side of the water of baptism, and became concerned regarding disobedience to the Lord's commandments concerning the ordinances of His house. She thus ventured to come before the church at Hayward's Heath, laying the matter at the Lord's feet. She was baptized by Mr. Richard Woodhams, who later became her pastor, on November 7th, 2007. She was 81 years old when she ventured to follow her Lord in baptism.

Increasing weakness necessitated Marjorie entering the Bethesda Home at Hove in January 2011. Here she was lovingly cared for until the end. She subsequently transferred her membership to Galeed, where she faithfully attended until she became bedbound towards the close of 2018. She was a faithful church member. She rejoiced in the appointment of a pastor at Galeed.

My first introduction to Marjorie, after I was asked to preach with a view to becoming the pastor at Galeed, was singular. On entering her room, I was asked to take out a tract from her desk so she could give it to the doctor who was expected to visit. That summed up this aspect of Marjorie's witness as a child of God – a burden for the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. She rejoiced when told recently of some who had started attending regularly at Galeed (without previous Strict Baptist backgrounds). She prayed regularly for Brighton and longed for revival in the city. This concern for souls was seen in her dying words to me, "Please don't forget to pray for X—."

Another thing that was so characteristic of Marjorie was her desire for, and prayers for, the unity of the church. Latterly the Galeed church meetings were held around her bed in Bethesda, and they were times which will not be quickly forgotten. They were generally ended with a comment from Marjorie as she lay in her bed – "How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psa. 133. 1).

In Bethesda Marjorie will be remembered for her Christian contentment. For virtually the last year of her life she was confined to bed. She always had some good reading material opened on her bed. She became slowly weaker and more unable to help herself. But rarely, if ever, did a word of complaint cross her lips. She was always more interested in the welfare of others than in herself. Her conversation

quickly turned to spiritual things, and she never tired of speaking of the Lord's goodness and mercy to her. She was a witness as to how a Christian should live and die to the staff who cared for her, and those who visited her.

A notable feature of Marjorie's latter days was her longing for heaven. In a notebook she had recorded: "Wednesday, August 14th, 2013. Mr. Roy Pearce took the reading and prayer. He read Revelation 21. How bright and beautiful and glorious beyond words must be that holy city. The Lamb's wife – the bride – need no candle – the Lamb is the light thereof. It made me long to be there."

That aspiration grew. She often expressed disappointment when I visited her that the Lord had not come and taken her. When, hearing she had taken a turn for the worse on the Tuesday evening prior to her death, I visited her the following afternoon, I asked, "How are you?" She replied, "Disappointed – I hoped and prayed I wouldn't wake up this morning. I want to be with Jesus." I read with her Psalm 45, and she picked up the words, "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace" (verses 13-15). She responded by saying with emphasis: "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,**" referring to the blessing she received in 2001.

When I visited her on the Friday, a few hours before she passed away, she was sleepy, but she recognised me, and when I read Revelation 22, she responded with, "Come *quickly*." She then slept deeply until she gently breathed her last at 7.30 p.m., while the evening service at Galeed was being relayed to her room. So, she left the worship of her Saviour on this earth to enter the eternal worship of heaven. "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and *do immediately pass into glory*."

Her mortal remains were laid to rest in the burial ground at Jireh Chapel, Haywards Heath, on October 1st. The funeral was taken by her pastors (R.W. Woodhams and M.J. Hyde), with Mr. J.F. Ashby leading in prayer.

The churches at Galeed and Jireh have lost a praying sister. Many have lost a godly friend. Bethesda has lost a good influence. The family have lost a caring sister and aunt. We are all the poorer. May we follow in the footsteps of Marjorie, in her concern for the coming of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, her prayer for the unity of the church, her

godliness with contentment (which is great gain), and her expectant longing to be with Jesus. May her death be ours, and the portion she enjoys now that which we will one day share in.

Matthew J. Hyde

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### NEW YEAR CONFESSION AND SUPPLICATION

*(Psa. 65. 11; 103. 4)*

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Lord, we adore Thee, and would fain express  
Thy matchless goodness and our worthlessness;  
Ashamed of self, we prostrate at Thy door,  
Confess our sin, and Thy free grace implore.

Another year of our short life is gone,  
And many are the wonders we have known;  
Our path's been strewed with blessings rich and rare,  
Proceeding from Thy special love and care.

Sometimes in solemn silence we have sat,  
Then peevishly cried out, How hard's our lot!  
Each trial we have viewed with fretful eye,  
And every mercy passed in silence by.

We've swelled our woes to an immense degree,  
And often said, None are so tried as we;  
God's righteous ways our carnal hearts despise,  
And often say they're neither just nor wise.

Yet sovereign favours we have oft enjoyed;  
To us the Holy Ghost has them applied;  
Through God's free goodness, mercies, rich and rare,  
Have cheered our souls and vanquished every fear.

Christ, and Him crucified, has been our song;  
His unctuous love has tuned our hearts and tongue;  
We've been abashed, our vileness have confessed,  
And felt that God in blessing has us blessed.

With shame and joy we now approach Thy throne,  
Ashamed of self, for righteousness we've none;  
Yet sing we Christ the Lord our righteousness,  
Whose matchless love will all our woes redress.

With wondering eyes we view the year that's past,  
The present year, perhaps, may be our last;  
Great God, uphold us by Thy power and love,  
And fix, and keep our hearts on things above.

William Gadsby (1773-1844)



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**FEBRUARY 2020**

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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 NEW PARLIAMENT**

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Our readers in the United Kingdom now have a newly-elected government, with a large working majority. While we must not indulge in politics, we believe that many of our readers will draw some thankfulness and satisfaction from the result of the general election. Firstly, that moves to withdraw from the European Union in an orderly way have been begun. The result of the referendum in 2016 is now being honoured. Secondly, that the nation has been delivered from a potential Prime Minister with Marxist and totalitarian tendencies, who also is openly hostile to Israel, and has shown sympathy with various terrorist groups among the nations. Some Labour party members have accused him of being anti-Semitic. We are also thankful that the Prime Minister in his Christmas message, acknowledged the birth of the Lord Jesus, and also expressed sympathy with persecuted Christians in other parts of the world.

We are told in the Scriptures to pray for those in authority over us, and that means whether they be good or bad rulers, for they are appointed by God, as the rulers in this world. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 1). Therefore we are to pray for them, that we might live quiet and peaceable lives according to the Word of the Lord: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2. 1-4).

With all the convulsions, threatenings, cruelty and apostasy in the earth, that glorious truth that "The LORD reigneth" is a sure foundation to men of faith, as they see all that is going on about them. The servants or followers of the Lord are called to "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called" (1 Tim. 6. 12). It is not an easy pathway to heaven, but a way in which we shall need much grace to be ministered unto us. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7. 14). The promise is sure, "But he that putteth his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain" (Isa. 57. 13).

Our readers of the *Gospel Standard* in these islands do not know how matters will unfold for us in the land. Neither do our readers in other lands know what will unfold for them, but we read that “the eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry” (Psa. 34. 15). May we each truly be favoured to trust in the Lord, pray our way along, cast our every care into His hands, and watch for the Lord’s appearing in His covenant promises.

“Amidst the sorrows of the way,  
Lord Jesus, teach my soul to pray;  
And let me taste Thy special grace,  
And run to Christ, my Hiding-Place.” (H. 711)

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### CHRIST DWELLING AMONG THE CHURCHES

*Sermon preached by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at the meeting of the Gospel Standard Societies at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester, on Friday, September 7th, 1973*

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**Text:** “Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee. My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies” (Song 6. 1, 2).

This word follows a most beautiful description of the Person of Christ. Christ’s bride was asked this question: “What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?” (Song 5. 9). *And she knew the answer.* With a heart overflowing with love she gives this most blessed description, coming up to this wonderful climax: “His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely” (verse 16). And this calls forth what I have read to you (verse 1); it has an effect upon the daughters of Jerusalem; and the daughters of Jerusalem, those seeking, enquiring souls, now speak again: “Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee.”

I want first of all to speak a word this evening to the “daughters of Jerusalem.” I wonder if there are any here? Those who long after Christ; who want Him; who seek to find Him; who cannot do without Him? The daughters of Jerusalem cannot say, “**My** Beloved”; they only dare rise as high as this: “**Thy** Beloved.” Oh, but they see such an attraction in Christ; they want to seek after Him; they can never be satisfied until they find Him, until they possess Him. Oh, what a mercy if grace has made you a daughter of Jerusalem! For these daughters of Jerusalem will one day embrace this blessed Jesus in the arms of faith and say: “**My** Beloved, **My** Beloved.”

I want also to speak a word to those of you who know the Lord. The question was asked by the daughters of Jerusalem to the bride of Christ: "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" and she knew the answer. She could speak so simply and so clearly of what Christ meant to her soul. O that there were more occasions like this amongst the people of God when, sweetly moved and constrained by the love of Jesus, there shall be a blessed testimony of what a precious Jesus means to their souls! "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. 22. 42) is the great question. We stand or fall here; and the beloved bride of Christ did not falter. She was asked a question. This "Shibboleth" (Judg. 12. 6) was put to her and she did not falter; she could answer what Christ meant to her soul. I wonder how many of you here tonight can, with humble hope, declare what Christ means to you? Then tell me, are there some of you who can say:

"Compared with Christ, in all beside  
No comeliness I see"?

(H. 940)

It is a wonderful thing if the words that we speak cause the daughters of Jerusalem to be attracted to Him whose worthy name we profess. A gospel minister is one who should speak well of Christ and exalt Him that those who hear might come, like the daughters of Jerusalem, and say: "Whither is thy Beloved gone, **O thou fairest among women?** whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee." And those of you who fear God, is it not your desire in your life to honour Christ? There is a solemn word: "For none of us liveth to himself" (Rom. 14. 7); and those of us who profess the name of Christ have an influence; an influence for good or for evil; an influence in the church where we stand in membership; an influence in the congregation where we worship; an influence on seeking souls; an influence on young people and children. Do we repel them or do we attract them? The daughters of Jerusalem had so many things they did not know, but they saw such a beauty in Christ and in His bride, and they asked this question: "Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee." They saw such a beauty and attraction in her they wanted to be like her. I often think of that amazing word concerning the early disciples: "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4. 13). Now does the world, do our young people, do seeking souls take knowledge of *us* that *we* have been with Jesus? They never can, they never will unless we *have* been with Jesus. But O, what a mercy when grace so reigns in the children of God that there are those who hover around that are sweetly attracted, who see that the people of God possess something that they do not possess, yet long to possess it.

“Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee.” Now she knows the answer. She knows where Christ is, where Christ is to be found: “My Beloved is gone down into His garden.” Once He went down into the Garden of Eden, but,

“Eden, from each flowery bed,  
Did for man short sweetness breathe;  
Soon, by Satan’s counsel led,  
Man wrought sin, and sin wrought death;  
But of life, the healing tree  
Grows in rich Gethsemane.” (H. 802)

“My Beloved is gone down into His garden.” He once went down into the Garden of Gethsemane and sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground: “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). There is the garden of the rock sepulchre into which the lifeless body of our blessed Redeemer was carried; and Oh, the wonders of that garden on the resurrection morning! “My Beloved is gone down into His garden.”

But I take it here that this garden speaks of the *gospel church* – “**His garden.**” Does not the Lord Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, speak of His beloved church: “A garden inclosed is My sister, My spouse”? (Song 4. 12). A very beautiful emblem of the church of Jesus – “a garden inclosed,” enclosed by eternal, electing love; a garden in which there are many plants of the Father’s right-hand planting. Oh, to be one of them! How solemn if we are not one of them! “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15. 13). “**His garden,**” and the Lord Jesus is gone down into it. In another place we have the Lord Jesus described in this beautiful description: “Thou that dwellest in the gardens” (Song 8. 13).

Beloved friends, this is the point which rests with much weight and sweetness upon my spirit today, that *the Lord Jesus* “**is gone down into His garden.**” I know that He is risen, exalted and glorified at the right hand of God, but He is with His people – a wall of fire round about them, the glory in the midst of them. He is graciously present in the gospel church to the end of time. This is such a sweet point to me. Amidst all our desolations, our sins and shortcomings, the Lord Jesus still dwells in His garden. We have a different analogy in the Revelation, but the same point. John, on the Isle of Patmos, heard a voice, and he turned and saw seven golden candlesticks, and one like unto the Son of man standing in the midst (see Rev. 1. 13). He had such a view of Christ in all His glory. He viewed Him walking amongst the seven golden candlesticks, and, blessed be His name, He still does! This is our mercy, that we are not yet

completely forsaken. This is the sweet point that rests upon my spirit, that the Lord Jesus dwells amongst His people. He is with them at all times. He is with them in their sorrows and trials, and He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13. 5). In a special sense, He is graciously present in our solemn assemblies. "The LORD hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psa. 132. 13, 14).

Now this is the prosperity of a gospel church, as Christ walks amongst the candlesticks, as Christ makes the place of His feet glorious, as Christ dwells in His gardens; as His gracious presence is felt; as He speaks to His beloved people; as He helps, blesses and comforts them; as He reveals Himself to them and grants them tokens of His love. "His garden." In a special sense the Lord delights to make His gracious presence known in the gospel church and in our solemn assemblies. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). Value it! Do not presume upon it! There are two other conditions besides the "two or three"! The first is this: "gathered together." In our solemn assemblies, may we not just come, but may we be graciously "gathered together." "Where two or three are **gathered** together." Secondly: "In My name." May it ever be our desire that in all our solemn assemblies, we might meet in Jesus' worthy name.

"My Beloved is gone down into His garden." And why is He gone down into His garden? Well, beloved friends, He is the Keeper; He is the Gardener. Be very clear concerning this. Christ has a garden and He dearly loves and highly values it; and He is the Gardener. That word concerning Mary Magdalene has a true sense spiritually: "She, supposing Him to be the gardener" (John 20. 15). He is the Gardener. He never left it to His beloved servants; He uses them, *but He is the Gardener*. "I the LORD do keep it" – that is Jesus Himself. He is the great Head of the church; He is the Gardener: "I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. 27. 3). He did not delegate it to any other.

"My Beloved is gone down into His garden." There are many here tonight who are solemnly and sweetly exercised concerning the churches of truth. May you realise afresh how dear the churches of truth are to Christ Himself. If you love the churches, Christ loves them far more than you. "He is gone down into His garden." And notice this. Sometimes we speak of "my church," and are burdened with cares and responsibilities and the things that try and perplex us. Do you not sometimes hear a whisper from the Lord Jesus Christ when He says, "It is *My* church"? How dearly the Lord loves His church!

"My Beloved is gone down into His garden." As the heavenly Gardener, He is gone down into His garden that the plants may be watered. These are precious seasons in the church of God when there are

times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; when the doctrine of Christ and Him crucified falls as the rain and sweetly distills as the dew, and the withering plants are refreshed and revived. And is not this what you long for? Perhaps you find a prayer arises in your heart: "Lord Jesus, come down again into the garden; water Thy garden and water my poor and withering thirsty soul."

"My Beloved is gone down into His garden." The garden is Christ's peculiar care and He delights to water it. He grants His blessings; He reveals Himself; He sheds abroad His love; and then the garden is watered and refreshed. And Oh! how we long that these times might be more frequent! May there be such a time tonight.

"My Beloved is gone down into His garden." He also is gone down into His garden to weed and to prune. There are many things which need nipping off; many things which need rooting up. There is something unspeakably blessed in this statement that Christ "is gone down into His garden." There is also something unspeakably solemn. Read through the second and third chapters of Revelation with reference to the seven churches. What is it? Christ is gone down into His garden, and there you see the weeding and the pruning; the rebuking, the chastising, the reproofing. When Jesus visits His garden, it will not always be for your comfort; it will be for His glory and your good. Some of your best hearing times will be when the word cuts, reproves; when you are brought to repentance; when you go home ashamed of self; when you do not speak to anyone because the heavenly Gardener has been weeding and pruning. To bring it closer: it does not just touch the gospel church, but concerns your own soul.

"Lord, my heart, a desert vast,  
Thy reviving hand requires." (H. 874)

There is so much that needs to be rooted up; so much that needs to be cut off; and when we are in our right minds, we value the Lord's solemn rebukes and reproofs, the weeding and the pruning, just as much as we value the comforts, the waterings.

"My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices." This is a sweet description of the churches – "beds of spices"; places where there is a sweet savour of Christ. And, you know, this is gospel prosperity when the churches are "beds of spices." May it be our exercise in our own particular churches that we may answer to this – "beds of spices"; that there might be a sweet savour of Christ; a sweet savour of Christ in the preaching, a sweet savour of Christ resting upon the hearts of the people, and a sweet savour of Christ in our lives. Now that is gospel prosperity.

"To the beds of spices." In Solomon's day, a popular feature in gardens was to have many aromatic plants, not so much for their beauty,

but for their fragrance. And so persons would walk in the garden and, though there would be no peculiar beauty in the plants, there was such a sweet fragrance from the beds of spices. And so it is in the true church of Jesus Christ. It is a "bed of spices." In the hearts of the members, the graces of the Holy Spirit are there implanted as sweet spices: repentance, humility, meekness, love, worship, thanksgiving, holy joy, gratitude, praise, prayer, fervent desires – these are the precious spices that the Holy Ghost implants in the hearts of His people in the churches. Wherever there is a true gospel church, it is a "bed of spices." But you see, beloved friends, it was when the breeze blew that the sweet fragrance flowed forth over all the garden from the beds of spices. So you have that beautiful prayer – and how we need to pray it! "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out" (Song 4. 16).

Now, child of God, as the Holy Ghost has dealt with you, these various spices are implanted in your heart. But, you know, the sweet fragrance does not always flow, does it? We feel at times that all is still and dead. There seems to be no movement; there seems to be nothing stirring:

"Hardly, sure, can they be worse  
Who have never heard His name." (H. 283)

The stillness! The deadness! Nothing going on between your soul and Christ! Nothing moving, nothing flowing until the north wind and the south wind awake and blow upon the garden, upon the beds of spices, and *then* the spices flow.

May it be our solemn, weighty exercise tonight in our own heart and in the church with which we are peculiarly concerned, and in general in the churches of truth, that the Holy Ghost may arise in power and effectively work, whether it is the north wind (so powerful), or gently as the south wind; but, "Blow upon the garden." May that blessed Spirit be poured into our hearts to pray: "Blow upon the garden." O these are sweet seasons when the Holy Ghost blows upon the garden, the beds of spices, and something flows; when you feel a little repentance flowing and a little love shed abroad in your heart, and that love flows to Christ and flows to all His people. Now this is prosperity. "Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."

"To the beds of spices." Really the gracious presence of our beloved Lord, the great Head of the church, makes the church a "bed of spices." I think one of the sweetest commentaries on this word is that blessed appearing of the Lord Jesus to His favoured disciples on the day of His resurrection in the upper room at Jerusalem (see John 20). He went down to His garden, and His gracious presence was felt in the bed of spices: "Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said. Peace be unto you" (verse 26). Now this is what we long for

– the Lord Jesus Himself amongst us: “Less than Thyself will not suffice” (H. 940). We long for Jesus Himself to stand in the midst. “Then were the disciples glad.” The spices began to flow as “He shewed unto them His hands and His side” (John 20. 20) – His wounded hands, the marks of His sufferings, the pledge of His love towards them; the clear evidence that it was the same Jesus who died upon the cross who now stood before them. The spices began to flow forth when He showed them His hands and His side.

“Look on *My* wounded hands, and read  
Thy name in crimson lines.” (H. 951)

This is the place where all His beloved people are engraved: “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *My* hands” (Isa. 49. 16). Now this was a “bed of spices.” “He shewed unto them His ... side,” where the cruel spear entered; the place from which flowed out blood and water. “He shewed unto them His ... side,” the source of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. And do we not long that the Lord Jesus might show us His hands and His side? Not to our bodily eyes, not in some vision, but a view by faith of His sin-atonement sufferings, and our interest in them. “He showed unto them His hands and His side,” the source of the open fountain.

“This fountain so dear, He’ll freely impart;  
Unlocked by the spear, it gushed from His heart,  
With blood and with water; the first to atone,  
To cleanse us the latter; the fountain’s but one.” (H. 155)

And the spices began to flow. Our Beloved was gone down into the garden. “He shewed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.”

“To feed in the gardens.” The Lord Jesus has promised to feed His people. They have a holy appetite and He has promised to feed them. And special promises are attached to the gospel church and the solemn assemblies of His saints: “I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread” (Psa. 132. 15).

“To feed in the gardens.” But I take it that the real meaning of this is somewhat different. There is a beautiful analogy here. Why does the King go down into His garden? How does He feed? Well, He feeds Himself upon some of those precious fruits that grow in His garden. Beloved friends, the Lord Jesus looks for fruitfulness in the churches. O that we might ever be exercised concerning this, that there might be fruitfulness in the churches and fruitfulness in our souls. It is when the Lord Jesus comes to His people and sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied (see Isa. 53. 11); when He sees His own work appearing there and claims it as His own. It was for this joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame (see Heb. 12. 2). O, what an



amazing thing that Christ should take delight in His people! He feeds in the garden. It is something He delights in. You can understand a sinner delighting in Christ, in His merits and precious blood; but here is the reverse. Christ dearly loves His people, and *He* delights in *them*. He calls His bride His Hephzibah, for His delight is in her (see Isa. 62. 4).

“To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.” This is another reason why the King goes down into His garden: “to gather lilies.” O what an amazing thing that a sinner saved by grace should ever be described as a lily, the emblem of spotless purity! “As the lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters” (Song 2. 2). And so it is, child of God. Though you feel so black, so worthless in your own sight, in the sight of your Redeemer you are as pure as the lily. And you know the secret: “Ye are complete in Him” (Col. 2. 10), washed in His own precious blood, clothed in His spotless righteousness. “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” (Isa. 1. 18). “Lilies.”

And the King goes down into His garden to gather the lilies one by one. O that we might be blessed with faith to see the death of the believer in this light, the light of this divine revelation that it is the King who has gone down into His garden to gather a lily that it might bloom more sweetly in the paradise above! It will take all the bitterness from death.

“Give the Saviour, without grudge,  
The purchase of His pain.” (H. 843)

“And to gather lilies.” Well, it will be a mercy if, when the Lord comes to call us from time to stand before His judgment seat, through His own work we are found as the lily:

“Redeemed by His merit and washed in His blood,  
With joy to adore at the footstool of God.”

It will be an unspeakable mercy! A solemn thing to be called from time, to have made a profession as a lily, and to be found nothing but “thorns and briers ... whose end is to be burned” (Heb. 6. 8).

And the great day hastens on when there shall be the general gathering of all God’s people, the resurrection morning, and “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49. 10). “To gather lilies.” Until that great and solemn day, Christ is gone down into His garden to dwell there “until the day break, and the shadows flee away” (Song 2. 17).

May some of you in your little gatherings be blessed Sabbath by Sabbath with this sweet assurance that though despised by the world, and very poor in the eyes of men and in your own eyes, Christ is come down into His garden and that He dwells there. And so He must dwell among

the churches of truth and His beloved people until time shall be no more, and then He will bring them home; and He not only dwells in the gardens, but He dwells in His people's hearts by faith.

"My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies."

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### TRUE FAITH

*In April 1846 John Kershaw preached at least two sermons on "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" (Eph. 2. 8, 9). The following is a very brief summary of one of the sermons, and as there is not much continuity, would appear to be just a few extracts.*

It is necessary in this part of our subject to draw a line of distinction between the real, genuine faith of a believer and the faith that a man may have and yet not be quickened by God the Holy Spirit. Now, there is what is called a nominal, natural faith. James, speaking on this subject, says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well" (Jas. 2. 19). Better be so than to be an infidel, to deny the Supreme Being. But recollect, the devils believe this, and they tremble. The devils believe that Jesus is the Saviour of His people, for the devils cried out, "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8. 29). And in another place, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" (Acts 19. 15). So you see there is a faith that both men and devils may have, and yet be destitute of living faith.

The Lord, speaking in the parable of the sower, said there were some who for a while believed, but in time of temptation fell away. Paul had to do with a great many of this sort, who for a time believed, but in the time of temptation and trial they left him. So, you see, there is a faith that we have a command over as regards assenting and consenting to the Word of truth; but the real faith of God's elect, we can no more command than we can command our souls to leave our bodies. Now, my friends, it becomes you and me to have a godly jealousy to know whether we are in the faith, for, as it respects genuine faith, it is the gift of God the Holy Spirit; it is a limb of the new creature. Paul says, "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).

It is called the faith of God's elect; and why is it called the faith of God's elect? Because it is wrought in the children of God and none else. You see this proved. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10. 17). The apostles preached the Word, and the Lord gave it success; and then it is written, "As many as were **ordained to eternal life** believed" (Acts 13. 48).

“By grace are ye saved ... and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2. 8). The faith of the elect is a plant that never grew in nature’s garden. He who has this faith believes all that God says in His holy Word, not only because it is the Word of God, but because he feels and knows these things in his heart. What is it without the feeling? It is, as John Berridge says, not worth a groat. The child of God does not want to go [to get faith] to those great commentators, such as Dr. Gill, Dr. Hawker, Matthew Henry, and other great men, from which many of our parsons get their sermons. No; he has it in his heart. I must stick to feeling. Some parsons say, “Bother your feelings!” Well, I cannot think so. If I had been out and come home very hungry, and saw a good table spread, and plenty of good things talked about, that would not satisfy my hunger. I must eat the things myself to be satisfied.

Christ is the Author of our faith; and not only is He the Author, but He carries on the work of grace in our hearts. Some professors talk about their faith, that they can believe when they like. I know I cannot. The child of God knows, by daily experience, that he feels dark and shut up, and cannot lay hold on a single promise.

Now, may the Lord assist me to show to some poor, cast-down sinners that they have faith; and O that He may be with us. You do really and truly in your hearts, confess before God that you feel guilty, lost, ruined and undone. Well, poor souls, there must be life to feel your deadness; there must be light to see your darkness. The great object of your faith is the Lord Jesus Christ; you love Him. I know a man who said he could never think he was a believer, he never thought he had faith, until one night, he said, “Our parson preached from these words: ‘Unto you therefore which believe He is precious’ (1 Pet. 2. 7); and as he was speaking, I did feel Him precious to my soul, and I said, ‘I have faith.’”

There is a verse of a hymn on the subject on which we are now dwelling; it is addressed as a prayer to the Holy Ghost:

“Assure my conscience of her part  
In the Redeemer’s blood;  
And bear Thy witness with my heart,  
That I am born of God.” (H. 24)

This is what the child of God wants to know, whether he is interested in the love of Jesus. You know that Jesus is the Saviour of His people, and that none of them will ever be lost. You have no doubts about that; but this is not enough for you. You want to feel that He is yours. It is as Hart says,

“True religion’s more than notion;  
Something must be known and felt.” (H. 237)

## EMMANUEL, THE SOURCE AND OBJECT OF LOVE

*By William Cunningham of Edinburgh (1805-1861)*

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Christ, however, has all the properties of the Godhead; and, as God, He has an undoubted right to the first place in our affections, while He is possessed of such glorious perfections, and stands in such a relation to us, that supreme love to Him should be the natural and proper result of any view which we take of Him, and of any attempt which we make to realise Him. No man hath seen God at any time; but the only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him (see John 1. 18). And one purpose for which God sent His Son into the world was, that He might manifest Himself to us in such a way as might more than ever constrain us to love Him. The apostle tells us, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4. 9), and one use we ought to make of the information which we have received concerning Christ is to constrain us to obey the first and great commandment.

But in endeavouring to use the record God has given concerning His Son, for impressing the divine character and perfections upon our minds, and shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, let us never forget that Christ is Himself God over all, that He is Himself the object whom in the first great commandment we are required to love with all our hearts, that He is possessed of all those perfections which render that commandment a reasonable one, and that the giving Him all the honour and respect to which He is entitled, is guarded by an express reference to the day of judgment, and the decision there to be pronounced with respect to our eternal condition. Surely, then, though you have never seen Christ, yet when you know well and believe firmly that He has been from eternity, and is still, possessed of every perfection and excellence, that He has always been, and still is, the Author of every good and perfect gift, surely you must be constrained to love Him, and to love Him far more than you have ever yet done.

Again, though you have never seen Christ, yet you know well and you firmly believe that He was faultless and most beautiful in His human nature; you are familiar with a great deal that He said and did while He lived upon earth, and everything is fitted to make you admire and love Him. You have a full and minute record – inspired and preserved by God – of all the leading actions in His life, of many interesting discourses which both in public and private He delivered, of His conduct and deportment in many trying and painful circumstances, of the toils and hardships which He endured, of the indignities and sufferings to which

He was subjected, and of His falling at length a victim to the malignity of men whom He had never injured, whom He lived and died to benefit.

You find Him subjected to the severest tests for bringing out His dispositions, and principles, and motives, and yet you can find nothing about Him on any occasion, in thought, word, or deed, which is not in perfect accordance, at once with the requirements of God's laws, and with the most exalted conceptions which man ever has formed, or can form, of holy beauty, and worth, and excellence. Never was any descendant of Adam put to such a test, and never was the result of any test so triumphant. Satan came, and found nothing in Him. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself in an unprecedented degree, and in circumstances of peculiar aggravation, yet He never wearied or fainted in His soul; He never was conscious of any murmuring or rebellious thoughts; He never manifested any impatience, or discontentment, or fretfulness, either with respect to God, whom He knew to be the primary cause of all that befell Him, or with respect to those men who perversely and maliciously tormented and provoked Him. And while He manifested every excellence or perfection that any of God's holy and unfallen creatures could display, He exhibited likewise every pure and innocent feeling that is natural to the human heart, not merely compassionating men in distress, but sympathising with the afflicted, as if their case was His own; and having peculiar emotions of love, or special, personal affection, towards individuals called forth in His breast.

In short, the more carefully you examine the life of Christ as recorded in the gospels, the more clearly will you see how all His thoughts, and words, and actions, were regulated by consummate wisdom, by unspotted, holy excellence, by the most amiable and affectionate dispositions; and when you thus, in realising His character as exhibited in His life, contemplate Him as a pattern of all holy excellence, as possessed of every quality fitted to command esteem and to call forth affection, you will feel a holy exultation, that the same nature which you wear, once appeared in such a form and aspect, that One – who was a partaker of flesh and blood like yourselves – should have exhibited such a faultless pattern of everything that is excellent and beautiful; and by all these views, and upon all these grounds, you will feel constrained to love Him.

You know that Christ was God, possessed of all the perfections of divinity; and you know likewise that He was most beautiful and perfect humanity, exhibiting His excellences amid perpetual and painful sufferings. You are to contemplate Him in these lights, that you may be constrained to love Him.

But there must be some great mystery in all this: Christ – God and yet Man – possessed of the divine nature and prerogatives, and yet

subjected to many sufferings and indignities; a holy and innocent Man, and yet put to death as a malefactor. What can be the meaning and the object of all this? In reply to this question, there are views opened up to us in Scripture, clearly stated to us in the Word of God, and resting upon divine authority, which, when understood and realised, must surely constrain us to love Christ, although we have never seen Him. And the substance of them is this: that Christ, the eternal Son of God, became Man from love to us, that He assumed our nature to deliver us from infinite ruin, that He came into this world in order that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly, that He submitted to poverty and obscurity, to hardship and suffering, in order that we might be saved from the wrath and curse of God, that He poured out His soul unto death, in order that we might be rescued from eternal ruin, and raised to glory, honour and immortality. His voluntary assumption of human nature was prompted by compassion for our ruined condition; He was induced to enter upon a life of humiliation and suffering, and was animated during the whole period of its endurance, by love for our souls, by a real and a powerful desire, existing in His heart, to save us from ruin, and to raise us to happiness.

It was because we were partakers of flesh and blood, that He “likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2. 14), and His object in humbling Himself to our condition was, that He might raise us to a participation of His own glory. It was because our state by nature was very wretched and deplorable, that He became emphatically “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53. 3). It was because none other could save us, that He undertook the mighty work of our redemption. It was because He wished and intended to raise us to an exceeding great “and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4. 17), that He sank to such a depth of humiliation, and endured such a load of trials. It was that He might bring us to the eternal enjoyment of God’s favour, that He consented for a time to endure the hidings of His Father’s face.

The process of His becoming Man, and suffering and dying, was the result of His own free choice, and that choice was determined by love to us, and by a sincere desire to do us good. It was the result, not of a hasty resolution or a temporary feeling, but of a firm and steady purpose to save us from hell, and to raise us to heaven.

This love of Christ, prompting Him to become our Surety, and to interpose for our salvation, to assume our nature, and to suffer and die in our room, is the source of all the happiness and comfort which we have ever enjoyed, even as pertaining to this world; of all the wonderful forbearance which He has manifested in His dealings towards us, notwithstanding our sins; of all that we have ever yet enjoyed, or may hope and expect to enjoy, of God’s favour here and hereafter. He has

thrown open to us the gate of heaven; and it is wholly upon the ground of these sufferings, which His love for us prompted Him to endure, that we have now before us the hope of “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 1. 4), in place of having only a “fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation” (Heb. 10. 27).

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## THE FLESH WARRING AGAINST THE SPIRIT

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Cirencester  
August 4th, 1851

*To Mr. Morse*

My very dear Brother,

What a privilege is real access in prayer! What humility, life, and power there is in *real* prayer! It moves heaven, earth and hell! Neither brazen gates, iron bars, nor Satan, with all hell, can stop or resist prayer. It has shut the bottles of heaven by the space of three years and six months, and has opened them again. I cannot tell one ten thousandth part of the wonders done by the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous. I am a poor creature at this; mostly too strong; this wonderful weapon being wielded best by *weakest* saints. But I bless a covenant Three-one God, I know what it is at times to have sweet liberty, freedom and access at the mercy seat. How blessed is that poor soul who is a praying soul! His life is hid with Christ in God; and because He lives, he shall live also. But my brother knows more of the life, walk, fight and triumph of faith, of the privilege and power of prayer, experimental understanding, and gospel knowledge, than I do.

I had, last evening, more life in my soul than usual in attempting to set forth the dear Friend of sinners as their whole, everlasting and great salvation. I verily believe I shall live and die in this solemn belief, that he is All in all in matters of salvation. Were it not for Him, I never more dare attempt to pray. Indeed there would be no mercy seat to go to; no altar; no priest; no advocate; no good Samaritan; no way to God. All would be death indeed but for Him, who is the Life, as well as the Way. How my soul admires Him at times! Yea, even in attempting to write a little of Him, I feel my heart drawn out towards Him. O how suitable and every way precious He is to him who believes! But alas! what a monster am I! It thrust itself into my thoughts, just as I was writing and feeling my heart a little drawn out towards Him: “Ah, if you could write such a letter as would get into the *Standard*!” This I found checked my feelings; and do what I could, it would still be there, and din din, as it were, in my soul. O ’tis “accursed pride,” that great enemy to peace and humility!

“It puffs us glad,  
Torments us sad,”

(H. 287)

and will be in exercise, even when we endeavour to set forth its ugly and serpentine nature. It lives almost anywhere and everywhere; it is a thrifty, dexterous foe, that can take all kinds of advantage, and turn to profit almost all things and circumstances. It can thrive where almost all other things wither; and is so artful that it can turn its hand to anything, and assume any shape; speak almost any language, and wear almost any garb. This sin and unbelief are more alike in many things than any other of the fruits of the flesh, or, if you prefer it, the Diabolonians who accompanied Diabolus when he made war with and overcame Mansoul.

May the goodwill of Him who dwelt in the bush be with you. I am, my beloved Brother, yours,

Joseph Tanner

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### THE HELMET OF SALVATION

*By William Gurnall of Lavenham (1616-1679)*

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I. Why is the Christian’s hope styled a “hope of salvation”? (1 Thess. 5. 8). A double reason is obvious.

1. Because salvation *comprehends and takes within its circle the whole object of his hope*. “Salvation” imports such a state of bliss, wherein meet eminently the mercies and enjoyments of all the promises, scattered some in one and some in another; as at the creation, the light which was first diffused through the firmament was gathered afterward into the sun. Cast up the particular sums of all the good things promised in the covenant, and the total which they amount unto is, salvation. The *ultima unitas* – final whole, or unity, gives the denomination to the number, because it comprehends all; so salvation, the ultimate object of the Christian’s expectation, and that which comprehends the rest, denominates his hope.

2. It is called a “hope of salvation,” *to distinguish it from the worldling’s hope*, whose portion is in this life (see Psa. 17. 14), and so his hope also. It is confessed that many of these will pretend to a hope of salvation; but the truth is, they neither have right to it, nor are they very eager of it. They think themselves so well seated in this world, that if they might have their wish, it should be that God would not remove them hence. Even when they say they hope to be saved, their consciences tell them they had rather stay here than part with this world in hope to mend themselves in the other. They blow up themselves into a hope and desire of salvation, more out of a dread of hell than liking of heaven. None I think so mad among them but had rather be saved than



damned – live in heaven than lie in hell – yet the best of the whole pack likes this world better than them both.

II. Why is hope compared to a helmet? For this conceive a double reason.

1. The helmet defends the head, a principal part of the body, from dint of bullet and sword; so this “hope of salvation” *defends the soul, the principal part of man, and the principal faculties of that*, whereby no dangerous, to be sure no deadly, impression can by Satan or sin be made on it. Temptations may trouble but cannot hurt, except their darts enter the will and leave a wound there, by drawing it to some consent and liking of them; from which this helmet of hope, if it be of the right make, and fits sure on the Christian’s head, will defend him. It is hard to draw *him* into any treasonable practice against his Prince, who is both well satisfied of his favour at present, and stands also upon the stairs of hope, expecting assuredly to be called up within a while to the highest preferment that the court can afford or his King give. No, the weapons of rebellion and treason are usually forged and fashioned in discontent’s shop. When subjects take themselves to be neglected and slighted by their prince – think their preferments are now at an end, and [that they] must look for no great favours any more to come from Him – this softens them to receive every impression of disloyalty that any enemy to the King shall attempt to stamp them withal.

As we see in the Israelites; thinking the men of Judah, of whose tribe the king was, had got a monopoly of his favour, and themselves to be shut out from sharing, at least equally, with them therein; how soon are they – even at a blast or two of Sheba’s seditious trumpet – made rebels against their sovereign? “We have no part in David,” saith Sheba, “neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel” (2 Sam. 20. 1). And see how this treason runs, even like a squib upon a rope. “Every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba” (verse 2). Thus, if once the soul fears it hath no part in God, and expects no inheritance from Him, I know no sin so great but it may at the sound of the tempter’s trumpet be drawn to commit.

2. As the helmet defends the soldier’s head from wounding, *so his heart also from swooning* [fainting]. It makes him bold and fearless in battle though amidst swords and bullets. Goliath with his helmet of brass and other furniture, how confidently and daringly did the man come on! As if he had been so enclosed in his armour that it was impossible any weapon could come near to deliver a message of death unto him! This made him carry his crest so high, and defy a whole host, till at last he paid his life for his pride and folly.

But here is a helmet that whoever wears it need never be put to shame for his holy boasting. God Himself allows him so to do, and will

bear him out in this rejoicing of his hope. “Thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me” (Isa. 49. 23). This made holy David so undaunted in the midst of his enemies: “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear” (Psa. 27. 3). His hope would not suffer his heart so much as to beat within him for any fear of what they could do to him. He had this “helmet of salvation” on, and therefore he saith, “Now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me” (verse 6). A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water. Now it is the proper office of hope to do this for the Christian in times of any danger. “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21. 28). A strange time, one would think, for Christ then to bid His disciples lift up their heads in, when they see other “men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (verse 26), yet, now is the time of the rising of their sun when others’ is setting, and blackness of darkness overtaking them; because now the Christian’s feast is coming, for which hope hath saved its stomach so long – “your redemption draweth nigh.”

Two things make the head hang down – fear and shame. Hope easeth the Christian’s heart of both these, and so forbids him to give any sign of a desponding mind by a dejected countenance. And so much may suffice for explication of the words.

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## TO A YOUNG MINISTER

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Normandien,  
51 Surrenden Road,  
Brighton, Sussex.  
1922

Dear Mr. J.,

Many times I have wished to answer your kind and welcome letter, but many things have hindered. Two chiefly:

1. Lack of time. You will understand how fully occupied my time is, and I hope be able to excuse me on that ground.
2. Often my mind is dark, cold, barren and dead, and to write in such a condition, unless absolutely necessary, is most difficult.

It was a pleasant surprise to me to have your letter, and to learn that in any case and measure the Lord had stooped so low as to make me useful to you, and give you, as a consequence, union to me. The glory must be His. “Helplessness” is written on the heart of everyone born

again. The lesson is wormwood and gall to proud nature, but pleasant to the hidden man of the heart. But the Lord is determined His children shall learn the lesson over and over again. He makes His Word mightily to grow in their hearts; its power and authority are known and felt. And how good it is to be depending on Him! Whether we will or no, we are dependent, but sweet it is to depend on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, and wonderful to get a smile from Him. But much painful opposition is experienced from a vile heart and a tempting devil.

I hope you have many souls for your hire, many seals to your ministry. By them a minister is confirmed and strengthened and cheered in the midst of his conflicts. The apparent absence of usefulness is a sore trial. But this is a day of small things in the churches; the pulpit is feeble. Only the Lord can revive us. I fear worse days are before us. The Lord Jesus seems to have all but left us. There is a small remnant according to the election of grace; these He will preserve against the power of the gates of hell. And when He has one to bless, then He sends a servant with the blessing concealed in some singular exercise of mind, some vile temptation, or some peculiar trial, and some Scripture opened to his heart and understanding by the Holy Ghost. May it often be your experience!

With every good wish, believe me,

Yours in the truth,

J.K. Popham

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### **AFFLICTIONS WORKING FOR GOOD**

*Extract from Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

Afflictions are blessings. God's corrections are our instructions, His lashes our lessons, His scourges our schoolmasters, His chastisements our advertisements [announcements to us]. And to note this, the Hebrews and Greeks both do express chastening and teaching by one and the same word.

Ah, you afflicted sons and daughters of Zion, have you not had such sweet discoveries of God, such sensible demonstrations of His love, such bowels of affections working in Him towards you? Have you not had such gracious visits, and such glorious visions, that you would not exchange for all the world? Yes. Have you not had the precious presence of God with you, quieting and stilling your souls, supporting and upholding your souls, cheering and refreshing your souls? Yes. And have you not had the Lord applying precious promises, and suitable remedies, to all your maladies? Have you not found God bringing in unexpected mercy in the day of your adversity, suitable to that promise,

“I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her” – or, I will speak friendly or earnestly to her heart, as the Hebrew reads it? (Hos. 2. 14). Yes. Have you not found that God hath so sweetened and sanctified afflictions to you, as to make them a means to discover many sins that lay hid, and to purge you from many sins that cleaved close unto you, and to prevent you from falling into many sins that would have been the breaking of your bones, and the loss of your comfort? Yes. Have you not found that you have been like the walnut tree, the better for beating; and like the vine, the better for bleeding; and like the ingenious [clever at contriving] child, the better for whipping? Yes. Have you not found afflictions to revive, quicken and recover your decayed graces? Have they not inflamed that love that hath been cold, and put life into that faith that hath been dying, and quickened those hopes that have been withering, and put spirit into those joys and comforts that have been languishing? Yes.

Oh, then, stand up and declare to all the world that times of affliction have been the times wherein you have seen the face of God, and heard the voice of God, and sucked sweetness from the breasts of God, and fed upon the delicacies of God, and drunk deep of the consolations of God, and have been most satisfied and delighted with the presence and in-comings of God.

When Hezekiah in his greatest affliction lamentingly said, “I shall go mourning to my grave. I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living. He will cut me off with pining sickness, He will break all my bones. Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me” (see Isa. 38. 10-14). So now God comes in a way of mercy to him, and prints His love upon his heart: “Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption” (verse 17), or rather, as the Hebrew reads it, “Thou hast loved my soul from the grave, for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.” Ah, says Hezekiah, I have now found that in my afflictions Thy affections have been most strongly carried towards me, as towards one whom Thou art exceedingly taken with. Oh, now Thou hast warmed me with Thy love, and visited me with Thy grace; Thou hast made my darkness to be light, and turned my sighing into singing, and my mourning into rejoicing.

So when Habakkuk’s belly trembled, and his lips quivered, and rottenness entered into his bones, and all creature comforts failed, yet then had he such a sweet presence of God with his spirit, as makes him to rejoice in the midst of sorrows: “Yet,” says he, “I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (see Hab. 3. 16-18). And thus you see it clear, that in times of affliction God makes sweet manifestations of His love and favour to His children’s souls.

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF PARDON

*By John Newton (1725-1807)*

“She hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins” (Isa. 40. 2).

The meaning here cannot be, that her afflictions had already been more, and greater, than her sins had deserved. The just desert of sin cannot be received in the present life, for the wages of sin is death and the curse of the law, or in the apostle’s words, “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1. 9). Therefore a living man can have no reason to complain under the heaviest sufferings. If we acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, we have likewise cause to acknowledge that He hath not dealt with us according to our iniquities. We read that He groaned and bled upon the cross, till He could say, “It is finished.” I apprehend the true sense is, that Jerusalem should receive *blessings*, double, much greater than all the afflictions which sin had brought upon her; and in general to us, to every believing sinner, that the blessings of the gospel are an unspeakably great compensation, and overbalance, for all afflictions of every kind with which we have been or can be exercised. Afflictions are the fruit of sin, and because our sins have been many, our afflictions may be many. “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5. 20).

Before our Lord healed the paralytic man who was brought to Him, He said, “Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matt. 9. 2). His outward malady rendered him an object of compassion to those who brought him; but he appears to have been sensible of an inward malady, which only Jesus could discern, or pity, or relieve. I doubt not but his conscience was burdened with guilt. An assurance, therefore, that his sins were forgiven, was sufficient to make him be of good cheer, whether his palsy were removed or not.

To this purpose the psalmist speaks absolutely and without exception. “Blessed is he,” however circumstanced, “whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psa. 32. 1). Though he be poor, afflicted, diseased, neglected or despised, if the Lord imputeth not his iniquity to him, he is a blessed man. There is no situation in human life so deplorable, but a sense of the pardoning love of God can support and comfort the sufferer under it, compose his spirit, yea, make him exceedingly joyful in all his tribulations; for he feels the power of the blood of Jesus cleansing his conscience from guilt, and giving him access by faith to the throne of grace, with liberty to say, Abba, Father. He knows that all his trials are under the direction of wisdom and love, are all working together for his good, and that the heaviest of them are light, and the longest momentary, in comparison of that far more exceeding and

eternal weight of glory, which is reserved for him in a better world (see 2 Cor. 4. 16-18). Even at present in the midst of his sufferings, having communion with God, and a gracious submission to His will, he possesses a peace that passeth understanding, and which the world can neither give nor take away.

How justly may we adopt the prophet's words, "Who is a God like unto Thee?" (Mic. 7. 18). Behold and admire His goodness! Infinitely happy and glorious in Himself, He has provided for the comfort of those who were rebels against His government, and transgressors of His holy law. What was degenerate Israel, and what are we, that He should thus prevent [guide] us with His mercy, remember us in our low estate, and redeem us from misery, in such a way, and at such a price! Salvation is wholly of grace (see Eph. 2. 5); not only undeserved, but undesired by us, till He is pleased to awaken us to a sense of our need of it. And then we find everything prepared that our wants require, or our wishes can conceive; yea, that He has done exceedingly beyond what we could either ask or think. Salvation is wholly of the **Lord** (see Psa. 3. 8), and bears those signatures of infinite wisdom, power and goodness, which distinguish all His works from the puny imitations of men.

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## THE FIGHT OF FAITH

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Devizes, Wiltshire  
January 17th, 1878

*To Mr. H.*

My dear Friend,

What a mercy it is that the link which connects God and His people together is a link that defies the very power of hell to break, and one which makes separation for ever impossible! There are no causes of separation in God Himself. Being immutable in His own mind and purpose, and unchangeable in His love, and His mercy being from everlasting to everlasting, it is impossible that His people can ever be separated from Him through any change of mind, or love, or purpose in Himself. And so far as the causes of separation in ourselves are concerned, they are all nonplussed, like a cancelled debt, by the grace which flows out from God through the rich, atoning blood of Jesus.

But how dreadfully afraid at times we are that the much we feel in ourselves will sink us at last in perdition! There are moments when the awful evils of our nature so boil up, and the very floodgates of iniquity seem to be so let loose upon us, that we have no more power to lay hold by faith of the truth that nothing can separate us from God, than if no

such doctrine had been revealed. But in those seasons when, through the power of grace, we get a vital touch of the doctrine on our hearts, the blessed truth is made the more pleasant, savoury and tasteful through the wretched experiences we had to wade through to get at it. To know our dreadful wickedness, and to be made to feel our dead, hard, carnal, filthy state, is God's way with us, in order that salvation by grace may not only be embraced by us as a doctrine, but be infused into our inmost soul as a part of our experience.

With kind Christian love,

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

Charles Hemington

### CRYING FROM THE BELLY OF HELL

*An extract from a sermon preached by  
Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)*

And thus, however low Jonah sank in trouble, he lost not his acquaintance with divine teachings. Did he go to Joppa? He did not lose them there. Did he fall asleep in the sides of the ship? He did not lose them there. Did the storm rage, the winds blow, and was Jonah cast into the billows? He did not lose his faith there; yea, when he was come into the very "belly of hell," he did not lose it even there. The Lord had given him living faith; and He who first kindled the divine spark in his soul, kept it secretly alive, brought it forth into fresh exercise, and never let the holy flame expire. This living faith keeps the soul from utter despair, however low it may sink in distress and trouble. Faith, hope and love, formerly kindled and realised in the soul, held it up from utterly sinking in the deep waters. And thus, in the midst of the soul's despondency, and of its sharpest exercises, there is often a blessed "Yet I will look **again** toward Thy holy temple" (Jonah 2. 4).

Now this word "**again**," shows that Jonah had looked there before; that it was not the first time his eye had been fixed by faith on the Person and work of the Mediator; and that it was not the first time his soul had received benefit from Jesus' blessed mediation.

But what is contained in the expression "**look**"? There are various kinds of looking. There is, for instance, the look of mere speculation; but *that* will not profit us. There is the looking on Him as revealed in the letter of God's Word, a seeing the name of Jesus in the Scripture, and a reading of many texts that speak of the efficacy of His atoning blood and righteousness; but *that* will not profit us. All this is merely a looking after the flesh; but the apostle says, "Though we have known Christ **after**

**the flesh**, yet now henceforth know we Him no more” (2 Cor. 5. 16). But the looking that *profits* the soul, that saves it, delivers it, and brings it out of every hole into which it may be sunk, is *the look by faith*.

Jonah’s look was indeed a believing look; but it was rather a longing, lingering, and almost despairing glance, that did not bring him out of the distress into which he was sunk, nor relieve him from the despondency with which he was overwhelmed. It was as though he would take one last look, as though he could not entirely sink into despair; and as if one look more would keep him from being entirely swallowed up, from being altogether a castaway. It was not then such a confident look as could deliver him out of “the belly of hell”; it was but just sufficient to bring into his heart a little support, and to keep hope and love alive in his soul.

Now, I believe many of God’s people are just in that state; they have not sufficient faith to bring them out of their trouble; the Lord does not sufficiently make known the riches of His grace to burst asunder every chain and fetter in which they are entangled. He does not see good to break the neck of every temptation, and bring the soul out of the despondency in which it is lying; but He gives just sufficient faith to preserve alive His own work in the soul, and thus keeps it looking again and again toward “His holy temple.” By this look strength indeed is imparted to support the soul, yet not sufficient completely to deliver it out of the exercises, temptations and distresses that it may be burdened with.

Now “a full soul” who knows nothing of this inward experience, will not value such a look as this. To be kept on a low diet cannot suit those who would turn away from every table not spread with delicacies: and so the idea of being preserved barely alive will not suit those who know nothing of vital godliness. But when a soul is really taught the grand difference there is between faith and presumption; and the eternal and awful distinction between what a man can do for himself, and what God does in and for him; when it feels the amazing difference between what comes from God as a free gift, and what is stolen by the pilfering hands of the creature – *then* it begins to find that the communication of God’s mercy and grace is not a thing constantly enjoyed in everyday profusion; that the table is not daily loaded with luxuries, but that the soul is kept alive from day to day, and preserved from actual starvation only by those crumbs and drops that God may be pleased to bless it with.

And, my friends, nothing but passing through a measure of soul exercises, temptations and trials, will teach a man this lesson. There is no means so effectual naturally to teach a man what good food is, as to put him for some time on a starving system: to keep him on a low diet,



to shut him up for awhile in a prison, or confine him within the walls of a workhouse. And so, spiritual hunger makes a man value gospel food, when he receives it as an answer to his prayers. When one is kept on short allowance; when God will not smile on the soul when we desire it; when He will not apply His promises when we want them; when one gets only a little here and a little there (according to the Scripture definition, "line upon line, and precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little"), I say, when a man is brought to this point, he begins to value and enjoy those things which before he thought little of.

Nothing, I believe, can really comfort a God-taught soul, but the consolations that God alone can bless him with; the only food that can really satisfy a living man, is the bread of life that the Holy Ghost from time to time brings down into his heart; and his heart can only be established and kept at anchor, just as the Lord is pleased from time to time to favour him with testimonies. And these realities are very rare, while counterfeits abound. False Christs, notional religion, carnal security, may be had at every shop, and be picked up in every street; but real testimonies from God, gracious smiles of His favour, gospel food brought down from heaven, you may depend upon it, my friends, that those who know these things experimentally, will say that they are very rare indeed. It is only occasionally that the Lord bestows these favours; it is only when we have been long toiling, and can catch nothing, that we are enabled to cast our net on the right side of the ship.

And the Lord's people learn two things in this school: their own wretchedness without them, and the rarity and infrequency of them. They are unable to procure them for themselves; and yet they are unable to live comfortably and die happily without them. Thus they are brought to see that much that passes for religion is no religion at all; that much that goes for true evidences and real hopes is nothing but lying refuges; that much is palmed upon men for the teaching of the Spirit which is nothing but delusion; that vital godliness is very rare; that there are very few persons spiritually taught of God; that there are very few ministers who really preach the truth; and that Satan is thus daily deceiving thousands, and tens of thousands.

A living soul, however weak and feeble in himself, cannot be satisfied, except with God's own testimony to his heart. He cannot take up with a religion in the flesh; he cannot rest on the opinions of men, nor be deceived long by Satan's delusions. There is a principle of divine discernment in a God-taught soul. However carnal he may be, however buried in the world, he cannot rest long contented without God's blessing. If the Lord does not communicate some token and blessed testimony to his soul, he can have no solid happiness.

## TESTIMONY OF RUTH STYLES

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Crest Haven,  
Argos Hill,  
Rotherfield, East Sussex.  
1941

*Mr. P.O. Laver*

My dear Friend,

You will think I am very slow, but at last I have fulfilled my promise to you. I began this little account some weeks ago, but I have only been able to do it a little at a time. Although there are several pages it does not take long to read.

I do think it wonderful how the dear Lord has dealt with me – a sinner full of pride and hypocrisy. And many times I have had to thank Him for sending you to Rotherfield. It was all in His purposes of love to me.

When I look back on all those years of formality and deadness in my soul, it makes me shudder. I do earnestly pray that I may never be left to drift into such a state again. I want the Holy Spirit to keep me lively in the things of God, that I may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is good to have spiritual business with our God. A state of sloth and ease I dread. I still desire an interest in your prayers.

Yours in bonds of Christian affection,

Ruth Styles

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### 1941

In my young childhood days, I had no thought for God, nor any concern for my own soul. I used to go to chapel on Sundays just because my parents did, and because it was the thing to do on the Sabbath. When I first began to try to pray to God, I cannot remember, but always remember one answer to prayer. While still a schoolgirl, one holiday I went to stay with Mr. Rose at Croydon. In company with some of his children, and some of Mr. Farncombe's children, I went for a ramble over the Shirley Hills. For some unknown reason I took my purse, containing all my holiday money, and my return ticket, in my pocket. We had wandered a long way over the hills, when suddenly I found my purse was missing. I felt worried and distressed, and did not know what to do. There were ever so many paths all very much alike, that I did not know which one to take to retrace my steps. Well do I remember my heart going up in earnest prayer to God, begging of Him that He would guide me to where my purse lay. I went back, not knowing whether I was on the right track or no. After a while, at the foot of a hill I saw my purse. In my feeble way I tried to thank the Lord for finding my purse for me.

This incident encouraged me to go to the Lord in future troubles and difficulties, both in school and at home.

At the age of eighteen, I went to Brighton to college. During those two years, I attended Galeed Chapel mostly. Although away from home and amongst all sorts of girls, I still liked to spend Sunday quietly, and in going to chapel. I cannot remember ever having any special help or blessing for my soul. The Lord was good to me providentially, and I was enabled to pass my examinations.

After leaving college, I lived at home for five years, during which time I attended Bodle Street chapel, and sometimes Dicker. I once heard the late Mr. Burt preach from the text, "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people" (Psa. 106. 4). I felt a great desire to be found numbered amongst His children. But after a while this desire passed away, and I went on as before – going to and fro to chapel like a door upon its hinges.

Working in a church school at Hellingly I was most unhappy, and after being there four years, I felt I could not stay any longer. This period of trouble gave me many errands to the throne of grace. I had to make my work and my future a matter of prayer. I begged time and again that the Lord would make a way for me, so that I might get another post. While spending a holiday at Forest Hill, I heard our friend Mr. Gascoigne preach from the text, "The king granted him all his request" (Ezra 7. 6). That was a good sermon to me, and I felt that the Lord would answer my poor prayers. About the same time I heard Mr. Rose preach at Bodle Street. What his text was I do not remember, but the last hymn that evening was 277 in Gadsby's. The text at the top, "He careth for you," struck me so forcibly, it seemed as if it was meant for me, and one verse of the hymn was very sweet to me:

"‘Cast,’ He said, ‘on Me thy care;  
’Tis enough that I am nigh;  
I will all thy burdens bear;  
I will all thy needs supply.’"

Previous to this I had written to the Education Committee asking if they could give me a transfer to a council school. After waiting some weeks further, I had a letter offering me a post at Rotherfield. I was convinced so certainly that this was the Lord's appointment for me, and when my dear father asked me whether I was going to accept it, I immediately said, "Yes," for I strongly felt that God had made the way for me. In this way I came to Rotherfield.

Now I was more happy in my work, and once getting settled down, things went along smoothly. Living in Rotherfield did not make me feel any love towards the chapel. And although my mother and father attended, I always tried to arrange it so that I went to Rotherfield Chapel

as seldom as possible. Of course, when my parents came to live at Rotherfield, I attended more frequently, but used to go away for weekends quite often. My chapel-going became a habit and my reading and prayer a mere form. Yet underneath all this, I felt great dissatisfaction, and sometimes wished that things were different with me. There seemed no sincerity in my heart, and I began to feel I was nothing but a hypocrite, and a deceiver.

One evening, Mr. Bates preached from the words, “Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD” (Isa. 43. 10). My spirit was softened, and I did wish that I might be a witness. But even these feelings passed away, and I became cold and indifferent. The ordinance of baptism I despised, and put away from my mind. If a minister spoke of it in his sermon, I shut my ears to it. This was my condition when Mr. Laver came upon the scene. In the naughtiness of my heart and my obstinate spirit I decided I would not settle at Rotherfield if Mr. Laver were chosen to be the pastor. Satan got very busy to work and suggested it was foolishness to come to chapel every Sunday, going to two services, and bringing sandwiches for dinner. I willingly listened and began to think it would be a good idea to come just once a day, and then have my midday meal at home. Still I kept coming.

The first sermon of Mr. Laver’s that came with any power to my soul was the one preached from the text, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17. 32). It made me consider my state. Lot’s wife had the angels take her by the hand to lead her away from destruction, and yet she was lost. This solemn remark made me feel that I might be like Lot’s wife, and be lost after all. I began to pray that the Lord would have mercy on me, and show me that I was a real child of His and not a hypocrite.

“Show me some token, Lord, for good,  
Some token of Thy special love.” (H. 736)

I remember waking up in the night and these words came immediately into my mind:

“Bastards may escape the rod,  
Sunk in earthly, vain delight;  
But the true-born child of God  
Must not, would not if he might.” (H. 282)

I wondered why this verse should come into my mind, and what it could mean. I was soon to discover what it meant, for I believe the Lord did chasten and rebuke me for my sins through the means of Mr. Laver’s ministry. Every sermon contained reproof, and my sins were brought to light. Two sermons from the text Galatians 6. 1: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted,” I shall

not forget. I felt to come short in every point, and yet there was no humbling of my proud spirit. In fact, I found myself resenting these sermons. I was still asking the Lord to show me some token of His love toward my poor soul.

Then on the last Sunday in May, Mr. Laver took for his text, "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matt. 25. 10). The arrow of real conviction entered my soul that day. I could see I was just like those foolish virgins. I mixed with God's people, but I was not one of them. I had not the oil of the Holy Spirit in me. I was not prepared, my sins were like a mountain, condemning me to hell, and when the Lord came, I should be shut out from His presence. "Where will *you* spend eternity?" was asked in the sermon. I knew where I should spend it, if the Lord came then. "And the door was shut" – these were the last words I heard – my state was one of despair, and I trembled from head to foot, the awful solemnity of those last words crushing my spirit.

This was the beginning of real soul trouble. That night I had very little sleep. My thoughts were upon the afternoon's discourse, and my sins weighed heavily upon me. How I did beg of the Lord to have mercy on my soul. The poor publican's prayer just suited me. From that Sunday I spent many nights with but few hours sleep. My state as a sinner before God was so weighty a matter, that whenever I could be alone I felt I must confess my sins before Him, and plead for pardon through the blood of Jesus. Now I went to chapel with an earnest longing in my heart, hoping that the Lord would speak to me through His servants. I longed for Sunday to come, with a "Who can tell?" in my heart, that perhaps the Lord would be gracious unto one, and answer my petition. I read the Bible more prayerfully, seeking to find some comfort for my distressed soul.

One Sunday evening I went to Mayfield and Mr. Groombridge preached from John 10. 27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." He spoke about following the Lord in the ordinance of baptism. All my arguments and reasonings against baptism were swept away, and I felt that if I knew I belonged to the family of Christ, I would like to follow Jesus in this step. The burden of my sins became heavier and heavier. Night after night I lay awake for hours pleading for mercy and that the God of all grace would bestow upon me His pardoning love, and that I might love Him. Although the Lord did not answer my prayer, yet He very graciously gave me some helps by the way which gave me some hope and encouragement. One such occasion was when Mr. Tyler preached from Habakkuk 2. 2, 3: "And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed

time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” He entered into my case, and I felt sure that the vision would come although it tarried.

One morning while looking in the hymnbook my eye lighted on these words: “The time of love *will* come” (H. 330). How sweet and encouraging they were to me; my faith was strengthened. But faith had to be tried. My petitions remained unanswered, and I seemed to get no further on the road. Mr. Laver was preaching at Rotherfield three Sundays in July, and how I did beg that the Lord would meet with me on one of those Sundays. But instead of the voice of pardon, more of my sins were brought to light, especially that cursed and subtle one of pride and self-righteousness. The text that Sunday was Luke 18. 14: “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” I knew all that was spoken about pride was quite true, and I owned myself to be very guilty. Deep were the wounds that sin had made.

I begged of the Lord that Mr. Laver might preach a sermon to heal my poor soul, and the following Sunday he preached from Jeremiah 32. 14: “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days,” and for once, instead of being reproved for my sins, I could truly say that I had those inward evidences – evidences of the purchase; and the words spoken that day were words of consolation to me, and I felt the Lord had answered my prayer, but I could not feel it was the time of love which would come.

Again I was exercised about baptism, but felt I could not venture. I must still wait. This ordinance appeared to me a most solemn and important step, that I would rather wait than enter into it in a wrong way. I did want to do it with the right motive in my heart – love to Jesus Christ – and in humility of spirit.

*(To be concluded)*

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## BOOK REVIEW

**The Provision of a Gracious God**, A History of the Church Worshipping at Jireh Chapel, Tenterden; compiled by Matthew J. Hyde; hardback; 304 pages; unpriced, but a donation of £10 to cover cost and postage would be appreciated; published by the church at Jireh, Tenterden and obtainable from Mr. G.W. Hyde, 01233 758558; gilberthyde51@gmail.com.

This is an interesting book to read. We could almost call it a chronicle of Jireh Chapel, Tenterden. The chapters are generally short, tracing out the history

of Jireh from its early roots amongst the Baptists at Tenterden in the seventeenth century and up to the present time. There is much concise detail covering so many aspects of the history of the church and people from early days, including the pastors, the deacons, the members and various friends; also the building, the graveyard and the chapel houses. The book is lavishly illustrated throughout. Two sermons are included, one by a more recent pastor, Mr. John J. Farley, and one by the present pastor, Mr. Gilbert W. Hyde. We found chapter 33 (although the chapters are not numbered) titled, "Some memories of those attending Jireh in the past," the most refreshing part of the book. A good number of the people mentioned, we have known personally, or have heard of from childhood days.

Jireh, Tenterden, has had its many ups and downs, sorrows and joys, as all churches have. We are mindful of the words of the poet: "Times of trial and of grief; times of triumph and relief" (H. 64). We attended the evening service of the centenary on October 15th, 1969, and well remember how Mr. Stanley Delves said that the word he had on his mind was the same as that which both Mr. R.J. Morris and Mr. F.L. Gosden preached from in the morning and in the afternoon respectively (Isa. 33. 20). He felt that he could not attempt to preach from it again, so he preached from another text. This is recorded in chapter 19 as Romans 9. 6. The closing remark by Mr. S. Delves was, "May God still bless Jireh."

We believe this to be a faithful record of the Lord's goodness to one of His little vineyards here below. We recommend this book.

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### PRIDE

*(Prov. 8. 13; 11. 2; 29. 23)*

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Innumerable foes  
 Attack the child of God;  
 He feels within the weight of sin,  
 A grievous, galling load.

Temptations, too, without,  
 Of various kinds, assault;  
 Sly snares beset his travelling feet,  
 And make him often halt.

From sinner and from saint  
 He meets with many a blow;  
 His own bad heart creates him smart,  
 Which only God can know.

But though the host of hell  
 Be neither weak nor small,  
 One mighty foe deals wondrous woe,  
 And hurts beyond them all.

'Tis pride, accursèd pride,  
 The spirit by God abhorred;

Do what we will, it haunts us still,  
And keeps us from the Lord.

It blows its poisonous breath,  
And bloats the soul with air;  
The heart uplifts with God's own gifts,  
And makes e'en grace a snare.

Awake, nay, while we sleep,  
In all we think or speak,  
It puffs us glad, torments us sad;  
Its hold we cannot break.

In other ills we find  
The hand of heaven not slack;  
Pride only knows to interpose,  
And keep our comforts back.

'Tis hurtful when perceived;  
When not perceived, 'tis worse;  
Unseen or seen, it dwells within,  
And works by fraud or force.

Against its influence pray,  
It mingles with the prayer;  
Against it preach, it prompts the speech;  
Be silent, still 'tis there.

This moment, while I write,  
I feel its power within,  
My 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.

Joseph Hart (1712-1768)





THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**MARCH 2020**

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

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**REPENTANCE AND FAITH TOWARD GOD**

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“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20. 21).

The Apostle Paul was favoured to be able to write that he was free from the blood of all men, as he bade farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus. These had gathered to meet him at Miletus as he sailed back to Judea and Jerusalem from his third missionary journey after preaching to both Jews and Gentiles. Paul told the elders that he had “kept back nothing that was profitable” to them (verse 20). He went on to say, “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (verses 26, 27).

When the Lord Jesus began to show Himself to Israel, He said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1. 15). How plain was the teaching of the Lord Jesus when He appeared with the disciples in the upper room (after the resurrection): “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). We read also that the Lord Jesus opened the understanding of the disciples (see Luke 24. 45), and commissioned them “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (verse 47).

Why “beginning at Jerusalem”? Because Jerusalem was the place where the greatest and most wicked crime that has ever been committed by mankind took place when they crucified the Lord of life and glory, the blessed “Saviour of the world” (John 4. 42). The gospel of the rich grace of God was first preached in Jerusalem, the place of mankind’s greatest sin of killing the just One sent to us from God. From the place where the vilest actings of man took place, the blessed gospel of salvation by free grace and the ineffable [unutterable – too great for words] and sublime love of God in the face of Jesus Christ began to be preached, first to the Jews and then also to the Gentiles.

We live in a day when the vital and fundamental truths of the gospel are barely preached. The complete ruin of man in his fall into sin is hardly heard of. We are under the curse of God for our sins, except we

repent and turn to Christ. Jesus warned the Jews (lest they thought those who had perished at the hand of cruel Pilate, and also the eighteen souls who died when the tower of Siloam fell (see Luke 13. 1-5), were greater sinners than themselves), and said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13. 5). What a most awful and solemn matter it is to perish in our sins. Jesus warned the Jews against the traditional and presumptuous religion that they claved to, trusting to their obedience to the law of Moses for righteousness. Jesus declared, "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24). The unbelieving and impenitent sinner will certainly die in his sins. To die in our sins means that we shall sink into "the bottomless pit" (Rev. 20. 1) to rise no more, to be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev. 20. 10), "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9. 44).

The Apostle Paul when writing to the Corinthians warned, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done.... Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5. 10, 11). The apostle also in writing to the Colossians declared, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1. 28). May the Lord graciously endue us with His Spirit to sound those warning notes of our ruin in the fall of man, and judgment to come, as well as to preach and sound the glorious high notes of the gospel trumpet and ring the sacred and melodious bells of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance and faith go hand in hand toward God our most holy Father, and to His well-beloved and only-begotten Son, sitting at the right hand of God. This is essentially the sacred, blessed work of the Holy Ghost who works wondrously in our needy souls. Not only do repentance and faith go hand in hand when the work of grace *first* appears, but surely we poor sinners are having to go *continually* to the Lord Jesus in repentance and faith throughout all our days here below. Do we not have to go in repentance and faith, often groaning out our case (see Rom. 8. 26), day by day from sunrise to sunset, and in the night watches also? Yes, we do. We are told, "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24. 9). God's dear people stagger under a sense of their sinnership from time to time, with all the lurkings and workings of the iniquity in their sinful nature. We truly have to cry out, "Lord, save or I perish."

What a wonderful truth it is that, "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). We read in Psalm 86, "For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee" (verse 5).

“’Tis the gospel’s joyful tidings,  
Full salvation sweetly sounds;  
Grace to heal thy foul backslidings,  
Sinner, flows from Jesus’ wounds.

“Are thy sins beyond recounting,  
Like the sand the ocean laves?  
Jesus is of life the fountain;  
He unto the utmost saves.”

(H. 913)

Jesus the glorious King and Saviour in Zion knows all the peculiar and hard cases of His dear church here below. We read that He delights in mercy, as Micah declares: “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” (chapter 7. 18).

May the Lord truly “increase our faith” (Luke 17. 5) and favour us with wrestling prayer to lay hold upon His strength, that we may trust in Him for ever. “Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength” (Isa. 26. 4). We have a kind, merciful, good and gracious God to go to, as we draw near to the Lord Jesus, sitting on the throne of grace.

“Daily to feel thyself undone,  
Will make thee haste to kiss the Son,  
And on thy knees for pardon sue,  
And praise, and bless, and love Him too.”

(H. 113)

“Blessed is the man that maketh the LORD his trust” (Psa. 40. 4).

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## FRUITBEARING AND PURGING

*Sermon preached by John Hervey Gosden at Galeed Chapel,  
Brighton, on Lord’s day morning, April 26th, 1931*

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**Text:** “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15. 2).

The whole of the religious world may be divided into two parts; one part of professors who have no vital knowledge of God, no living union to Jesus Christ, whose religion is of the earth, begun with the flesh, and will end with it. Of that part, those people, Christ speaks, it would appear, in the first part of the text: “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.” It is impossible to conceive that any individual has real union to Christ, and yet is utterly and always without fruit. But it is possible, and very evident, that men can easily be united to Christ in

profession, can have His name on their lips, can pass current as Christians, who, having no union to Christ, therefore bring forth no spiritual fruit. The religion that is saving is the work of God the Holy Ghost in the heart. No man can unite himself to Christ. The Spirit of God alone forms that union.

In this chapter the Lord Jesus calls Himself the Vine, the Root of the Vine, the Life of the Vine, the Vine itself, and His people branches in that Vine; which shows to us one great truth, that all the life and all the fruitfulness that any sinner, any believer, ever produces, is from the virtue of union with Jesus Christ.

This word of the Lord Jesus was with a twofold purpose, it would seem, spoken by Him to His disciples. The first is a caution, calculated to produce exercise in every truly living God-fearing person. Security of a natural kind, founded upon a natural credence of God's Word, is the rock upon which many a professed Christian splits; and it is wisdom to observe the caution of the Lord Jesus here: "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." Fruit is not perhaps what we might think to be fruit, for professing Christians for the most part are very well satisfied with their fruitfulness. They are full of zeal, full of good works, full of self-sufficiency, doing a great work for God, etc., but that is not the kind of fruit that is in the text. It is fruit produced from vital union to the Lord Jesus. A great deal of true fruitfulness is unseen outwardly, but it is fruit produced in the heart where the union is first found. How solemn it will be to be found at last but a nominal branch, never bringing forth fruit to God's glory; to think that we please God, to think that we are doing a grand work for God, and all the while are just dead, just nominal Christians! Does it ever exercise your mind? Are you ever really seriously, simply, and secretly before God in this business, as to whether you have real living union to the Lord Jesus?

We are not *born* with union to Christ. Actual union to the Lord Jesus is a thing which is accomplished in this life. If we are united to the Lord Jesus vitally, there has been wrought in us a work that none but the Holy Spirit could work. We must have been cut out of the old stock, and grafted into the new. We must have been cut off by the action of the law from hope in the law of God for salvation and righteousness. We must have been quickened into divine life, because the Scripture reveals that we were born dead, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2. 1). No man has actual union to the Lord Jesus in his experience who has not had in his soul the work of the Holy Ghost in these particulars. Nothing is easier than for a person to assume by an assent to doctrine, his union to the Lord Jesus. The flesh may go a great way in that direction. It is to be feared many deceive themselves in that way. True religion is the work of the Holy Ghost, a work of cutting out of the old stock, cutting off from fleshly hopes, a laying low, a dying, a killing to hope in the law. It is a

work that only the Holy Spirit can accomplish, to cut out of the old stock and to graft into the new. We Gentiles, being of a wild stock, are strangers in comparison with the Jews, “strangers and foreigners” (Eph. 2. 19) naturally; we have no birthright privileges. But even Gentiles, equally with Jews under the gospel, are brought to God by Jesus Christ. A Jew, as such, has no *spiritual* privileges; a Gentile, as such, has no spiritual disabilities as a Gentile, in this particular. All men are made of one blood, and all are born in sin without exception, “dead in trespasses and sins.”

Therefore this is the first thing to notice – not whether we have put on religion, not whether we have turned from a course of outward wickedness to a course of outward righteousness, but whether God has come to us, whether He has dealt with us in our hearts, whether He has convicted us of our sins, showed us something of our true condition as sinners against Himself, and caused us to realise in a measure (for it can only be known and felt and endured in a measure) what we deserve as sinners, laid us low as to all our own strength, caused us to know that we are both unable and unwilling by nature to know, to serve, or to love God. Inability and unwillingness, both sinful, attach to us so far as our natural powers are concerned. O what a state of condemnation man is in, “condemned already” (John 3. 18), loving “darkness rather than light”! (John 3. 19). But when the true light of God shines, then there is an effect in the soul; then there is produced in that soul a belief in God, a trembling before Him, and a fear of His name. Then there is a fleeing, as we were reading just now: “Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb. 6. 18). If we have never had wrought in us that which has moved us “to flee from the wrath to come” (Matt. 3. 7), that is to say, never known in our own hearts the law of God, a reality, a vital thing – “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4. 12) – if, I say, we have never had that made so real to us as to move us to flee from the wrath to come, all our religion, all our notions about the Lord Jesus, and even admiration for Him as He is described in the Scriptures, are short of saving. “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.” A profession of religion without vital possession of the Spirit of grace, in a sense is worse than no religion at all. The Lord, by the Apostle Jude, speaks of some, that they are without fruit, whose fruit, such as it is, withers, “twice dead” – dead in trespasses and sins, and dead in a profession of religion, “plucked up by the roots” (verse 12). That will be the issue of all empty profession of Christianity. All who have not that vital contact with the Lord Jesus will be plucked up by the roots; their religion will go, their fruits will wither, and they themselves will be undone. The flesh passeth

away; all the glory of man withers, and passeth away (see 1 Pet. 1. 24); and if we have a very showy religion upon which we pride ourselves, and for which, perhaps, our friends may admire us, and have no union to the Lord Jesus, woe be to us!

“Every branch that beareth fruit.” Fruit there must be if we are living branches. Let us look a little at the fruits that there are accompanying salvation – the “things that accompany salvation,” as we were just now reading in that solemn sixth of Hebrews. It is evident that the Holy Spirit is speaking of some who go a great way in religion, who have experience of a sort, feelings of a kind, and hopes; and yet who fall away, and concerning whom it is impossible that they should be renewed unto repentance – a scripture that is calculated to make every person not utterly hardened in conscience tremble before God, as realising the deceitfulness of his own heart. But then the apostle goes on to speak of those to whom he writes as having “things accompanying salvation.” He was persuaded better things of these Hebrews, even things accompanying salvation: though he thus spoke in order to caution them, to put a caution upon their spirits, to bring them up, perhaps, from a condition of lethargy and formality. The “things that accompany salvation” are the fruits that are produced by salvation, salvation being God’s presence, His Spirit working in the soul, eternal life implanted in the heart.

The first fruit I will name is the fear of God. If we are born again, the fear of God is in our hearts; that is, reverence for His holy majesty, a concern for His glory, a regard for His character. This universally accompanies salvation. I speak not only of salvation enjoyed comfortably, but of salvation in the effect of it, for regenerating grace is salvation, and will issue in eternal glory eventually. There will be godly fear. But people do not get into eternal glory without a struggle, without a fight, without pilgrimage, without many oppositions and many fears. These things are in the lot of those who are really in the way of life. If you think to get to heaven, and you go through your religious life without any of these things, then probably you simply have a name to live and are dead. The fear of God is a tender principle deep down in the heart, put there by God. It does not grow out of nature. Whatever “is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3. 6). Much religion is born of the flesh, but the true fear of God is born of the Spirit. It makes a man regard the character and glory of God more than his own comfort; and though his interests are dear to him, there are times when God’s glory is dearer, when His name is very great to that sinner, when he trembles before His Word. The fear of God makes a man, when he cannot stand before God’s Word and say, “I am innocent,” fall down before it, fall under conviction. The fear of God does that. What God says is right to a man in whose heart is the fear of His great name.

Then another thing which accompanies salvation, and is a fruit of the Spirit, is hope. I know it may be very low, but I believe, and think the Scriptures are with me in this, that no child of God will really be always altogether hopeless. The Spirit always brings, in due time, in some measure, the encouragement of the gospel, even if it be but a secret support under solemn conviction of sin; otherwise there is no prayer. If there is no hope in our souls, whatever desire there may be, there will be no prayer. And certainly the exercise of prayer is a fruit of union to Christ, because the Lord the Spirit inspires in His people a hope of, and a desire for, those very things which God has designed to communicate. All the promises of God which are the substance of hope, the “things hoped for” (Heb. 11. 1) – all these promises are in Christ. The Holy Spirit leads this way in prayer, inspiring hope in God’s mercy. He kills a man to hope in himself. A man becomes dead to the law by the action of that law on his conscience, in his heart; he is just hopeless in respect of that, in self-despair, and cut off from the hope of life on account of his sinfulness and his guiltiness before God. Then the Holy Spirit shows him another way of life, another ground of hope; He sets before him a door of hope in the valley of Achor (see Hos. 2. 15), and this poor sinner, embracing this by faith, begins to pray; he hopes in prayer. Why, if you pray for what you have no hope of getting, you but mock God and deceive yourselves. Prayer always accompanies gospel hope. Hope always accompanies real prayer. Both are the work of the Holy Ghost.

True it is that often prayer is very low; often we may feel unable to pray, and our hearts are maybe very hard; but sometimes there is this godly mourning on this account. Mourning accompanies salvation, and is a fruit of the Spirit. “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7. 10). “Blessed are they that mourn” – mourn over their sins, over their untoward hearts. “Blessed are they that mourn” – after the Lord Jesus, after His love, after His visits, after tokens for good from Him – “for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5. 4). The Holy Spirit says this, and the people of God sometimes get encouragement that way. And this mourning is a fruit of the Spirit.

Love is a fruit of the Spirit; indeed, in the sixth of Hebrews, to refer to that again, it is made the test of true religion; not light, not great gifts, not much show, not many things to talk about in religion. No, not these things. They may be without living union to Christ; but love cannot be – that is, *spiritual* love. “We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love ... in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6. 9, 10). Now the ministry to the saints, that is, relieving the saints, is only an outward fruit of an inward grace, the fruit of the Spirit, love. Love respects God; love

is the response to God's love revealed. It is produced in the heart by a feeling of God's love there. It is called the chief of the graces in the Scriptures: "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love"\* (1 Cor. 13. 13).

You may, and doubtless some of you will, mourn from time to time over the coldness of your hearts; you may be sometimes distressed because you lack this spiritual love. What makes you distressed? What makes you mourn? What makes you pant to love the Lord with mind and heart, His people, and His ways? Well, if I answer, I should say, it is love that makes you want to love. Love may get very low, and you cannot manufacture it. No. Men falsely think that because they have a nice disposition, and because they are disposed to do good to people, and because they have a good temper, and are not soon put out of countenance, that therefore they have this love. But it is infinitely higher than our natural love; it is a grace of the Spirit; it is produced in the heart by what is only known by the people of God, and that is the love of God; and those who know most know but little of it. It is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; love revealed in the gift of His dear Son, revealed in the precious sacrifice and sufferings that the Lord Jesus underwent in order to redeem His unworthy and sinful people from death and hell – love, the love of the Spirit, in coming and quickening a poor sinner, in leading him, enlightening him, reproving him, encouraging him, opening the Scriptures to him, and causing him in some measure to walk in the strength of divine grace. The love of God is a comforting thing, the gift of the Holy Spirit. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19).

A godly life, from an inward knowledge of Christ, is really a fruit of the Spirit. We are told in Peter to add godliness to our faith and our virtue. "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness" (2 Pet. 1. 5, 6). If there is no fruit this way in a godly life, then our profession of knowing the Lord can but be false. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7. 20), the Scripture declares. "Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15. 13). Pharisees, self-righteous people, and all ungodly livers, shall be plucked up. But if you have union to Christ, it is sure to be found in your life. What is in the heart will be seen in the life in some measure, in a godly conversation.

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit, godly patience. We have need of it. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21. 19). But even here we may be deceived. Patience, spiritual patience, is different from that quality in the natural mind. The patience that the Lord gives to His

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\* "Charity," the Authorized Version translation of the Greek, is better translated in modern English as "love."



people is an exercised patience, a patience that respects the promises of God, the faithfulness of God in His promises; that brings the sinner, the child of God, the believer, to endure hardness as he looks at the end that is set before him. It is not any patience; it is not philosophy.

Joy: that is a fruit – holy, spiritual, deep, unctuous joy in the Holy Ghost. Now earthly joy, even the best of earthly joy has a real alloy of bitterness in it. Oh, I do pity the worldling, whose joy is bounded by what this world can afford him, and if some of you young people have nothing but the world before you, and what that may provide for your enjoyment, the Lord have mercy upon you! There is a reason for joy in God. David called God his “exceeding joy” (Psa. 43. 4), and He *is so* to His people. They see in Him more than all the world beside. They hope to possess in Him what will eternally be their enjoyment, and that without the alloy of bitterness and without the defilement of sin; holy, unctuous joy, called the “oil of joy for mourning” (Isa. 61. 3), which is prepared and given by the Lord Jesus to His people at times, in a measure, even here. So the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle to express his desire for the Romans: “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” (Rom. 15. 13). And in that scripture you will perceive how these fruits of the Spirit are united – how, as it were, they depend mutually upon each other, all flowing from Jesus Christ the Root.

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, peace that is independent of circumstances. Circumstances move us about much; we are driven almost to despair by them at times, dejected beyond expression; sometimes foolishly elated by some prosperity of circumstances. But the peace of God is that which is in a sense independent of circumstances. It flows into the soul; it respects the conscience; it regards God’s attitude towards the sinner, when reconciliation is felt in the heart towards God, when the sinner knows and feels that God has no quarrel with him, that his sins are forgiven, that he is a redeemed sinner, that he has eternal peace before him, that God is his Refuge, that he cannot want, because the Lord is his Shepherd. This is the peace, the nature of the peace that is felt a little in the heart, and flows sometimes like a river.

“Every branch that beareth fruit.” Obedience is a fruit, the obedience of faith. The obedience of faith respects the will and the love of a sinner toward God; the heart and the will are in obedience. Often he obeys in his heart more than he can obey with his powers, the will being present oftentimes when he is opposed by the principle of sin within him; but obedience is there, the fruit of the Spirit. Do we bear the fruit of obedience? Many things the Lord commands His people. He tells them to “pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pet. 1. 17). He tells them to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5. 17). He tells them to come out from among the world and worldly professors, to be separate, and not

to touch the unclean thing (see 2 Cor. 6. 17). He tells them to “love as brethren” (1 Pet. 3. 8). He tells them to be watchful, and to pray always. He tells them to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto” them (Matt. 6. 33). He tells them to present their bodies to Himself as a reasonable sacrifice, and an acceptable sacrifice (see Rom. 12. 1).

Are we obedient? It is not legal obedience; it is the fruit of the Spirit. Gospel obedience is the response of a loving heart, the response of one who has known the joy of the Holy Ghost, the enjoyment in some measure of divine salvation through it. Obedience – putting “on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and making “not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13. 14) – that is obedience. Submitting ourselves “one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5. 21) – that is obedience. Humbling “yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. 5. 6) – that is obedience. Following after holiness and peace – that is obedience. And all these precepts are acceptable to the heart in which is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life, truth and love in Christ Jesus. And if we are without any of these fruits, whatever we possess, we are just dead, and we shall be cut off and burnt.

But secondly in this text the Lord speaks of these people who bear fruit being dealt with. “Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it,” so that there is something (ah, a good deal!) in those that have union to Christ that needs to be removed. Purging is cleansing, and it implies defilement. It implies things that are, as it were, extraneous [foreign, not belonging] to the Spirit’s fruitfulness; something that will be better taken away; and of these things the Lord Jesus says His eternal Father purges these branches, cleanses them. Have we no pride to be cleansed? Haughtiness? Independence? Carnal reasonings? Errors of doctrine? Errors of spirit? Hastiness? Foolishness? Prayerlessness? Lightness? Enmity? Maliciousness? Lusts? Is there nothing to be cleansed? No unbelief? And is cleansing acceptable to us? Are we made willing to be clean? That is the work of the Spirit – to make a man willing to be clean. Ah, but this purging is very solemn; blessed is the issue of it, but solemn, oftentimes, are the means of it. “Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it.” There is this rubbish to be burnt up; there is this sentiment to go; there is this false notion to be taken away; there is this growth, that is no good to the tree, to be lopped off. And the Lord does it with His people. He does it in various ways, by various means.

One of the principal means He uses in purging His people is His Word, the Word of God in the hands of the Spirit, showing to the sinner in whom is divine life and some fruitfulness, the ugliness of these things that need to be purged, thus causing the sinner to possess a longing to be rid of them. If He reproves you for pride, then He will make you willing to be humble. If He reproves you for your independence, He will make

you willing to depend on Him. If He reproves you for your impatience, He will cause you to long to be made patient. The means He uses are very heavy to the flesh sometimes. "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it."

Take pride: "The proud He knoweth afar off" (Psa. 138. 6). Now that scripture in the hands of the Spirit in His dealings towards you may be very solemnly verified, and when He is knowing you afar off, you who have been accustomed to be near to Him and to enjoy some sacred communion with Him, and He is reproving you in this way, that is very bitter. Purgatives are bitter often. And it rouses suspicions in the heart, questionings as to what the Lord will yet do, and it may even produce doubts as to one's standing for eternity. When the Lord is afar off, knowing you afar off, He reproves, and in His great mercy shows people why He reproves. Rutherford speaks about enquiring for causes of absence after he had enjoyed the sunshine of God's presence. Now that is a fruit of the Spirit – that enquiry. It is not a fruit of the Spirit for a man who has known what the Lord's gracious presence is, when the Lord withdraws that presence, and knows him afar off, for that man to philosophise about the doctrine of divine faithfulness, and just to lie down, and take no pains, and not be grieved or exercised to know why it is the Lord knows him afar off.

We need our errors purged from us, for we may very erroneously use truth to our great damage; though if the Lord is teaching us, He will make us wise, and we shall not deceive ourselves finally. Nature hates the labour of religion, though it may go a long way in expounding the doctrines of the gospel. But to be savingly known, they have to be wrought out and burnt in. The discipline of the Spirit with a man, nature revolts at, but grace submits; grace accepts punishment, grace gives the sinner the wisdom to receive the reproof of life, and thereby to abide among the wise.

"He purgeth it." We may have a great deal too much religion, but the Lord will purge it out. If any man build upon that one foundation that is laid in Zion (and "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ") – if any man build upon it "wood, hay, stubble ... the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3. 11-13). Now wood, hay and stubble will not stand the fire. If we have a grain of gold, that will not be burnt, but the rubbish will if we are the Lord's; we may lose a quantity of our devotion, our self-righteousness and our religion that we have – all of it perhaps – which is so much rubbish, being of the flesh. A mercy if we have any true gold, which cannot be lost! Ah, this burning business is very solemn – "by the Spirit of judgment, and by the Spirit of burning" (Isa. 4. 4), in your conscience! He uses the devil to these means; He allows the devil to tempt the people of God, to put them to it very severely. Temptation in itself is an evil.

Temptation overruled by the Lord is for the profit of His people, but it is solemn and it is painful suffering to be tempted, to be assailed.

Take your faith. Some of you may have been very strong in faith, and have thought that you would never be moved. You have the doctrines well embedded in your understanding, and you may say, "I will never swerve." Then in a moment the enemy may bring such a thrust, and send such a storm upon you, and so stir up your carnal reason that you may be almost swept away into infidelity. Your faith – where is it? Well, if you are in the psalmist's case, it is in God, though assailed; but you will not be able to keep your own faith. Ah, if you think so, the Lord, if you are His, will purge you of that self-confidence, and will make you see that it is not faith at all that you can keep. No, but what did David do, when his faith was assailed day by day, persistently assailed, the enemy saying to him, "Where is thy God?" Do you know His voice? Oh, professor of religion, do you know what that is? Or does your faith always stand strong and unassailed because it is in the flesh? "Be not highminded, but fear" (Rom. 11. 20). If you stand, you stand by faith; and your standing by faith is by the power of God. He will purge you of self-confidence. The strength of faith was increased in David through that trouble; for he said, "My soul ... hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him" (Psa. 42. 5). What did he do? He prayed; he took his trouble to the Lord; and that was faith. Now some people's faith just diminishes their trouble, or refuses to look at the trouble. And what is the consequence? Prayerlessness. But if you look at the trouble, and face the issue, solemn it will be and painful; but if you are enabled to fall down flat and helpless, and say, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember Thee" (Psa. 42. 6), the issue of your trouble will be good.

"Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." It is almost impossible, because of the quantity of things one needs oneself to be purged from, to speak about this purging of the flesh with all its works – wrath, malice, pride, prayerlessness, anger, impatience, lust, idolatry, covetousness – all these things are in us, my friends; and they are lively, very strong, not dead, not *names*. Oh, if they were but names, we should not have the trouble we do. They are living principles, and often in our hearts they are active, if not so much outwardly. "But," says the Lord, "I will cleanse you. My Father, which is the Husbandman, will purge you, as you are a living branch." When a man prunes a tree, a fruit-bearing tree, he prunes it just clear of a fruit bud; that which he cuts off may look very useful, but it is not of any use to the tree. It is good for the fruit that he should prune it. So God cuts His people back. He restrains them from their rashness, makes them feel their weakness when their strength would damage them. When a tree grows with vigour, and it would not be fruitful, but all wood and leaf,

then the wise husbandman cuts it back, in order to produce fruitfulness. So does the Lord. You may not get on as quickly in religion as you desire, but if the Lord is handling you, it is better than to make haste. "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28. 16).

Look at this point for a moment. He will purge you of all raw knowledge, so that you will be constrained and compelled to set your feet down in the experience of truth. The people of Israel went through the flood on foot, every step. They went through the wilderness on foot; forty years they went up and down; they had to tread it out; and so do the people of God. If you make haste, you will have to go back. If the Lord has mercy on you (and it *is* mercy), you may have to unlearn a good deal that you know, in order to learn it by the teaching of Him who only teacheth to profit. This is purging. You lose much, but nothing that is worth keeping will you lose by the purging work of the Holy Ghost.

I must just drop this matter where it is. May the Lord take you and me in hand, and make us fruit-bearing branches of the true Vine!

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### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH NOT RECEIVED BY NATURAL UNDERSTANDING

*Extract from Robert Traill (1642-1716)*

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This doctrine is a spiritual mystery, and lieth not level to a natural understanding. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"; "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 10, 14). Working for life, a man naturally understands, but believing for life, he understands not. To mend the old man, he knows, but to put on the new man by faith, is a riddle to him. The study of holiness, and to endeavour to square his life according to God's law, he knows a little of, though he can never do it, but to draw sanctification from Christ by faith, and to walk holily, in and through the force of the Spirit of Christ in the heart by faith, is mere canting [strange jargon] to him. A new life he understands a little, but nothing of a new birth and regeneration. He never saw himself stark dead. Nay, not only is it unknown to the natural man, but he is by his natural state an enemy to it. He neither doth, nor can know it, nor approve of it. "Wisdom" – that is, Christ's way of saving men revealed in the gospel – "is justified of all her children" (Luke 7. 35), and of them only (see Luke 7. 29, 30).

This enmity in men to the wisdom of God, is the cause not only of this contempt of its ministry, but is a temptation to many ministers to

patch up and frame a gospel that is more suited to, and taking with [attractive], and more easily understood by such men, than the true gospel of Christ is. This Paul complains of in others, and vindicates himself from. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Cor. 1. 17); "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2. 2). He warns others against it. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2. 8); "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh" (2 Cor. 10. 3); "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel"; "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1. 6, 9). And it is certain, that doing for life is more suited to corrupt nature, than believing is.

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## RECEIVING INSTRUCTION

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Durgates,  
Wadhurst, East Sussex.  
October 26th, 1939

My dear Friend,

I felt a peculiar exercise in the services yesterday, and as you opened the exhortation, "Let the peace of God **rule** in your hearts" (Col. 3. 15), I perceived and received the reproof contained in the text and chapter, and which you were enabled so tenderly to administer.

As you were describing the effects of so gracious a rule in the heart, it discovered much in mine contrary to it, and I have had but little sleep, for the word searched the very corners of my heart, and upon every fresh discovery, the words dropped in as a reproof: "Let the peace of God **rule** in your heart."

About 3 a.m., being much burdened, something suggested in my heart to turn the exhortation into a prayer, and refer it back to the Lord, and so I said, "Lord, do let Thy peace rule in my heart, and get the victory in me over all that is not consistent with Thy will, and subdue every wrong spirit. O may that sweet rule rule out all that genders to bondage and death. O let Thy gracious rule correct, purge, save and keep me."

Kindly, tenderly, and yet distinctly, I felt the influence of that peace, felt my spirit corrected, and felt it "sweet to lie passive in His hands, and know no will but His" (H. 472).

What a powerful influence is real humility! I believe that is just what David prayed for in the fifty-first Psalm. "Renew a **right** spirit within me" (verse 10).

Don't trouble to answer this note; it is just to let you know that to me the word did not return void.

I shall not forget the feeling of love and union I felt to Mr. Haddow when we met in July; only thirty-seven years old; a sad loss to the church in a sad day.

I do pray that I may not be allowed to act in any way that would break our union, or bring a feeling of estrangement between each other.

You have been a comfort and help to me.

With love,

Frank L. Gosden

## JESUS CHRIST IS THE ALTOGETHER LOVELY

*An extract from John Flavel of Dartmouth (1628-1691)*

*Jesus Christ is the loveliest Person souls can set their eyes upon.*

"Thou art fairer than the children of men" (Psa. 45. 2). That is said of Jesus Christ which cannot be said of any creature, that "He is altogether lovely" (Song 5. 16). Let us then weigh the import of this phrase, "altogether lovely," and then show in what respect Christ is so.

*Let us weigh this excellent expression*, and particularly consider what is contained in it.

1. *It excludes all unloveliness* from Jesus Christ. So says a former writer, There is nothing in Him which is not amiable. And in this respect Christ infinitely transcends the most excellent and lovely creatures; for whatsoever loveliness is found in them, it is not without imperfection, though fairest pictures must have their shadows; the most transparent stones must have their foils [metal backing] to set off their beauty; the best creature is but a bitter-sweet at best: if there be somewhat pleasing, there is also somewhat displeasing. But it is not so in our altogether lovely Saviour. His excellencies are pure and unmixed; He is a sea of sweetness without one drop of gall.

2. "Altogether lovely." As there is nothing unlovely found in Him, so *all that is in Him is wholly lovely*; as every ray of gold is precious, so everything that is in Christ is precious. Who can weigh Christ in a pair of balances and tell you what His worth is? His price is above rubies, and all that thou canst desire is not to be compared with Him (see Prov. 8. 11).

3. "Altogether lovely." He is *comprehensive of all things that are lovely*; He seals up the sum of all loveliness. Things that shine as single stars with a particular glory, all meet in Christ as a glorious constellation.

“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1. 19). Cast your eyes among all created beings; observe strength in one, beauty in a second, faithfulness in a third, wisdom in a fourth; but you shall find none excelling in them all as Christ doth. He is bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a garment to the naked, healing to the wounded, and whatever a soul can desire is found in Him.

4. “Altogether lovely.” *Nothing is lovely in opposition to Him*, or in separation from Him. If He be altogether lovely, whatever is opposite to or separate from Him can have no loveliness in it; take away Christ, and where is the loveliness of any enjoyment? The best creature-comfort out of Christ is but a broken cistern; it cannot hold one drop of true comfort. “My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (Psa. 73. 26). It is with the loveliest creature as with a beautiful image in the glass – turn away the face and where is the image? Riches, honours and comfortable relations are sweet when the face of Christ smiles upon us through them, but without Him what empty trifles are they all.

5. “Altogether lovely.” *Transcending all created excellencies* in beauty and loveliness. If you compare Christ and other things, be they never so lovely, never so excellent and desirable, Christ carries away all loveliness from them. “He is before all things” (Col. 1. 17). Not only before all things in time, nature and order, but in dignity, glory and true excellence. In all things He must have the preeminence.

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### KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD

*An extract from John Gill (1697-1771)*

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“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1. 5).

These words, in connection with the preceding verses, show that such as are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” and are “begotten ... again unto a lively hope” of “an inheritance incorruptible,” are “kept” as in a garrison, “by,” or in “the power of God,” safe and secure from a final and total falling away, “through” the grace of “faith unto” consummate “salvation,” to be enjoyed for ever in heaven. In answer to which, it is said,

1. “That this place only proves that all, who are preserved to salvation, are so kept by the power of God; but not that all believers are so kept.” I reply, we do not say that all believers are so kept; since there are some who are nominal believers, have no true grace, believe but for a time, and fall away; but then we say that all true believers are so kept; otherwise the words of our Lord, “He that believeth and is baptized shall



be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16. 16), would not be true, nor the will of His Father be fulfilled: “And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6. 40). For how should every one that believes be saved, unless they are preserved unto salvation? And if those who are preserved unto salvation, are kept by the power of God unto it, as is owned, it follows, that since every true believer will be saved, and in order to it be preserved unto salvation, then every one of them is, and will be, kept by the power of God unto it.

2. It is farther said, that this place “proves only that they are kept through faith; that is, if they continue in the faith, and hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end” (see Heb. 3. 14). But it should be observed that there is no *if* in the text; faith is not represented as a condition, but as a means of preservation, engaged by the power of God, for that is as much secured by the power of God as salvation itself, or preservation to it. Besides, such a sense of the words is no other than this, that these persons are kept by the power of God, if, or so long as, they keep themselves; which, as it greatly depreciates the power of God, and ascribes too much to the creature, so it is in itself exceeding trifling.

Add to this, that if this faith, through which believers are kept to salvation, will render them victorious over the world, enable them to resist the temptations of the devil, to prefer afflictions before the pleasures of sin, and even to suffer death, not accepting deliverance, in expectation of a better resurrection (see Heb. 11. 35); and lastly, engage the power of God in their preservation, and so cause them out of weakness to be strong, all which is owned by our author; this, surely, proves that they shall certainly continue in the faith, and so be preserved safe unto the kingdom and glory of God.

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### TESTIMONY OF RUTH STYLES

*(Concluded from page 62)*

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July passed away, and still no answer to my many fervent pleadings. The time of love had not come. I was weary in body, and bowed down in spirit, utterly miserable. No help or comfort came to me. Then on Sunday, August 3rd, I heard Mr. Sawyer preach at Mayfield in the evening. His text was Matthew 11. 28-30: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” Mr. Sawyer described all my feelings. I was truly heavily laden – what a weight my sins were – but I felt that if what Mr. Sawyer said was true,

then I should one day receive that rest which Christ promised to such characters.

On Monday, August 4th, all the hope and comfort received the previous evening had gone. I could neither pray nor read the Word of God – the Bible was like a sealed book. I began to think I must give it all up, I had come to the end of everything. That evening I happened to pick up the *August Sower*, and on the first page was a sermon by a Mr. J.R. Anderson. His text was, “And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me” (Gen. 32. 26). I took the *Sower* to my bedroom, and there I read and re-read the sermon. It was meat and drink to my soul, for it so thoroughly described my case, and my feelings and my desires. It gave me fresh strength and hope. Like Jacob, I felt I must go on wrestling and pleading with the Lord, until He should bless me with what I desired and wanted more than anything on earth – His pardoning love, and the forgiveness of my sins.

With renewed fervency I spent wakeful hours wrestling at the throne of grace, pleading the words of our dear Saviour, Jesus Christ: “And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do” (John 14. 13). I now asked the Lord to bless my soul, rather than give me sleep. “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Tuesday and Wednesday nights were spent in prayer and supplication, still humbly asking for the blessing that I so longed to receive. When I came downstairs on Thursday morning, I looked at the text on the calendar, and in big bold print were the words, “Thy prayer is heard” (Acts 10. 31). I felt at once that was for me. I had it upon my mind all day; even in the midst of my work the words came again and again: “Thy prayer is heard.” When I got home that day, I went upstairs to my bedroom, and read the chapter in which the text is to be found. Comparing my case with that of Cornelius, I was encouraged to hope that perhaps in a few days the Lord would grant me my request. My faith was strengthened, and now I prayed that my poor prayers might soon be answered.

On Saturday morning I read, as is my custom, the portion for the day from my *Daily Light*. The text for the day was, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee” (Song 4. 7). I could not get any further than the text. It came so sweetly and yet forcibly to me as I read it, and I wondered could it really be for me. If only I were quite sure that it was Jesus speaking to me such wonderful words, O how happy I should be! My state of mind all that day I cannot describe. I certainly could not settle my thoughts on work. Still thinking upon the words, “Thou art all fair, My love,” I went into the spare bedroom and opened the Bible there, and it opened on to the Song of Solomon, and the first words I saw were, “Thou art all fair, My love.” In the evening I went on an errand to Town

Row. All the way there I thought how I would like to see Mr. Laver, but finally decided I would not call.

On Sunday morning, I was awake very early, and I did pray that the day would be a day of blessing to my soul. I read the Saturday portion in *Daily Light* again, and at the end of the reading were the words, "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2. 10). I had not noticed them on Saturday, but now they stood out with such a depth of meaning, especially in connection with "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." The thought came into my mind to ask the Lord that He would graciously speak those words to me during the services at chapel; then I should know that the first portion of Scripture was mine. Satan said, "It's no good asking that Mr. Laver might take that for his text, for he has already got his text for the day." So my unbelieving heart would not allow me to ask the Lord for such a favour. If ever I begged of the Lord to bless the minister, and give him divine direction, I did that morning. How my hopes and fears rose alternately. O I did want the Lord to bless me, and show me my sins were pardoned! I said, "Lord if Thou wilt grant me my request this day, I will willingly follow Thee in the ordinance of baptism," and I felt it would be a very high honour and privilege to be allowed to follow Him.

On my way to chapel, my heart was going up in prayer to God, "O Lord, do bless my soul today." As I walked up the chapel steps, my body trembled at the thoughts of entering into the house of the Lord. I was in such an agitated state of mind that my head was aching. Mr. Laver read Colossians chapter 2, and to my surprise there was the text, "Ye are complete in Him," in verse 10. I thought that was very wonderful, and I did hope that text would be announced, but again Satan butted in and said, "He won't have those words." Words cannot describe my feelings when the text was given out, just the very words I had asked the Lord to speak to me: "Ye are complete in Him." To think that the dear Lord had so manifestly answered my poor petitions, it was too wonderful to believe. I had heard of people asking the Lord to give the minister a special text, but never thought He would work such a wonderful and marvellous thing for me – so unworthy, and so base. During the morning service I sat like one in a dream, it was all so wonderful.

The afternoon sermon was heavenly food to my soul; what a feast it was. I felt myself to be in the presence of the Lord, washed in the blood of Christ, sanctified, justified, and clothed in His righteousness, and without spot or wrinkle. My burden had gone completely from me – all my sins were blotted out, Christ was All in all to me, and I felt such a love to Him, a love which I had never experienced before. The Lord in His abundant mercy blessed me far above and beyond anything I had ever hoped for. The Amen came all too soon. As the Lord's supper was

being administered, I did wish I were sitting round the table. Then I remembered my vow made in the early hours of the morning. I felt I must do it at once.

At the close of the service, Mr. Laver gave out hymn 593 – “Jesus is a mighty Saviour.” The last line of the first verse, “Come, and on His grace depend,” gave me courage. I felt that I could come; Christ being my All, I could come; Christ being my all-sufficient Friend – my Redeemer. Thus I decided I would speak to Mr. Laver after the service, and I asked the Lord that if it were right, and consistent with His will that I should do so, that Mr. Laver would come and speak to me before I left my seat. Again the Lord answered my prayer, for there was Mr. Laver walking down the aisle, and he came and spoke to me before I was out of the pew – an unusual occurrence for ordinance Sunday.

That evening I was thankful to have a headache, for I was able to excuse myself from the company, and go to bed at 7.30 p.m. I just wanted to be all alone with Jesus, whose love was so wonderful and precious to me. To Him I would give all the praise and all the glory for, “There was nothing in me to merit esteem, or give the Creator delight.” If I had been left to my own ways, I should never have chosen this way.

*August 1991:* Whilst sitting with Miss Styles, she told me that it was fifty years since my father (Mr. P.O. Laver) preached from the text, “Ye are complete in Him” (Col. 2. 10). She had read in her *Daily Light* that morning. The first text was, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.” She felt herself to be such a sinner, that this was not meant for her. She went on to read; and the last text was, “Ye are complete in Him”; and she prayed that if this was true of her that my father would preach from that text, which he did. On the Monday evening she went to see him regarding baptism and joining the church. He had not intended preaching from those words. The text he was going to preach from was, “It is finished,” and he showed her the headings he had made, when preparing the sermon. He had to change his text, when the words “Ye are complete in Him” came to him in the early hours of the morning.

The text at the baptizing service was 2 Peter 3. 18: “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” The text she was given when she was received into the church was, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12. 9).

Hymn 766 was chosen by her, either at her baptism or when she was received into the church, and verse 4 was particularly good to her:

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

Hallelujah!  
Grace shall reign eternally.”

Gwen Cooke

Miss Ruth Styles died on August 13th, 1998, aged 94 years, after a loyal and consistent membership of nearly fifty-seven years. Her baptism on September 3rd, 1941 was a confirmation for Mr. Percy O. Laver to accept the pastorate at Providence Chapel, Rotherfield, October 1941.

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## WEAK FAITH ENCOURAGED

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Berwick Court,  
Berwick Station,  
East Sussex.  
April 6th, 1884

My dear Friend,

I have thought a good deal about you this afternoon, coming home from chapel, thinking of Good Friday and the church meeting. I wondered if I could give you a word of encouragement, believing your mind is, and has been, exercised upon the ordinances of the Lord's house. But the question with you is, "Am I the right subject? Was it for me that Christ suffered, bled and died? Am I a real believer in Him?" These, and a variety of other exercises, mingled with fear, keep you back.

I believe there have been times when you have felt your heart glow with love to the Lord, His house, people and ways, so that you could have followed His commands; and yet you are afraid there is something yet unknown to you that the Lord's people know. Yet you believe in your sinnership, and you believe in the ability of Christ to save you, and sometimes you have felt a little of His willingness, and have had a sweet hope raised up in your heart that He has done something even for one so unworthy as you feel to be. You could not put it all away, and say the Lord has done nothing for you. You can but hope He has made you feel your sinnership, and your need of a Saviour. You have been seen [by Himself] at His dear feet suing for mercy for Jesus' sake, and there have been times when you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have felt such love to Him that has made you desirous to live to His honour and glory, and without sinning against Him.

I have looked upon you for a long time as being one with whom the Lord has been at work, and have hoped from what I have heard from you, and felt towards you, that I should see you brought into the gates of Zion, to tell what the Lord has done for you. I am still hoping to see this, and my desire is that the Lord may shed abroad His love in your heart, and

constrain you out of love to Him for what you hope He has done, to make an open profession. I would not on any account persuade you, but if I could give a word in season I would.

You may have many fears, and amongst them this, that you do not know enough; but it is the life of God in your soul the church would be feeling after, not a lot of words. But if you were enabled to come humbly, and tell what you hope you have known, it would find an echo in the hearts of others. I believe the ministry of our dear pastor, Mr. Vine, has been blessed to you, and you have been favoured in secret, and should these blessings be hid under a bushel? May the Lord give you one more token, and strength to attend to the things spoken, as did Lydia:

“Lord, in Thy house I read there’s room,  
And, venturing hard, behold I come;  
But can there, tell me, can there be  
Amongst Thy children room for me?” (H. 447)

Yes, there is room for such. May the Lord direct you,  
Yours sincerely,

R. Burton

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## OBITUARY

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**Philip Stephen Warren**, member of the church at Salem, Carshalton, for sixty-three years and a minister of the gospel, passed away on Lord’s day, August 13th, 2017, aged 91.

Father wrote of his birth and early life: “The Lord arranges our birth into this world at the right time, right parents, and the right place.

‘My life’s minutest circumstance  
Is subject to His eye.’ (H. 70)

“I was born in a cottage in Seal Chart, near Sevenoaks, Kent on January 28th, 1926. Father was at that time a farm labourer. Out of work at the time of the economic slump, we were very poor and we went to Bexleyheath and lived in rooms. Here three more boys were born. One, a twin, later died, so we grew up a family of seven, two girls and five boys.

“At about four years old I was seriously ill with enteritis and my life was despaired of. An aunt went to see the doctor and accused him of letting me die because we were very poor. In those days there was no National Health Service. I was then sent in an ambulance to Dartford Hospital. After this my mother was always concerned over my health.

My father and mother attended Bexley chapel. Once the pastor was talking about 'we are sinners,' and I looked at him and said to myself, 'I am not a sinner.' I did not like chapel.

"In 1934 we moved to Keston, Kent, and Dad and Mum found work for a time. My father looked for a chapel to attend, and after a time we went to a Strict Baptist room, a few people meeting over a jeweller's shop in Bromley. I am ashamed of it – I was willing to go with Dad to chapel, but did not want to go to a room. We walked three miles one way and took a bus part of the way home. My life was busy – including Saturday working and the local Methodist Sunday School – and I went into them all with enthusiasm, except chapel, until the Lord began with me. All through He watched over my life.

"In childhood I used to have as it were a thought come. I remember turning over in the night what I had heard. One occasion I went to a harvest thanksgiving service. It was offering to God the crops of the earth. That night on my bed I felt a measure of the holiness of God and felt that He did not need offering of the crops of the earth. I still remember it to this day.

"One freezing night I was sent to a local shop for some writing paper. As I went out of the gate, I saw the road repairs down the hill. The watchman was there. I went and spoke to him. Then the words came powerfully that Father needs his writing paper. I immediately obeyed and ran back, and as I was running up I saw a car going down and heard a crash. I ran to the shop, bought the writing paper and took it to Dad. Then I went down to see what happened. Right where I had been standing before I ran away, there was the car. The old watchman was killed. This left a deep impression with me. Where did the prompting come from? I believe now it was the Lord, but I did not know it then."

Father wrote of his war time experiences: "Early in 1941 the nation was in a desperate state, and we passed through intense bombing which I personally witnessed. Keston was three miles from RAF Biggin Hill Aerodrome. German bombers were seen every day, with dogfights overhead. I remember one Sunday lunch we were having dinner with our Uncle Charlie Warren the minister, when there was a rattle of machine guns. We saw a German bomber flying low, firing machine guns. Thankfully no one was hurt. The call had gone out to join the Home Guard. From fifteen years of age I and other local lads served in the Home Guard until I was called up in May 1944.

"A large brown envelope was delivered by the postman; my mother said quietly, 'It has come Phil,' and handed it to me. I can only imagine what she felt, one son a prisoner of war in Germany, another fighting in Burma, and now one in the Navy. Having said all my goodbyes, I left a

sad mother and father to venture into the unknown. It was a cold, wet morning, which corresponded to my feelings.”

Father described his naval training, and: “at this time, two incidents occurred which I trust caused me to consider the deep mystery of the foreknowledge and overruling care of the Lord for His people, also His divine purposes in our life. Although I have been a rebel and have resisted His will for me, under His gracious, beneficent and restraining hand every step taken in His will has been the right one. O that I had hearkened to His voice. I can truly say with Newton in hymn 232:

‘Determined to save, He watched o’er my path,  
When, Satan’s blind slave, I sported with death.’

“The first was weeks after I had been called up. I received a letter to tell me that the shop in which I had worked had received a direct hit by a doodlebug flying bomb. All the staff had been killed. It being the writer’s Saturday afternoon off, he had escaped with his life. My place had been taken by an ex-soldier who had been invalided out of the army to apparent security. He was taken and I was spared.

“The second concerned the Ipswich (Earthen Vessel?) chapel I attended. I became friendly with the daughter of a minister there and we started going out together. I did manage to snatch a few hours with her between courses, the final one being prior to going overseas. Whilst sitting in the train going to see her, suddenly a powerful command entered my mind: ‘Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate’ (see 2 Cor. 6. 17). I had never experienced anything like it before. Surely it could not mean giving up this relationship? Everything about it seemed right. So I continued. But eventually I did have to separate from her. As the Lord deepened the work in my soul, I was to learn that she did not understand, nor desired, the path I was walking in. I did not know my left hand from my right spiritually. I was like Bunyan’s Pilgrim, convicted of sin, carried the burden and weight of sin, and knew not what to do. She told me that she did not understand me, and we parted. I was to learn, ‘Can two walk together, except they be agreed?’ (Amos 3. 3).

“Having experienced the sea and war at sea, the training prepared for what was to come. Our tutor was an ‘Old Salt’ [old sailor] who had seen many years in the service. He emphasised that things happen so quickly at sea, not only from enemy action, but the sea itself has many moods. It can be calm and peaceful one moment, and the next a sudden squall, giant waves, hurricanes and hidden reefs and rocks in uncharted waters.”

Of this need to be instantly ready, Father wrote, “I made sure after that to be on my way at the first ‘ting’ of the alarm bells. Delay can mean the difference between life and death. As I was to learn after we



sank a Japanese cruiser, the Japanese Officer of the Watch ignored the warning until it was too late.”

On later specialist training: “By this time I had become a ‘loner.’ The usual pursuits of the other sailors did not appeal to me. I enjoyed walking along the country lanes. There in the quietness of the countryside, the war with all its harrowing scenes seemed a long way off. My destination was a Fleet Destroyer, HMS Virago. Shortly before we left Leith, the captain informed us that we were bound for the Far East, and all that could be spared would be given weekend leave. I returned home to say goodbye. The last hymn given out on that Sunday was hymn number 501:

‘For a season called to part,  
Let us now ourselves commend  
To the gracious eye and heart  
Of our ever-present Friend.’

I felt near to tears; would I ever see them again?

“I remember looking up at the Firth of Forth Bridge as we sailed under it bound for the open sea and the dangers awaiting us. It was now January 1945. We eventually joined the convoy we were to escort to Gibraltar. We passed Land’s End, and as I watched those hills disappearing, I thought of home and those I loved, wondering if I should see them again. Sadly there were those aboard who would never return, and there were those who would return cripples.

“Later we sailed through the Suez Canal. I was able to watch the miles and miles of sand dunes slip by as the sun blazed down. I tried to visualise what it must have been like for the Israelites fleeing from the Egyptians. After we had passed through the salt lakes into the Red Sea, as I looked toward the shore, I wondered where the place was that they passed through the sea.

“On February 18th we sailed into Trincomalee harbour, Ceylon [now Sri Lanka]. Four days later we steamed out, together with other destroyers and carriers on our first operation against the Japanese in Sumatra, approximately a thousand miles from our base.”

Sent to relieve another destroyer, he wrote: “We arrived and came alongside. The loss of life, and the damage I saw, brought home to me the terrible reality of war at sea. I realised that this was a warning of that which was to come, which indeed it was.

“VE Day – Victory in Europe – was declared on May 8th, whilst on passage back to Trincomalee. All ships of the East Indies Fleet held services of thanksgiving on the quarterdecks. On Friday, May 9th, the whole fleet was back in harbour, and everyone was tired out after seventeen days on operations. After only a few hours we were on our way again, this time to find and destroy a Japanese heavy cruiser.

“It was a custom of mine when off duty to go to some quiet place on the upper deck, with my Bible or hymnbook, to read, or simply to gaze over the sea. Watching the flying fish skimming over the water, the tiny rainbows formed in the spray, listening to the swishing of the water along the side of the ship, looking at the sparkling foam in our wake, these sights and sounds had a calming effect upon my troubled mind and heart.”

Father described the “deep foreboding” before the night battle in which the destroyers alone sunk the cruiser. The following morning, “all ships slowed down and lowered ensigns to half-mast whilst Saumarez [the lead destroyer] buried her dead at sea. I watched from the *Virago*.” He described that afternoon, Japanese air attacks again and again and “as darkness was falling we suffered a near miss. The ship became a scene of dead and wounded, with holes in the side and superstructure. Splinters cut through men, killing four outright and wounding eight more. A cook was wounded; I spoke to him and others wounded later in the mess deck, turned into a hospital. He was in a bad way, and he died in the night. The following morning, we buried our dead, members of our crew committed to the deep during the funeral service, those taken in death in a moment of time. I still live through those hours now after so many years. I could tell the captain was very concerned over the wounded, and for the next of kin. No easy task being a captain.

“I served on HMS *Virago* until November 1945. I wish to record to the Lord’s honour and glory that I was brought safely through much, with remarkable deliverances, in those dangerous years. So were two of my brothers who also knew the smell of cordite [used in big guns] in close battle and the horrors of war.

“During my Ceylon transit camp stay, I had an experience which had a profound impression on me. I was to prove that the Lord is ever mindful of His people, and that He hears and answers their prayers.

“My feelings at this time were of dejection. I could find no resting-place for my soul. I had no one to guide me, or to turn to for spiritual advice. My life was spent in a continual battle between my natural desires, and the aspiration to live a holy life in order to win salvation. If only I could find the Lord, if only I could prove the reality of those beliefs which I had been taught as a child. I believed there was a people that knew the answers, but they were many miles away. My heart ached. I was ‘as a sparrow alone upon the house top’ (Psa. 102. 7), a mystery to myself, and to everyone else. I wanted to find someone who knew the way, who could show me the way of salvation. The only prayer I knew was, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner’ (Luke 18. 13). I did not know anything other than the desire for sin, the love of sin, and fear to commit sin, lest I should incur the wrath of God. I knew I loved sin, but I could not say that I loved God.

“One day I went into the camp’s information room, and stood before a huge map of the Pacific and the East Indies. Whilst gazing at Australia, I had a sudden deep impression that I would be going to Sydney, to Ryde Strict Baptist Chapel. Was I destined to meet with God’s people? It seemed impossible. According to fleet news, there did not appear to be any possibility of any naval ships going to Australia. I reasoned away it coming to pass. I knew nothing of the scripture: ‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God’ (Luke 18. 27).

“Only a short time after, the command came for me to report immediately. I was drafted to HMS Penn, a destroyer in Trincomalee harbour. On board, I enquired where we were bound for. ‘Singapore, and then we set sail for Australia, our final destination is Sydney.’ I stood still in amazement. Expectation rose up within me. O the joy I felt in my heart in anticipation. I felt sure that the people there knew something of what I was passing through. Realisation dawned, out of all the ships in the Royal Navy to which I could have been drafted, here was the one, the only one, destined in the Lord’s will to take me to the very place where He had shown, in answer to my poor, heartfelt cries. It was indeed a sacred experience.

“Shortly after the ship set sail. I now had time to reflect, knowing there might be a change of orders at any time. So it was a watching to see if the Lord would make my journey prosperous or not (see Gen. 24. 21).” Weeks later when his ship was off Australia steaming towards Sydney, Father wrote of the ship suddenly “turning round. We were ordered to return to tow a broken-down submarine. My heart sank. I thought it was the Lord. Now it looked as if it had come to nothing. We proceeded slowly to Singapore. There the captain received orders to return to Australia. We set sail the following day. Again my hopes were raised; we were taking the shortest route to Sydney. We arrived on April 26th, 1946.” (This was some three months after Father’s experience standing before the map in Ceylon.)

He described how, when granted leave, he went to Ryde chapel a number of times and found it closed at advertised times; how he was encouraged to venture again, then: “I saw to my unspeakable joy people standing outside. Even as I type these words, I feel tears come to my eyes. My heart was full to overflowing. In that moment I believed the Lord fulfilled His promise. I was with His people. How my heart went up to the Lord in thanksgiving.”

He described how he was made welcome; the services he attended; the various new hindrances in the way; and the times and conversations he had. He was cast down, but encouraged one Sunday evening reading a reprinted 1898 sermon preached by Mr. Ashdown: “Holding faith, and

a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. 1. 19). Also, "The words were impressed upon my mind: 'I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it' (Rev. 3. 8). I proved it true during the remainder of my stay in Sydney."

He describes his conflict: "If there is nothing in this religion, why have I constant strife within? As Mr. Evans [the deacon] said: 'The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.' 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. 7. 19, 24). My heart warmed to him; I felt I knew a little of what he meant. I had hoped that he would speak of some great experience which would give me encouragement. I had much to learn. I retain in my memory the precious spiritual times we had together. I well remember one evening, when we were singing hymns around the family organ, hymn 944 was chosen:

‘Tell me, Saviour, from above,  
Dearest Object of my love,  
Where Thy little flocks abide,  
Sheltered near Thy bleeding side!’

"I could hardly sing it. The words were so applicable to me; they were truly the language and desire of my heart. Ever since that blessed occasion, whenever that is sung or read, my heart warms within me. It is one of those sacred times, precious to me.

"It was indeed a time of refreshment and comfort. The goodness of the Lord, in granting me the means to travel there; overcoming all obstacles; and the privilege of meeting with His people in that far off land."

After visiting the South Pacific Islands, he wrote of "a state in which I doubted the reality of all that I believed. The evidence suggested that I was completely deceived. With the power of this temptation, I felt I must know without a doubt that there is a God. 'Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O LORD' (Psa. 130. 1). We were about to enter the South China Sea and, being the typhoon season, we anticipated a rough passage. I thought if I prayed to the Lord that if He would make the sea calm, then I would know that there is a God. I went many times to the ship's side to see if the sea was calm. There was not a ripple. Each time I felt within, 'There is a God.' Then there was a ripple on the water, then a heavy swell. The order came: 'Rig the life lines and batten down hatches.' I then knew that we were heading into rough weather. My heart sank, and I could not pray, because there was no God to pray to. O the desolation I felt. I had been deluded, and I was finished. Words fail to describe the utter dejection I felt over the next few days.

"The wind increased and the waves became as a cauldron, a foaming, liquid mass, and as mountains rising above the ship. It seemed

certain that we would capsize, and all seemed lost. I was facing eternity. I felt numb within. In that awesome moment I could not pray. There was no God. Finally we did reach harbour in Hong Kong. Now I reasoned there must be a God because we were delivered from the stormy seas. He had heard my poor prayers and cries of distress. A sense of thankfulness came over me. Whilst I was not without a little 'who can tell?' I was still not satisfied. I had to know, without a doubt.

"In case anyone should think that I am exaggerating the awesome power of the stormy seas: I would mention we tied up alongside an ocean going tug. Its superstructure was higher than the bridge of our destroyer. It was called out to sea in company with a corvette. 'One moment it was on the radar screen, the next it was gone, sunk without a trace,' I was told by a sailor on the corvette. I had very solemn thoughts, especially in the experience through which I had just passed. It was not so much the stormy seas – I had experienced them before, and a natural fear – but it was the temptation that I was passing through. 'There is no God.' I carried on in this state, sometimes with a little hope, sometimes in darkness in my mind.

"One day I was walking across the mess deck, and the Lord spoke with power into my soul, such as I had never experienced before. I was filled with sacred awe, and became as dust and ashes in the presence of Him. Such infinite power! Such infinite wisdom! Such infinite love! I felt all my strength drain away. I completely lost sight of my surroundings, aware only of His sacred presence. This lasted a few moments as we judge time, but whilst under the power of His presence, there was no time. I knew in that sacred moment that there was a God. Satan was gone. I was free from the snare. I read my Bible with new insight. I could understand the feelings of Elijah and others in the Bible when they came into the sacred presence of God. Now I knew. This sacred experience had a profound effect upon me down to this day. Had the Lord answered my prayer concerning the stilling of the waves, there would still have been doubt. Instead He brought me through the dangers, and granted me this greatest blessing. How my heart sang His praises. I kept this locked up in my heart for many years and told no one. I could not even write it down.

"After I was discharged from the Royal Navy, I went through a period of unrest. I became lukewarm. I backslid. The Lord stopped me under a sermon preached by Mr. J.W. Tyler in Dicker Chapel: 'Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live' (Isa. 38. 1). I spent most of the following week on my bed crying for mercy." Then after Mr. Tyler preached at Gower Street Chapel, London from, "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity" (Hos. 14. 1): "where before there was despair, now there was hope.

During this period I felt to be led to be baptized [by Mr. G. Relf in February 1950] and join the church at Bromley.” Later, invited by the Bromley deacon to go with him to hear Mr. S. Stevens at Carshalton: “That night he preached to me. He entered right into my path, all my feelings and failings. I went away from that chapel with hope in my heart.” Afterwards he wrote, “I felt such love to the ministry of Mr. Stevens, and to the people at Carshalton – I came into great conflict over this – and eventually felt led to transfer [December 1953] my membership.” Father married Mother (then Eunice Field), already a member at Carshalton, in November 1954.

*Taken from August 25th, 2017, Providence Chapel, West Street, Croydon funeral service:*

It was there [see above experience on HMS Penn’s mess deck] that the Lord began the exercise to the ministry in his soul. He wrote, “When He appeared, He spake these words with power, and that filled me with fear and trembling: ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel’ (Mark 16. 15). In the midst of the sacred awe I felt, I cried out in my soul, ‘I am an ignorant man O Lord – how could such a one as I dare to be a messenger of His?’ The year was 1946, and I was twenty years old.”

That word of the Lord was tried, greatly tried, over many years. Dad knew, as Moses knew, the “backside of the desert” (Exod. 3. 1) all right. But Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24. 35). For forty years he carried that exercise. He first preached [at St. David’s Bridge, Cranbrook] in 1987 the gospel he was commanded to preach with power from heaven all those years ago.

I remember our first pastor [Mr. S. Stevens] describing a dream. Initially as I recall it, there was a crowd of people. But the Lord took him down step by step, down to two weeping, lonely, poor sinners. And I remember well as a fourteen-year-old boy, our dear old pastor saying, “I’ll go for them!” And that is what dear Dad, I believe, knew. After two strokes, he preached his last sermon in 2005. There followed years of affliction and the bearing the burden of the afflicted. But how often those that heard him pray in those years witnessed there was that “seeking to know Thee as Thou art” (H. 952), seeking to know One above. The Lord gave him a blessed exercise, done with the things of time – to know his Jesus.

Then just over a year before his end, he went to hospital once more. It seemed to be the end, and he certainly thought it was, telling one of his grandchildren on two different occasions that he would not see him any more. When in his right mind afterwards he told me, he knew the Lord’s sacred presence once more in that hospital. He spent six months in a

nursing home very near to Mum and ourselves, and when in his better days he would ask for Matthew 11. 28-30 to be read. The "heavy laden" – it speaks of heavy loaded – heavy burdened. The Lord alone knows what Dad walked in those days. And there was a longing for that rest in his Lord, in his Jesus, One that had won that battle for him, though in darkness, agony and blood on that cross. It was real to Dad.

I read those same words to Dad the Saturday morning before he died. And I must testify to the Lord's honour and glory, I cannot recall in those long months having such a blessed liberty at the throne of grace as in prayer that morning by that bed. The Lord was very near. He would take him home the following morning.

Philip L. Warren

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Glimpses of Grace;** a compilation of portions for daily reading taken from sermons preached by J.K. Popham, prepared and edited by Mr. James E. North; hardback; 379 pages; price £15.95 plus postage; published by and obtainable from Mr. James E. North, 10 Copinger Close, Totton, Hampshire, SO40 8WN. Tel: 07500 265419.

James Kidwell Popham was the pastor at Galeed Chapel, Brighton for fifty-five years. He passed away into eternal glory in June 1937. As Editor of the *Gospel Standard* for thirty years to June 1935, and with many sermons still being published, and pieces inserted in this magazine, our readers will need no introduction from us.

Mr. Popham's sermons are Christ-exalting sermons, and he delighted to preach His wondrous grace to poor, guilty and lost sinners. He ever sought to encourage needy and trembling sinners to flee to Christ. We believe that many of his hearers were led by the Spirit into the pathway of David: "I flee unto Thee to hide me" (Psa. 143. 9). He faithfully preached of the Person of the Lord Jesus, as the blessed One sent from God, as the Son of God and the Son of man, and exalted Him in His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His living intercession in the court of heaven, at the right hand of power.

The daily portions are full of gospel truth, and we believe that the reader will find some gospel crumbs from time to time, as the Holy Ghost may be pleased to bless the glorious truth to them.

There is a foreword by Matthew J. Hyde, the present pastor at Galeed Chapel, Brighton. There is an index of the daily portions at the end. A reading for February 29th (leap year) is also included as the last portion.

We will just make a minor comment (not a criticism), that one or two of the portions seem rather disjointed, where there is not the flow in the theme before us. This comment does not detract from the glorious gospel truths set forth in this publication, neither should it deter any interested and exercised pilgrim from purchasing a copy.

This is a profitable publication. We hope that it will have a good sale, and we warmly recommend it to our readers.

## MOURNING AND LONGING

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The Saviour hides His face!  
 My spirit thirsts to prove  
 Renewed supplies of pardoning grace,  
 And never-fading love.

The favoured souls who know  
 What glories shine in Him,  
 Pant for His presence, as the roe  
 Pants for the living stream!

What trifles tease me now!  
 They swarm like summer flies,  
 They cleave to everything I do,  
 And swim before my eyes.

How dull the Sabbath day,  
 Without the Sabbath's Lord!  
 How toilsome then to sing and pray,  
 And wait upon the Word!

Of all the truths I hear,  
 How few delight my taste!  
 I glean a berry here and here,  
 But mourn the vintage past.

Yet let me (as I ought)  
 Still hope to be supplied;  
 No pleasure else is worth a thought,  
 Nor shall I be denied.

Though I am but a worm,  
 Unworthy of His care,  
 The Lord will my desire perform,  
 And grant me all my prayer.

William Cowper (1731-1800)

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## NOTICE OF DEATH

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**Kenneth David Cecil Warren**, a faithful deacon at Rehoboth Chapel, Bromley, for fifty-six years, and latterly a church member at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, passed away to his eternal rest on Monday, January 27th, 2020, aged 89 years. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1. 17).



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
APRIL 2020

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

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**CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY**

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5. 6).

We have set before us a most glorious truth. May the Holy Ghost make this divine statement a comfort and consolation to us poor sinners, who know ourselves by nature to be so very ungodly.

To set forth the great love of God to sinners, the apostle, by inspiration, went on to write in the three following verses, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were **yet sinners**, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” On account of His great love and the merit of His death and the shedding of His precious blood, it is so wonderfully true of Immanuel today, as it was when He lived here below, “This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them” (Luke 15. 2).

“For when we were yet without strength.” When Adam and Eve, our first parents, sinned against the command of Almighty God and partook of the fruit that they were forbidden to eat, they then began to die. From that day, the whole human race, being conceived and born in sin, is truly born to die. David confessed, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51. 5). Our sinful nature is shown by Isaiah’s description of the people of Israel, whom God had nourished and brought up: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores” (Isa. 1. 4-6). All men are under the same word of condemnation as they stand in their nature, for we are told, “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5. 12), and again, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3. 23). The apostle also writes in the same chapter, “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone

out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3. 10-12). It is because of this, that all mankind are now living under the curse of a broken law. Our recovery is beyond our own ability, and beyond the reach of our fallen human nature. We are completely lost, and have very solemnly fallen out of favour with God, and now incur His anger.

Joseph Hart set out the plight we are in when he penned:

"Man, bewail thy situation;  
Hell-born sin, once crept in,  
Mars God's fair creation.

"Vaunt thy native strength no longer;  
Vain's the boast; all is lost;  
Sin and death are stronger.

"Enemies to God and goodness,  
Great and small, since the fall,  
Sink in lust and lewdness." (H. 799)

So we poor sons of men are completely ruined, and apart from free and sovereign grace given to us, we are enemies to God and godliness. How true it is:

"Our life is ever on the wing,  
And death is ever nigh;  
The moment when our lives begin,  
We all begin to die." (H. 498)

The truth is that apart from the rich, saving grace of God, shown to us by the work of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, we would continue to be deceived by a false, carnal security, either in the profane world or the religious world. We are told through the Apostle Paul, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 14). As the Lord Jesus taught, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3. 7). Thomas Kelly versed so aptly this truth, and what an infinite mercy and wonder it is to experience and know something of this heavenly call out of nature's darkness:

"When we lay in sin polluted,  
Wretched and undone we were;  
All we saw and heard was suited  
Only to produce despair;  
Ours appeared a hopeless case;  
Such it had been, but for grace.

"As we lay exposed and friendless,  
Needing what no hand could give,

Then the Lord (whose praise be endless)  
 Passèd by, and bid us live;  
 This was help in time of need;  
 This was grace, 'twas grace indeed.

“Yes, 'twas grace beyond all measure,  
 When He bid such sinners live,  
 Laid aside His just displeasure,  
 And determined to forgive;  
 But He chose our hopeless case,  
 With a view to show His grace.” (H. 1040)

“In due time.” God’s perfect time. The proper time. God’s wonderful appointment. The time promised, which was looked for by the Old Testament saints. Almighty God will never be before His time, neither behind His time. He cannot be hurried, neither can He be hindered or thwarted in the unfolding of His purposes in the earth. God will bring all things to a most blessed and a most solemn fruition, when Jesus comes “the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9. 28). He will cast the wicked and impenitent sinner into hell, and gather the humble, seeking and penitent believer to Himself. Jesus will lead such believers “unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7. 17).

It was “in due time” that the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the temple and informed him that his wife Elisabeth would conceive a child who was to be named John. Six months later, “in due time,” a virgin, who was espoused to Joseph was visited, and told by Gabriel that she would have a Son, who was indeed “the Son of the Highest,” “and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1. 32, 33). “In due time,” Joseph was visited by the angel in a dream, and told that his espoused wife had conceived a Son by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, “And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1. 21). It was in God’s “due time” that Caesar Augustus issued a decree that the Roman empire should be taxed, and because of this taxing, Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to be taxed. It was there that Mary brought forth her “firstborn Son,” which was the fulfilling of the prophecy of Micah concerning “Bethlehem Ephratah” (see Mic. 5. 2).

We must also think of poor, tried Jacob, alone for some months, all his family (who were under covenant promise) being down in Egypt. We think of the lonely, anxious hours the patriarch must have experienced, while praying, watching and waiting for their return. No doubt days and nights spent in prayer and supplication! “In due time” the eleven sons returned to Jacob, and with such overwhelmingly wondrous news, that “Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 45. 26). “Jacob’s heart fainted,” for the news seemed too good to be true. Yet it was true! God “is faithful that promised” (Heb. 10. 23). The

promise of salvation is sure to all humble, seeking and penitent believers; for such believers are the spiritual sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who live “by faith.”

As we look upon our own personal pathways, has there not been a “due time,” both for the evil and the good? It certainly was “in due time” to Jacob, Joseph and all the family. And so it is with us in our pilgrimage here below, as John Berridge rhymed:

“Ye broken hearts all, who cry out, ‘Unclean,’  
And taste of the gall of indwelling sin;  
Lamenting it truly, and loathing it too,  
And seeking help duly, as sinners must do.

“If often He hides His face from His friends,  
And silent abides for merciful ends,  
At length He uncovers Himself from His cloud,  
And sweetly discovers His face and His blood.

“A time He has set to heal up your woes,  
A season most fit His love to disclose;  
And till He is ready to show His good will,  
Be patient and steady, and wait on Him still.” (H. 687)

“In due time” is God’s best and perfect time. And so it was when Jesus died for sinners. “In due time,” Jesus had to go about His Father’s business (see Luke 2. 49). “In due time” He sweat, and agonised, and prayed in Gethsemane. “In due time” he was met by the Jewish mob, and taken by wicked hands, and charged with blasphemy and sentenced to death. They led Him away to Caiaphas, to the judgment hall and to Pontius Pilate. They then made Him to bear His cross and nailed Him to it at Calvary. This was all in God’s perfect time, that the holy and blessed Immanuel had to drink the cup that His Father gave Him to drink. This most bitter cup could only pass away by drinking it. He died for our sins.

“Of His sufferings so intense,  
Angels have no perfect sense.” (H. 154)

“Christ died for the ungodly.” As God’s dear people journey on, they are made to realise more and more what a wondrous act of love and mercy it was, that “Christ died for the ungodly.” What an amazing truth it is, that as Jesus died, He made an end of sin and “abolished death,” that the humble believer might live for ever.

“Jesus has made an end of sin,  
And righteousness divine brought in” (H. 586)

We read, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray;

we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 5, 6). Every proud look, foolish thought, lustful imagination, rebellious word, evil speaking, violent altercation, lighthearted or jocular speech, dishonest or deceitful behaviour, devious talking, and every ugly backsliding fall into sin, are completely atoned for by the shedding of the precious blood of Jesus. "For He hath made Him to be sin" – not a sinner, but the sin-bearing Victim – "for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21). Joseph Hart penned:

"God sent His Son to die for us,  
Die to redeem us from the curse;  
He took our weakness, bore our load,  
And dearly bought us with His blood.  
  
"In guilt's dark dungeon when we lay,  
Mercy cried, 'Spare' and Justice, 'Slay.'  
But Jesus answered, 'Set them free,  
And pardon them and punish Me.'" (H. 837)

By the meritorious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, the believer is made free from the bondage and curse of the law, and also from the second death, as Jesus said unto bereaved Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11. 26). Jesus also declared, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8. 36). How true it is as Henry Fowler wrote:

"In Jesus combine all the riches of grace,  
What glory and grandeur I see in His face;  
Jehovah's eternal and co-equal Son  
Took all our transgressions and made them His own." (H. 1033)

In the holy records we read of the variety of sins God's dear people have committed either before or after their call by grace. True faith never makes light of or excuses sin, for it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God. Yet in the faithful records, we read of the idolatry of Solomon, the denial of the Lord Jesus by Peter, the sharp contention and separation of Paul and Barnabas, the pride of Hezekiah, the presumption of King Uzziah, the adultery and blood-shedding of David, the weakness of Jehoshaphat in the helping of the ungodly, the disobedience of Jonah, and so many shortcomings and falls of God's own dear people. They could not be charged with living completely ungodly lives, yet they made their mistakes. The Lord give us each much grace to live godly lives to the glory of Christ. How we need to be kept on our watch tower, and to plead and wrestle with the Lord, who, we read, can keep us from falling. "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, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

“Now begin the heavenly theme;  
Sing aloud in Jesus’ name;  
Ye who His salvation prove,  
Triumph in redeeming love.

“Mourning souls, dry up your tears;  
Banish all your guilty fears;  
See your guilt and curse remove,  
Cancelled by redeeming love.

“Welcome all by sin oppressed,  
Welcome to His sacred rest;  
Nothing brought Him from above,  
Nothing but redeeming love.

“Hither, then, your music bring;  
Strike aloud each cheerful string;  
Join, ye saints, the hosts above;  
Join to praise redeeming love.” (H. 90)

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### CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

*Sermon preached by Jesse Delves at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham on  
Lord’s day morning, December 2nd, 1973*

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**Text:** “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and 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).

I have had much conflict of mind about reading these words because of my own felt lack experimentally of what is here involved; but it is rather noticeable here in the text that the apostle is personal *all the way through*. He refers to his own case, not that of other people, what *they* have known or *not* known or whether they have had such an experience as this or no. Here we have his *own* experience, and we have no reason to question its blessed reality. The apostle refers simply and beautifully to what the gospel has done for him in his *own* soul.

What the apostle really means here is expressed in some other epistles of his, although in different language. If we take the Epistle to the Philippians we have an exposition of this verse and what it really means. The apostle says there that he counted his own righteousness as dung and dross, and was willing to part with all for Christ’s sake, to be found in Him. That is what *this* verse really means, although here it is not a prayer that he might be found in Him, but is rather describing a sacred experience of it and what is involved.

Again, in the Epistle to the Romans the apostle speaks of being “**dead with Christ**,” and says that if we be dead *with* Him, we shall also

“**live with Him**” (see Rom. 6. 8); and more particularly in the Epistle to the Galatians, the apostle tells us what it is to be crucified with Christ. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6. 14).

We may realise then that the Apostle Paul affirmed some things of himself that we may not feel exactly able to say of ourselves. But I venture to say this much, to any one of the Lord’s dear people; if the Lord shall be pleased to come and bless *you* in your soul, with some sweet view of Him as crucified for you, then that would in the sense intended, crucify you with Him. That is to say it would bring you in your own feelings to glory in nought but Calvary’s cross. It would be a good thing, taking a general view of present-day preaching, if there was more of Calvary in the preaching than alas there often is. I do not mean so much in our own circle as in a general sense; in fact in some religious circles I fear you would hardly know there was such a place as Calvary.

Now, as I may be helped, I will come to the text. I confess that I have tried to get away from it, but it has been on my mind for several days, so here I am, dependent upon the Lord’s merciful help. What does the Apostle Paul *really* mean by being crucified with Christ? There is, I believe, a being crucified with Christ with respect to every member of His body as they stand in a mystical union with Him. A mystical union subsists between Christ and His people, between the Head and the body, which nothing can separate. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, refers to the church as being the *body of Christ*, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1. 23). As that is blessedly true, dear friends, it must mean that all that the dear Saviour went through in His substitution, He went through on His people’s behalf as united to Him in an indissoluble bond, a union that is referred to in John 17. 23: “I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” There is no union so sweet and blessed as this. This is a union that the hymnwriter felt something of when he said,

“Hail, sacred union, firm and strong!  
How great the grace! how sweet the song!  
That worms of earth should ever be  
One with incarnate Deity!” (H. 405)

It is a *blessed* union, a union that death and hell can never sever. In this sense, viewed as His body with Christ as Head over all, they were there with Him and were crucified with Him. It is, I know, an amazing thought; it confounds us; but this is a union that has subsisted from all eternity. This is the union of the *church with Christ*.

Being crucified with Christ is not necessarily precisely limited to Christ being nailed to the cross for His people, but incorporates the

whole of His sufferings *for* His people. The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ were not for Himself, but for the sake of His chosen people that were being in this union crucified with Him. It has been so designed by the Lord that where this mystical union *is real*, there will be in experience some fellowship with Him in His sufferings. The sufferings of Christ will not be a mere theory, or something recorded in the Scriptures; they will enter into the marrow and spiritual experience of the Lord's living people more or less.

This fellowship with Christ here particularly is a fellowship with Him *in His sufferings*, and is what the apostle refers to in the Philippians: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the **fellowship** of His sufferings" (Phil. 3. 10). How very sacred is this fellowship. Here are divine realities – *realities* – not mere theories, but realities in the soul of a believer in the Lamb of God. We have to confess that we do not know really very much about this fellowship. This is fellowship with Christ in His sufferings on account of the sins of His people which He *bore away*; and this fellowship experimentally is grief for sin, *grief for grieving Him*, weeping, mourning over our own load of guilt, and realising that in this sense every sin was *like a nail* that fastened Him to the cursed tree.

It may be that some of the Lord's people here now have known something of this fellowship with a suffering Christ in their *own bodily* sufferings. Undoubtedly many of the noble martyrs did who laid down their lives for Christ's sake, as they were burnt at the stake in the days of Queen Mary. They probably had, and I believe they did have, fellowship with a suffering Christ in their *own* sufferings. This is very, very sacred. There is not likely to be very much fellowship without *some* suffering ourselves, although this may not be in bodily pain or suffering, but in suffering *for sin*, grieving for *grieving Him*.

There is another feature of being crucified with Christ, and that is in receiving in our soul's experience the *blessings* that flow to us *through* His sufferings and death. If there had been no *atonement* on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ, there could have been no deliverance from the curse of the law. By Christ being made a curse under the law, His dear people are delivered *from* the curse of the law, a profoundly blessed truth. Moreover the blessing of Abraham is come upon the Gentiles as here in the chapter that we have been reading: "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: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3. 13, 14).

We shall never fully know here the supreme and inexpressible value of Calvary, and the cross of Christ. The apostle could well say this: "I am crucified with Christ." "I count all things but loss for the excellency



of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3. 8). I glory in nought beside the cross of Christ, and this, he affirms, has crucified the world to me and I to the world. I die with Him; I live through Him; this is to be crucified with Christ.

So, dear friends, although you and I may feel to come very, very short here in our own feelings and experience, yet I am persuaded that there are some of you here who have known this sacred moment in your spiritual experience when the sweet love of Christ has been shed abroad in your heart. This has crucified you with Him, so that He has become the Chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely in your soul's experience. "I am crucified with Christ."

Before passing on, I may go as far as this: to say that, unless we *are* crucified with Christ, whatever we may profess to be and know in a religious sphere, we shall come short at last and be weighed in the balances and be found wanting; and very probably many of the Lord's waiting ones, and possibly some of our younger friends, may have to say, "What you have been speaking about leaves me altogether behind as I feel." Even so, unless we are crucified with Christ we shall come short at last. I hope this is a point of exercise; yet this may be true of you in the purposes of a covenant God, though as yet you may not have felt the sacred, sweet experience. It may be true of you notwithstanding, though not to your own satisfaction. But it must be true of every one of the redeemed family of God. If we take it collectively like this, it incorporates the whole of the elect of God, every one of them. We have here Paul's experience; but to waiting ones I would say encouragingly that if you are exercised about these matters (and I believe some of you are), the day will come when your bonds will break and you will be favoured with that sight of Him by faith which you have possibly not had before. Then you will be feelingly crucified with Him, that is to say you will feel *your own* interest in what is involved in His blessed substitution.

There are several things involved here, and one of them is a complete deliverance from the claims of the law. The Apostle Paul writing in his Epistle to the Romans says of those believing Romans, "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7. 4). These favoured people then are delivered from the law that condemns and curses them. They are delivered from it. The apostle affirms this: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3. 13). The curse of the law is everlasting ruin, perdition, punishment, death, hell. It is an awful curse, but this enhances the majesty and glory of the blessed gospel which delivers us from it so that the hymnwriter could say,

“The terrors of law and of God  
With me can have nothing to do;  
My Saviour’s obedience and blood  
Hide all my transgressions from view.” (H. 340)

If you should feel *that* in your own soul, then you will know what it is to be crucified with Christ, for He will rise in the view of faith as the *glory of heaven*, the Lamb slain, the Mediator, the glorious Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

“I am crucified with Christ.” This is all very personal is it not? “I” each time, but not one too many, and they are all so beautifully linked up together. If the first “I” is really true, as it was with the Apostle Paul, every following “I” will also be as blessedly true. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live” – as though the apostle would say, I am not dead either as to my body or my soul.

What kind of life is this then, that one can be the subject of who is crucified with Christ? It is the *life of the soul*. The apostle does not refer so much to the *body*, it is the life of the soul within the body. “Nevertheless I live.” I live – though I am crucified with Christ, yet I live. This is undoubtedly the life of Christ in us. “Christ in **you**, the hope of glory” (Col. 1. 27). It was true of the apostle that as far as his body was concerned he *was* a living man, but here he refers more particularly to the life of Christ *in his soul*. “Nevertheless I live.” That is to say, notwithstanding what I have already stated, although I have said I am crucified with Christ, “nevertheless I live.” What kind of life is it? It is that life of faith on the Son of God, “who loved me, and **gave Himself for me**.” The apostle writing to these Galatians seems to come to a place where there might be no one else living in the world but himself. He loses sight of everything but his blessed, glorious Saviour “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“Nevertheless I live.” I would take this opportunity to apply this to the spiritual life and soul-exercise of a believer. First of all, it is a life of conflict, more or less. Was not this true of the Apostle Paul? I am sure it was. If we go over to Romans 7 we shall see that the apostle knew something about this conflict. There were two powers working within him. Said he, “The good that I would I do not”; “I am carnal, sold under sin” (Rom. 7. 19, 14). He *would* be very different from what he felt himself to be. “Nevertheless I live.” It is more or less a life of conflict, not often smooth and easy. No! In fact the conflict brought the apostle to such a pass as to say, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (verse 24).

I wonder if this conflict has ever brought any of you to feel this wretchedness. I believe it has with some of you; you have had to say in your measure, “O wretched man that I am!” The powers of evil rise, sin rises, unbelief rises, the devil straddles across the path, everything is

against you; you feel like Jacob who said, “**All** these things are against me” (Gen. 42. 36). Here is a conflict, then, against these opposing powers that rise up; but the Lord’s dear people are exhorted to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold of eternal life, to take the *shield* of faith, and to enter into this battle against those opposing powers. The apostle refers also to the *ultimate* victory – “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15. 57).

“Nevertheless I live.” But this is not only a life of conflict; it is a life of *faith*, that is of *believing* in Him, putting your *trust* in Him. This faith is that confidence in your heart, as the Lord exhorted in the gospel by John: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14. 1). This faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a blessed life; it centres *not* in our own merit, but the merit and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is a life of *hope*. The Lord’s people live in hope here, not *as yet* realising, but there will be full realisation one day. Here it is a good hope through grace; it is in the heart of one who is thus crucified with Christ; it is a good hope through grace in His merit and death. You are crucified with Him, therefore your faith and your hope centre in Him, and you can say,

“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.” (H. 1106)

“Nevertheless I live.” I live then in *faith*; I live in *hope*. But there is something more, and this is a *love* to Him in your soul. Perhaps you say, I wish I could feel it. So do I; but even so, there it is, and this grace cannot be separated. Where there is faith acting on the Lamb once slain, where there is hope built on His precious blood and righteousness, then at times at least there will be a love to Him. O what a sweet love it is! One has said,

“Jesus, I love Thy charming name;  
’Tis music in my ear.” (H. 138)

It is a sweet love, especially when you feel, as some of you have done, the sweetness of *pardoning* love, and have felt your sins to have been *washed away*. Then you do, as enabled, cast yourself on Him and count all else but dung and dross, as compared with the *glory* of His cross. Well, my words are poor at best.

“Living tongues are dumb at best;  
We must die to speak of Christ.” (H. 177)

I would put this point to myself and to you; it may be wholesome to search our hearts and see how far we may feel we can come in this. The

Apostle Paul could say it *of himself*. May the Lord help us, may the Lord favour His waiting children, may that time of love come,

“When we shall clearly see,  
Not only that He shed His blood,  
But each shall say, ‘*For me.*’” (H. 330)

That, more than anything else will *crucify you with Him*. Amen.

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## BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

*By William Huntington (1745-1818)*

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“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5. 3).

The Saviour carefully describes the case and inward state of those gracious souls upon whom His blessings are pronounced. No random arrows are discharged from His bow, nor is any uncertain artillery taken from His quiver, nor discharged by His valiant men of Israel. For though they fight, they never beat the air. He first discovers the case, and then pours in the oil.

True spiritual poverty stands in a person’s being made sensible, under the convincing, convicting operations of the Holy Spirit of power, that he is destitute of all spiritual riches. He has no righteousness to appear in before God, but is miserable and entirely naked, exposed to wrath and shame and everlasting contempt, unless divine mercy intervene. He owes five hundred pence, and has nothing to pay with. He owes obedience to the law, but has neither heart to it nor ability for it. He feels the pinch of spiritual famine; he is in want, husks cannot satisfy him and the Bread of Life is not as yet broken to him; he feels the need of it, and hears of it, which sharpens his appetite after it. “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” (Luke 15. 17). Nor has he got the hand of faith to feed himself with; therefore he cannot receive Christ, he cannot mix faith with the Word, he cannot apply a promise, and faith not being strong enough to attend his prayers, he can bring no comfort home. He faints, because he cannot believe.

Such a poor soul has no certain dwelling-place. He can place no confidence in the flesh, because of the plague of his heart; nor find any rest in his bones, because of his sin; nor can he see his soul sheltered in the cleft of the Rock; he is exposed to the tempest without a covert, and to the storm without a hiding-place.

No beggar ever so ragged, so miserable, so destitute, so deplorable at the brass knocker, as such a soul at mercy’s door. He is poor and

wretched, miserable, blind and naked, and he knows it. And what is still worse, he feels himself liable to eternal imprisonment. This is the poor and needy man who waits at Wisdom's gates and watches every motion at the posts of her doors. He hears that Wisdom hath killed her beasts and mingled her wine, and he pays all possible attention to her maidens to see if his case is touched, his character described, or his name included when they bid the guests (see Prov. 9. 2-6).

This is the poor man that useth entreaties; he is not too proud to beg, though he is unable to dig. Nor is he above prayer; many a heavy sigh, many a silent groan, many a longing wish, many a bitter cry, many a humble confession, is poured forth in the midst of all the unutterable shame and blushing.

These are the poor in spirit. And as it is with poor beggars, so it is with such. They are despised, kicked and cuffed by all; devils, sinners and hypocrites are always sure to smite such. Nevertheless, these are the elect that cry day and night, and put their mouth in the dust when they sue for a hope in God's mercy.

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." To be blessed is to have one's neck delivered from the legal yoke, and one's soul redeemed and delivered from the terrible sentence of the law. The blessing and the curse never were put upon one and the same mountain, nor upon one and the same soul at one and the same time. The sinner must come from Sinai before he can get the blessing at Zion.

2. It is by faith that he comes from the ministration of death to the promise of life, or passes, as Christ saith, from death unto life, so as to come no more into condemnation. Such a believing soul is blessed with faithful Abraham, who obtained his blessing by faith when he saw the Saviour's day on Mount Moriah. Such an one receives the promise of the Spirit through faith; the Spirit of life and the Word of life come both together. The Word comes with power, in the Holy Ghost and much assurance, and immediately union with the living Vine and fellowship with the living God take place. Such have got the blessing in the best sense, and in every sense, which is life for evermore.

3. The whole cluster of blessings that attend the blessing of life now follow and flow in in all their sweetness. A divine power sensibly guards and keeps the soul; the light of a propitious Father shines in the face of Jesus without a cloud or a frown. This draws us nigh and encourages to a holy freedom and familiarity; while pardoning, humbling, comforting grace heals the wounds, closes the breaches, and polishes out all the scars and wrinkles made by the fiery law, sin and Satan; while the countenance of God shines upon the heart and way, when reconciliation, friendship and peace flow like a river, and drive infidelity, devil and misery all before them. This is Jehovah's blessing: "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” (Num. 6. 24-26). “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

“For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Poverty of spirit goes before to empty us of self, to sap the empire of sin and Satan, to prepare the way and make room. The kingdom follows after, and is set up and established on the ruins of the former. The poor soul comes out of the stronghold of Satan before he is crowned with grace. For, as the wise man says: “Out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor” (Eccles. 4. 14). Even the crowned head must become poor in spirit if he be saved, or poor and wretched to all eternity if he be lost. Spiritual poverty humbles the sinner’s proud spirit, dissolves his stubbornness, and reduces him to a lowly mind and childlike disposition, which is needful, for Christ declares that, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein” (Mark 10. 15).

1. The kingdom of heaven signifies, first, the gospel with all its blessings, promises and power. Hence it is called the gospel of the kingdom, and preaching it is called preaching the kingdom of God. So a person who is blessed with a savoury, unctuous experience of the power of the gospel, and who is enlightened into the mysteries of it, is called a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven (see Matt. 13. 52).

2. The kingdom of heaven signifies the empire of grace in the saints of God, where Satan is dethroned and cast out, and a superior power put forth and displayed. This, Christ says, is the kingdom of heaven within us; that as sin has reigned unto death by Adam’s fall, so grace should reign unto life through the righteousness of Christ (see Rom. 5. 21).

The kingdom within stands not in word, which any fool may prate, nor in particular meats and drinks which any pharisee may use, nor in meat and drink which a papist may refuse, but in a divine power which none but God’s elect know. It stands, first, in justification; secondly, in reconciliation and friendship; thirdly, in regeneration; fourthly, in the unutterable happiness and holy triumphs of the soul under the Saviour’s sceptre; and fifthly, in the habitual and perpetual indwelling and abiding of the Holy Ghost. “The kingdom of God is ... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14. 17).

But sometimes the kingdom of heaven means ultimate glory, which was prepared for the elect from the foundation of the world, and which it is God’s good pleasure to give us, and into which the Saviour will one day introduce us. Whether, therefore, the kingdom of heaven means the gospel, the mysteries of the kingdom, or whether it means grace, or whether it means glory, the poor in spirit are heirs of it. To them it is given to know the mysteries, and to them God will give grace and glory. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

## THE POOR PILGRIM LED SAFELY BY GOD

*By William Gurnall of Lavenham (1616-1679)*

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We do not wonder to see a man of strong constitution, that eats his bread heartily and sleeps soundly, live; but for a crazy body, full of pains and infirmities, to be so patched and shored up by the physician's art that he stands to old age, this begets some wonder in the beholders. It may be thou art a poor, trembling soul, thy faith is weak, and thy assaults from Satan strong; thy corruptions stirring and active, and thy mortifying strength little; so that, in thy opinion, they rather gain ground on thy grace than give ground for it. Ever and anon thou art ready to think thou shalt be cast a wreck on the devil's shore; and yet to this day thy grace lives, though full of leaks. Now, is it not worth the stepping aside to see this strange sight? A broken ship, with masts and hull rent and torn, thus towed along by almighty power through an angry sea and armadas of sins and devils, safely into his harbour? To see a poor taper or rush candle in the face of the boisterous wind, and not blown out? In a word, to see a weak stripling of grace held up in God's arms till he defeats the devil? This God is doing in upholding thee; thou art one of those babes out of whose mouth God is perfecting His praise, by ordaining such strength for thee, that thou, a babe in grace, shalt yet foil a giant in wrath and power.

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## REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

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Mark Cross,  
East Sussex  
February 1909

My dear Cousin,

I received your good letter a few days ago, and am feeling I should like to return a few lines to you. You commenced your last letter on a spot of experience that is rather sacred to me; a part of my experience, I mean, that, when I hear it traced out, generally produces in me some solemn remembrance, with some feeling of reverence of God upon my spirit, of the time when the Lord met me on my way home from Rotherfield, after having left the public house, December 1st, 1861; and of the solemn way in which I was arrested, when I see so clearly that living and dying as I then was going on, hell would have been my everlasting portion. But after I recovered myself a little from the solemn sight of my sinnership, I seemed to buoy up myself with the thought that I could by a thorough amendment of life mend matters and bring about peace and reconciliation. But after about thirteen months' hard work in trying to do so, I felt the Lord tore away all that I had been building up,

and I felt brought to the judgment bar before an angry God, and to stand before Him a guilty, undone man, justly deserving hell, and as you said, so I said "Amen" to my own condemnation. I had not the least hope, but felt that my everlasting doom was fixed for ever.

O what a solemn place to stand in, to have nothing to look forward to but to be eternally lost! And yet even under that feeling, I felt a love to the ways of God, and that I could not return into the world with all its enticements and pleasures, and felt I would rather walk in His ways while here, though I should be lost at last. But O blessed be His name, the time came when He gave me to feel and know that He had not brought me into that state of condemnation to send me to eternal perdition, but to condemn me for trusting in my own works for salvation, and to tear from me that fig-leaf dress of self-righteousness which was so natural to me. And in time I was brought to bless His name for thus dealing with me, and as the apostle says, the way I thought to be unto life I found to be unto death (see Rom. 7. 10).

After about a fortnight, I went to hear that dear man of blessed memory, Mr. Thomas Russell, whom I had been accustomed to hear for some time. I had felt some encouragement under his ministry, and also under the late Mr. John Grace, when he came one evening to Rotherfield in the year 1862. But the time when I found a deliverance and lost the burden of my sin was in the beginning of 1863. Mr. Russell took for his text Isaiah 27. 12: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." He was led to take up my case from the beginning, and traced it along much better than I could possibly have told him. He told me the Lord's intention was to beat me off from trusting in myself, and bring me to trust for salvation alone in Him and His grace.

What a blessed memorial day was that! I went home blessing His holy name, and for somewhere about three months I enjoyed the sweetness of His mercy and love to me. O the sweetness that I enjoyed and felt in hearing the gospel for about three months! I used to awake early on Sunday morning and long for the time to roll away to go. It was indeed my meat and my drink. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them," and they were indeed "the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15. 16). I also felt sweet meditation in the week at my work, and sweetness in reading God's Word and other good writings of godly men. All kinds of sin for the time being seemed to have lost all power over me, and I had not the least idea of their resurrection any more. Truly God's grace and fear in exercise in the heart will subdue the power of sin.

But how greatly I have proved that in this I was terribly mistaken; for after about three months of this comfortable walking, I felt the sweetness of that divine love withdrawn, and the fountain of that great



deep of the working of sin and temptation to spring up again; and I became a very distressed man again, and most greatly feared whether I was deceived after all. The sweetness in hearing the gospel was withdrawn, and I was a poor, mourning creature again. But after a time the Lord was pleased to smile again, and I could say, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name" (Psa. 103. 1). How many years have passed since then, and many mercies I have been the subject of, and many sins also, and many backslidings of heart I have been guilty of; and the Lord's sparing mercy has followed me all these years.

Wishing you both every mercy and every favour the Lord hath to bestow,

Your affectionate cousin,

Thomas Pollington

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## THE FIERY AND THE CLOUDY PILLAR

*By Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)*

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"And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence" (Isa. 4. 5).

There is an allusion here to the cloudy pillar which rested upon the tabernacle. It was as a cloud by day, but as a pillar of fire by night. The reason of this is evident. By day, the cloud and the smoke were sufficiently visible; but not so in the night season. In the night, therefore, it was a pillar of fire, that the presence of the Lord might be distinctly seen. Spiritually viewed, this night may signify dark seasons in the soul; for there is night as well as day in the experience of God's saints. Now when they are in these dark seasons, they want clearer and brighter manifestations of the Lord's presence than when they are walking in the light of day. Thus this "shining of a flaming fire by night" may represent the shining in of the Lord's clearer, fuller, and more manifested presence, the livelier and more powerful application of His word to the heart; the brighter evidences and clearer marks that He gives of His favour, which, compared with the cloud, are as the shining of a flaming fire. It is the same presence of God, and the same glory, as was the case with the cloudy pillar; but that presence and that glory are seen in a more conspicuous manner as giving light in seasons of darkness.

The shining of a flaming fire by night may also represent the shining light of the Word of truth which is spoken of as "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Pet. 1. 19). How often when the mind is dark, and

evidences obscured, there is little else seen but the clear shining of the Word of truth to which the soul turns its eyes as its only guiding light. "Thy Word," says David, "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119. 105). We often get into spots where we have to look out of ourselves to the clear shining of truth in the Word of God; for there is darkness everywhere else; and to that light we have to look and wait, and sometimes at a great distance and for a long season, until that Word comes near and begins to shine into the heart. But with that shining light, as it draws near and gives forth its comforting rays and beams, comes in due time the presence and glory of God. So to fix our heart upon the word of promise, and wait for its fulfilment, is to walk by faith and not by sight. Thus to Abraham the word of promise was by day a cloud; but when "an horror of great darkness fell upon him" (Gen. 15. 12), the same word of promise, as the word of a covenant God, was as a burning lamp that passed between the pieces of the offered sacrifices (see verse 17).

The glory of the Lord is His presence in the soul, for that is represented by the cloud, as it was when His glory filled the house of God, which Solomon built. Now this glory of the Lord in the cloud and smoke by day, and in the shining of a flaming fire by night, is to be a defence, both upon every dwelling place of mount Zion and upon her assemblies. A defence against what? Chiefly against four things.

1. First, it is a defence against *error*. No person can embrace error who knows anything of the presence and power of God in his soul, or has ever seen anything of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; for all error is opposed not only to God's truth, as revealed in the Word, but to God's presence, as revealed in the heart. And this is true both as regards individuals and churches. God will never sanction error as held by either. He will never bless with His manifested presence any erroneous man, be he minister or private individual, for He never honours or blesses anything but His own truth, and those only who believe and hold it. "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. 2. 30). This is a very important point, for you will often hear erroneous men speak as if they knew spiritual things by divine teaching and by divine testimony, and will often boast confidently of their comforts and enjoyments, as if they had got their views from God Himself, though they turn the truth of God into a lie. But be not deceived by these men or their false pretensions. They have only kindled a fire to compass themselves about with sparks, that they may walk in the light of their fire, and in the sparks which they have kindled. The Spirit of truth guides into all truth, and cannot and will not countenance or bless error. The Lord's own prayer to His heavenly Father for His disciples was, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth" (John 17. 17). The soul never was divinely sanctified by a lie, nor the heart truly comforted by error.

2. But this glory will also be a defence against all *evil*; for nothing makes sin so to be seen and abhorred as sin as the presence of the Lord. He is known and felt at such moments to be infinitely pure and holy, and a holy God must needs hate sin. If, then, His presence be felt in the soul as a cloud in which He manifests His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, it will be a defence against all the sins in which you might be entangled, when there is no such sensible presence to make you revere and adore His great and glorious Majesty.

3. It is, therefore, also a defence against all *temptations*, which would lead us into anything contrary to God and godliness.

4. And it will be a defence too against all *enemies*. You may have many enemies, both without and within; but all their attempts to injure you will be unsuccessful if you have the cloud of the Lord's presence in your soul, and His glory in your midst. No enemy can hurt you if the Lord be your defence. He will watch very jealously over what He Himself has communicated by His Spirit and grace to your heart, and His presence will be your best defence against every foe and against every fear.

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## KINDLY ENCOURAGEMENT

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Welwyn  
Hertfordshire  
April 4th, 1938

*Miss H. Goldsmith*

My very dear friend,

I feel I must try and answer your kind letter of last week, but I feel very unfit to do so. There is much that one ought to say to you. I can enter into the experience of waiting for blessings that do not seem to come, but this is not to say they will not come. We look for some evidence that these blessings will come, and even this may appear to fail. But, as you speak in your letter, there are times when our feelings and exercises are outlined for us, encouraging us to believe that our pathway may after all be a right one. Your experience of such things quickly passing away as the morning dew does not alter the truth of it. If you were walking in a path naturally, and it was hid in darkness, and you knew that certain things would prove that the path was a proper one, one ray of light giving you a sight of those things would prove you were right. It is true that if darkness gave place to daylight you would feel more comfortable about it, but it would be in a degree of comfort; it would not make the path any more right than it was before.

It is so with a spiritual pathway. You get these glimpses by the way, and when you get the shining of the countenance of the Lord in your

heart, it will not make the path more right than it is now, but you would have more comfort and assurance in it. I do not say this to settle you down, but to encourage you to believe that what you walk in is of the Lord, and He will indeed grant the desire of your heart. I know you will say you have not a desire, but I know you have. How otherwise can you explain your prayer to the Lord to possess a real desire? It is because you want to possess the experience of grace. This is a desire.

In a fitness for Christ, there is a poverty in the heart which is made so complete that a person feels they do not possess anything. I cannot help feeling that many of the Lord's dealings with you are designed to take everything away from you, so that you feel at last you have not the least ground to believe that God has done anything for you. Your experience in the future may be of such a kind that one day you may say to me, "Please do not speak to me of these things, nor write to me, because I feel the longer I go on, the more I am deceiving you." It may seem to you as if the door is closed against you in prayer, in the ministry, in your private reading. You may envy every soul that can speak of the love and grace of God toward them, and you may mourn in secret because the love of God does not flow in its freeness for you. The sharp ups and downs of Christian experience may seem to be things unknown to you, and you will feel no one understands just where you are, or what you feel. This is the way that the Lord leads some of His people to know Himself. I could wish and pray that it might be another path appointed for you, and perhaps it may yet prove so, but if it be as I have said, it will be a right way.

Believe me, my dear friend, I would not add one atom to the burden of your case, but yours is a case where there is a weakness of faith. Do please understand what I mean, Helen. The faith is there, and it is of God, but in His sovereign wisdom, He withholds the full power of it. This is very plain to me in your letters, because you would walk by sight if you could. We all would. You often speak of wanting signs and evidences, and experiences that you can look at, and if you could only see the life and power of God in your feelings, you would build all your hope and comfort on what you could see. The Lord will not let you do it. What He intends to give is a pouring into your heart of His mercy and love, regardless of what you may be able to see beforehand of His work. This is why you do not get the blessings you seek. You want these evidences. The Lord intends you shall have Himself, and with Him you will possess all needed blessings. The day will come when He will visit your heart, and without any reason because of your experience, but for His mercy's sake. I do not say this to disparage your experience – far from it – but rather to try and explain your path to you. If it should try

and hurt you, please do not hide it in your heart. Write or speak to me. I know what I mean, but am afraid I cannot make it very plain in writing. You know I feel too much toward you willingly or knowingly to hurt you.

My earnest prayer and desire is for the best of the blessings of God to be your portion in your heart's experience.

I am quite willing to meet you in London on Friday. I could say much as to how you regard the possible fruitfulness or barrenness of going to the house of God.

Believe me to be

Your very affectionate pastor,

W. Haddow

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### A LONG-SUFFERING GOD

*Extract from a letter by John Newton (1725-1807)*

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How wonderful is the patience of God towards sinful men! In Him they live, and move, and have their being; and if He were to withdraw His support for a single moment, they must perish. He maintains their lives, guards their persons, supplies their wants, while they employ the powers and faculties they receive from Him in a settled course of opposition to His will. They trample upon His laws, affront His government, and despise His grace; yet still He spares. To silence all His adversaries in a moment, would require no extraordinary exertion of His power; but His forbearance towards them manifests His glory, and gives us cause to say, "Who is a God like unto Thee?" (Mic. 7. 18).

Sometimes, however, there are striking instances of His displeasure against sin. When such events take place, immediately upon a public and premeditated contempt offered to Him that sitteth in the heavens, I own they remind me of the danger of standing, if I may so speak, in the Lord's way: for though His long-suffering is astonishing, and many dare Him to His face daily, with seeming impunity, yet He sometimes strikes an awful and unexpected blow, and gives an illustration of that solemn word, "Who ever hardened himself against the Lord and prospered?" (see Job 9. 4). But who am I, to make this observation? I ought to do it with the deepest humiliation, remembering that I once stood (according to my years and ability) in the foremost rank of His avowed opposers; and with a determined and unwearied enmity, renounced, defied and blasphemed Him. "But He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy" (see Rom. 9. 15), and therefore I was spared, and reserved to speak of His goodness.

Josephus, when speaking of the death of Herod Agrippa I, ascribes it to a natural cause, and says, he was seized with excruciating pains in his bowels. But Luke informs us of the *true* cause: an angel of the Lord smote him (see Acts 12. 20-23). Had we a modern history written by an inspired pen, we should probably often be reminded of such an interposition where we are not ordinarily aware of it. For though the springs of actions and events are concealed from us for the most part, and vain men carry on their schemes with confidence, as though the Lord had forsaken the earth; yet they are under His eye and control; and faith, in some measure instructed by the specimens of His government recorded in the Scripture, can trace and admire His hand, and can see how He takes the wise in their own craftiness, stains the pride of human glory (see 1 Cor. 3. 19), and that when sinners speak proudly, He is above them, and makes everything bend or break before Him.

While we lament the growth and pernicious effects of infidelity, and see how “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3. 13), what gratitude should fill our hearts to Him, who has been pleased to call us out of the horrid darkness in which multitudes are bewildered and lost, into the glorious light of His gospel! Faint are our warmest conceptions of this mercy. In order to understand it fully, we should need to have a full and adequate sense of the evil from which we are delivered; the glory to which we are called; and especially of the astonishing means to which we owe our life and hope, the humiliation, sufferings and death of the Son of God. But our views of these points, while in our present state, are and must be exceedingly weak and disproportionate. We know them but in part, we see them by *reflection*, rather the images than the things themselves; and though they are faithfully represented in the mirror of God’s Word, to us they appear indistinct, because we see them through a gross medium of ignorance and unbelief.

Hereafter every veil shall be removed; we shall know, in another manner than we do now, the unspeakable evil of sin, and the unsupportable dreadfulness of God’s displeasure against it, when we see the world in flames, and hear the final sentence denounced upon the ungodly. We shall have far other thoughts of Jesus when we see Him as He is; and shall then be able to make a more affecting estimate of the love which moved Him to be made a substitute and a curse for us; and we shall then know what great things God has prepared for them that love Him. Then with transport we shall adopt the Queen of Sheba’s language. “It was a true report we heard in yonder dark world; but behold the half, the thousandth part, was not told us!” (see 2 Chron. 9. 5, 6). In the mean time, may such conceptions as we are enabled to form of these great truths, fill our hearts, and be mingled with all our thoughts and all our concerns; may the Lord, by faith, give us an abiding evidence

of the reality and importance of the things which cannot yet be seen. So shall we be enabled to live above the world while we are in it, uninfluenced either by its blandishments [flatterings] or its frowns, and, with a noble simplicity and singularity, avow and maintain the cause of God in truth, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. He whom we serve is able to support and protect us.

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## HOLINESS, THE LIVERY OF THE SAINTS

*By Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

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Consider that holiness is *the very ear-mark, the very livery and badge of Christ's servants and subjects*: "For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour" (Isa. 63. 8), and they are called "the people of Thy holiness" (verse 18). God's people are too holy to lie; they will not lie for His glory, nor for their own worldly good (see Job. 13. 7; Rom. 3. 7, 8; Rev. 14. 5). They will rather die than lie, with that brave woman that Jerome writes of, who being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved rather to die than lie.

Neither the merry lie, nor the jesting lie, nor the officious lie [trying to help others], nor the pernicious lie, will down with those that are the people of God's holiness, or that are His holy people. Saith God, I have been at so much cost and charge about them, I have carried it so kindly, so bountifully, so sweetly, so favourably, so nobly to them; I have been such an all-sufficient Saviour, such a mighty Preserver, and such a glorious Deliverer of them, that certainly they will not lie, they will not deceive My expectation, they will not deny Me, they will not deal disloyally nor unworthily by Me. They are of Augustine's opinion, who hath long since told us, that we must not tell so much as an officious lie, though it were to save all the world.

So Jeremiah 2. 3: "Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of His increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD." Holiness to the Lord is the mark that God sets upon all His precious ones: "Know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself" (Psa. 4. 3). God hath wonderfully, gloriously, marvellously, yea, miraculously set apart the pious, the holy, the merciful, the godly man, the gracious saint, by some mark of distinction for Himself, that is, for His own honour, and glory, and service, and delight. Look, as Rahab's house was known by a red thread (see Josh. 2), and the Ephraimites by their lisping (see Judg. 12); and Jehu by his driving (see 2 Kings 9), so real Christians are known by their holiness.

Holiness is the livery of King Jesus and also of His followers, by which all His subjects and servants are known and differenced from all other persons in the world. And in the primitive times, a Christian was known from another man only by the holiness of his conversation, as Tertullian witnesses. Look, as our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of holiness raising Him up from the dead, was declared to be the Son of God (see Rom. 1. 4), so it is the spirit of holiness, it is principles of holiness, it is the life and practice of holiness, that declares us to be the sons of God. Holiness is that golden character by which God differences and distinguisheth His people from all others in the world. Look, as the worshippers of the beast are known by the mark of the beast that is upon them, so the worshippers of Christ, the people of Christ, are known by that mark of holiness that Christ hath set upon them.

This title, this compellation, "saints," is given fourscore times to the people of God in Scriptures, as if God took a greater delight to have His children known by this badge and livery than by any other. As for such that have the name of *saints* upon them, but nothing of the nature of a saint in them; that have a name to be holy, and yet are unholy; that have a name to be gracious, and yet are graceless; that have a name to live, and yet are dead; these God will in that day unmask, when He shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. An unholy saint is a white devil; he is a monster among men. Christ sweat, and prayed, and died, and was raised to make sinners saints, to make the rebellious religious, and the licentious conscientious. All He did and suffered was to stamp the seal and impress of holiness upon them. And therefore, as ever you would be owned and honoured by Christ another day, look that the Holy Spirit sets the seal of holiness upon you. If the impress of holiness be upon you in the day that the Lord makes up His jewels, He will declare you to be His before all the world. He will say, These are My sheep, these are My sons. I know them by that mark of holiness that I find upon them.

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### THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

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It has been represented to us by several friends that some observations on the subject of the church of God might be acceptable and profitable matter for our readers. The consideration of so vast and highly important a subject, and the fact that there are available many excellent and exhaustive treatises thereon, produced a reluctance to attempt to handle it in our pages, lest we should confuse, rather than edify, the minds of our readers. However, we trust that the thoughts we purpose to present in this and future issues of the magazine, may be



owned of the Lord to produce among us a greater appreciation of the importance, solemnity, beauty, glory and end of the church; and that her divine Head – the dear, only-begotten Son of the Father in truth and love – may therein be honoured; and His humble followers, His favoured members, be refreshed, enlarged, humbled and blessed indeed. If thus the “unity of the Spirit” may be preserved in peace, and without any forfeiture of truth “that which is lame may rather be healed than turned out of the way” (see Heb. 12. 13), we shall deem ourselves highly overpaid for any labour. We do not intend an elaborate treatment of the great theme, but aim at setting out more generally the origin, constitution, and end of the church of the living God; with some thoughts upon an individual gospel church, its order, use and end. All unhallowed and curious speculation we desire ever to eschew, but with the holy Word of God as our guide, and (we trust) with the Holy Ghost as our Teacher, we propose a reverent, humble inquiry into this subject.

### THE CHURCH OF GOD

1. *Its origin.* The original cause and institution of the church is God Himself. It is the church of the living God, not by a necessity, but by His own purpose and grace. Holy Scripture declares that “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever” (Deut. 29. 29). Except for the truth of this “revelation” it would be impossible, not to say improper, to consider the Being of God, His will, or His works. Incomprehensible as He ever must be to a finite creature, therefore comprehended by none but Himself, it has pleased the eternal Jehovah to discover Himself as to His character, His will, and in a degree as to His being, by means of His holy Word.

The Being of God is first: a consideration whereof creates awe in the mind of a puny creature, especially a sinful one whose limitations are not those of creature-ship merely but of depravity. Joseph Hart says truly,

“To comprehend the great THREE-ONE  
Is more than highest angels can.” (H. 34)

But the knowledge of God is the being, the blessedness and the glory of the church. In Him she dwells; with her He tabernacles; with Him she is destined to live eternally: not abstractly, but in and through the Son of His love, constituted Mediator (see Psalms 48. 3; 76. 1; John 17 through-out).

Eternal self-sufficiency: “I AM THAT I AM”; “I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever” (Exod. 3. 14; Deut. 32. 40), makes creation a work of condescension. Infinite goodness, wisdom and power are therein displayed, as the effect of “the counsel of His own will,”

“according to the good pleasure of which are all His works” (see Eph. 1. 5, 11). Creation embraces all that is not “God, or that is worshipped” (2 Thess. 2. 4); “all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers” (see Col. 1, 16; Gen. 1 and 2). God knows no necessity. He no more borrows leave to *act* than to BE, who is alone sovereign, entirely independent. “Who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Job 9. 12). As is His character, so are His works. “A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He”; “Thou art good, and doest good” (Deut. 32. 4; Psa. 119. 68). Immutable in His being, so immutable in purpose, though various in method, are all His dealings with the creatures. “A faithful Creator,” “Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing” (1 Pet. 4. 19; Psa. 145. 16). In creation, therefore, He communicated His goodness, according to the nature of each race of creatures: His express verdict on each succeeding day being, “And God saw that it was good,” and when all was completed and placed in subjection to man, there was the emphasis, “And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was **very good**” (see Gen. 1 and 2).

Yet Jehovah did not communicate divine perfections to any creature, although every creature was the perfect production of a divine act. Independence is impossible to a finite being; creatureship and dependence are inseparable. “In Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17. 28). Compared with exclusively divine attributes, God charged His angels with folly, and in them He put no trust (see Job 4. 18), that is, they were never entrusted with independence; and respecting His intrinsic purity, “the heavens are not clean in His sight” (Job 15. 15). Superlative [highest degree] creature wisdom and perfect created purity, have no comparison with essential divine wisdom, and uncreated divine holiness. “To God only wise, be glory through Christ Jesus for ever”; “The only wise God our Saviour”; “Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto”; “God, that cannot lie”; “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all”; “He cannot deny Himself” (Rom. 16. 27; Jude 25; 1 Tim. 6. 16; Titus 1. 2; 1 John 1. 5; 2 Tim. 2. 13). The above Scriptures express somewhat of the inexpressible perfections of Jehovah.

Another perfection of His character is love: “God is love” (1 John 4. 8). Verily this attribute is essential to the infinite Being of God, irrespective of His external works. With humble reverence we venture to say that His own eternal self-sufficiency, delight and blessedness depend upon the ineffable [unutterable] actings of His love within the mysterious subsistence of the Godhead in His Trinity of co-equal and eternally-related Persons. Not only would the Unitarian destroy the possibility of a covenant of grace, but he would render impossible the very essential independence of Jehovah, by his theory of a uni-personal

God. So interdependent are all the sacred truths of God, that if one is infringed, the integrity of the whole is invaded. But we are not left in darkness; the Word of God asserts the sacred doctrine of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. "The Son of the Father, in truth and love"; "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world"; "Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee"; "I and My Father are One"; "Let Us make man"; "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... all things were made by Him"; "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One" (2 John 3; John 17, 24, 21; 10. 30; Gen. 1. 26, 2; John 1. 1-3; 1 John 5. 7).

That this glorious, eternal, self-sufficient, holy, just, immutable Being, dwelling in His own essential light and love – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, one indivisible Jehovah – should not only condescend to create, but should (antecedent to creation-work) enter into a covenant in Himself and decree thereby to have for His especial treasure, a people "near unto Him," chosen out from among men, an innumerable multitude of persons whom He foreknew and predestinated "unto the adoption of children" unto Himself; that He should select not angelic (the highest) but human nature for this high privilege, is matter for everlasting amazement and wonder. Holy, elect angels eternally serving and worshipping Him their Creator, are "greater in power and might" than men; but man who is "made a little lower than the angels" in nature, is by grace raised unspeakably higher by adoption into the family of God! Surely this truth impels the ejaculation of wonder and surprise, "What is man, that Thou art [thus] mindful of him?" (see 2 Pet. 2. 11; Ps. 148. 14; Eph. 1. 4, 5; Heb. 1. 14; 2. 6, 9). Blessed with this, a man can envy no angel.

The church of God, then, to be composed of mankind, had a being in eternity, before the foundation of the world, in the mind, the will, love, purpose and decree of Jehovah. Deep indeed is her foundation laid, as chosen by the Father in the Son, that she might be holy and without blame before God in love. This choice has no respect to anything that she would have or be, by way of merit, in time; nor did all the foreknown demerit hinder the choice – it was divinely free, uninfluenced. Foreknowledge – an essential perfection or attribute of God – was exercised in an especial immanent [permanently pervading] act of free grace and uncaused sovereign love towards the objects of His favour, settling upon them eternally, inalienably [unalterably], "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; and that notwithstanding divine prescience [foreknowledge] certainly indicated they would be as deeply involved in the ruin of sin as all other of the human race! (see Rom. 8.

29; Eph. 1. 3; 2. 1-3; Titus 1. 2; 3. 5; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Jude 1; Isa. 48. 8-10). There is nothing contingent [of uncertain occurrence] here. Uncaused, immutable, unquenchable love determining according to the good pleasure of Jehovah in Himself, can never be frustrated. O what an unspeakable wonder to be an object of this love! How solemnly just that since none could deserve it, it should freely embrace some and omit others: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9. 13; see Mal. 1. 2, 3).

2. *Its Head.* The Head of this church, thus sovereignly originated in the will of God, is the co-equal, eternal Son of the Father. In Him as her divine Treasury, Jehovah gave the church life and grace before the world began. "All the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God" (2 Cor. 1. 20). His only-begotten Son did Jehovah set up as His elect Servant in the covenant of grace, of which He was the ordained Mediator – a position He engaged to assume, a service He undertook to perform (see Psa. 40. 6-8; Isa. 42. 1; Jer. 30. 21). In anticipation of this, His "delights were with the sons of men"; in pursuance He was in the fulness of time to become incarnate, saying, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psa. 40. 7, 8). To the Son of God were given the whole number of the election of grace; they being co-heirs with Him, while they are His own inheritance as He is by covenant transaction "Son over His own house" (Heb. 3. 6; see Isa. 42. 1; 59. 21). So vital and intimate is this headship that Holy Scripture sets it forth in such symbolic terms as Husband and wife (Eph. 5. 32; Rev. 21. 9); Body and members (Eph. 1. 22, 23; 1 Cor. 12. 12-27); Vine and branches (John 15. 1-8). And the church's security is declared in this union which can never be broken; the Head ensures the preservation of the members even before they have actual union with Him: "Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude 1). Probably David in the Spirit of prophecy alludes to this sacred and profound mystery – the being of the church in Christ the Head, before her actual formation – when in Psalm 139. 16 he says, "In Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned" – what days they should be fashioned, margin – "when as yet there was none of them." The Trinity secures the safety of each elect member of Christ; against her as in Him no powers can effectually prevail: "They shall never perish, neither shall any man" – one – "pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man" – one – "is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are One" (John 10. 28-30). Nor is the Holy Ghost inoperative in this preservation, for by His power each member is ultimately quickened and

actually united to Christ: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6. 17). And this reaches to the resurrection, beyond the reach of time and death and change, and into eternity: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8. 11). We might say in passing, that it is also the Trinity by whom the oneness of the whole church is ensured: "There is one body, and one Spirit ... one Lord ... one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"; "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (Eph. 4. 4-6; John 17. 21).

That this headship derives from mutual covenant engagements, is a very sacred truth. Christ's derived authority as Jehovah's righteous Servant, does not militate against His personal, eternal co-equality in the Godhead. It mightily encourages a poor, helpless, guilty, broken-hearted sinner, to apprehend that all the authority of the Trinity is in salvation. We consider that the Lord Jesus when on earth indicated the secrets of the covenant of grace, to which He was a party, when He said, "I speak that which I have seen with My Father"; "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do"; "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me" (John 8. 38; 5. 36; 17. 8). But this is somewhat anticipating another branch of our subject, which comes to be noticed in a future number. Thus for the present we leave it, trusting that our readers may find unctuous and profitable meditation in comparing what is here written, with the Scriptures named.

*(To be continued)*

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## GODLY REJOICING

*By J. van Haaren (1933-1983)*

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"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15. 23, 24).

The church of today has forgotten how to rejoice. Many think that with spiritual life one has to walk around with his head hanging down. Yea, today it is the case, the more complaining, the more converted. This, however, is a terrible mistake. The Apostle Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4. 4). Moses prayed for this when he said, "O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days" (Psa. 90. 14). Do God's children then always walk around singing? O no, more often than not they weep, and

they do that in their inner chamber, but when they leave that chamber, they wash themselves, and they do not present a downcast countenance as do the hypocrites. The life of faith is not strengthened in complaining, but in the glorying of free grace.

This piece has been taken from *The Banner of Truth*, which is the official periodical of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of the United States and Canada. We believe that this minister preached at a Trinitarian Bible Society Annual General Meeting in London, well over forty years ago. If our memory serves us correctly, his text was 1 Peter 2. 2: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word.” This was the first time that we heard a Dutch minister preach the glorious gospel. This article reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus on fasting: “Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly” (Matt. 6. 16-18). Ed.

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### THE MEMORY OF THE JUST

*An account of Rachel Bibby, the eldest daughter of William Gadsby,  
by A.B. Taylor of Manchester*

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Rachel Bibby passed away on April 19th, 1858, in her 59th year.

I cannot hesitate in saying that I most certainly believe Mrs. Bibby was a dear, redeemed child of the covenant; and though she was not enabled to make an open profession of the name of Jesus, she was a pattern to many. I have watched her attentively for the last ten years with peculiar feelings, looking for answers to prayers long filed in heaven, presented by one who had a father's heart, as also a Christian's, and who was a friend and pastor over the flock at Manchester, and servant of the Most High God. I have often prayed for answers to his prayers; and though this may to some seem strange, nevertheless so it is; and, moreover, I have obtained many answers to such prayers in my own soul, and in the church as a whole.

Our dear, departed friend, for the last several years, as you know, was very poorly; but it must indeed have been a wild Tuesday evening if she were not among the hungry ones in Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester, in the corner of her pew. She was, indeed, “poor in spirit,” “a longing soul,” “hungering and thirsting” for covenant mercies and fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

When first I made enquiries about her hope for eternity, she seemed very agitated, and was evidently not expecting the question; but before long she laid herself open on the subject, and told me she had long been

a poor, sensible sinner, and all she could do was to pray for mercy, though sometimes she could not do that. On one occasion she was much comforted by these words: "The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him" (Psa. 103. 17). These words long supported her, giving her much comforting hope. On another occasion a sermon was preached from the words, "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" (Isa. 54. 10).

She took an early opportunity of conveying to me a little of her joys, and she added, "O, if I could but keep the feelings I enjoyed on that occasion, how happy I should be!" adding, "But I have such a sinful heart – no one knows." She well knew the doctrines of grace in all their beauties, but felt so little of the power, as she said, that she was ashamed lest the friends should think she wished to suppose herself one of the Lord's. A most unassuming, retiring, humble soul she was, and one who could express herself in tears and trembling much more effectually than in plain language. Often have I seen her weep and tremble, smile and sob, when she could do no more. She had sorrows and cares none knew fully but herself. The follies of others cost her many sleepless nights, and sent her often to a throne of grace on their behalf. Now she is gone, some will miss the friendly smile and motherly advice, nay, the remembrance of the departed sinks deeper into the heart than ever did the loving correction she imparted in her life. She is gone where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

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### ETERNITY

*"The former things are passed away" (Rev. 21. 4).*

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For ever and for ever!  
 Ah, who can comprehend  
 Where could be its beginning,  
 And where can be the end?  
 But one day by God's mercy  
 His own elect will see  
 Its glories and its wonder,  
 To all eternity.

For ever and for ever  
 All sorrows put away,  
 Where shines the Saviour's beauty  
 In realms of endless day;  
 No cross, or loss, or sighing  
 In that immortal land,  
 Around the throne of Jesus  
 The sons of God shall stand.

For ever and for ever  
To see His lovely face,  
To bow the knee before Him  
And His almighty grace;  
On earth the bitter weeping  
Endures but for a night,  
But when the morning cometh  
All shall be joy and bright.

For ever and for ever,  
Earth's bitterness no more,  
All pain shall be forgotten  
On that eternal shore;  
The sufferings of the present  
To what shall be revealed,  
Will seem to be as nothing  
To those the Lamb has sealed.

For ever and for ever  
From sin and self set free,  
Washed in the blood of Jesus,  
A vast, a boundless sea.  
For ever and for ever  
His mercy to enjoy,  
Where song is never-ending –  
A solemn, sweet employ.

For ever and for ever  
To be in bliss unknown,  
For ever and for ever  
To sing around His throne.  
For ever and for ever  
Midst all the ransomed throng,  
To shout the wondrous praises  
That to the Lamb belong.

Author unknown

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## NOTICE OF DEATH

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**Gerald Asquith**, a faithful deacon at Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, for fifty-five years, and church member for seventy years, passed away to his eternal rest on Lord's day morning, March 8th, 2020, aged 91 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). "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13. 5).



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**MAY 2020**

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

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**SATAN, THE FATHER OF LIES**

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“When he” (the devil) “speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8. 44).

The Lord Jesus here was reproving the Jews and the Pharisees as they denied that He was the Blessed One sent from heaven. He told them solemnly that their father was the devil. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.” Jesus knew that they would murder Him, for they hated Him and also His doctrine, for they were bent on establishing their own righteousness. The Apostle John asks, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?” John follows by answering, “He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 John 2. 22).

The entrance of sin into this world came by way of a lie. The lying serpent said unto our first mother Eve, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3. 1). Eve replied that God had forbidden them from eating of one of the trees, with the warning, “For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2. 17). Satan’s lie in answering her was, “Ye shall not surely die.” Eve gave way to the temptation that “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3. 5), and in partaking of the fruit, and in giving to Adam to eat, they were both ensnared, perceived their nakedness, and began to die. Death has now passed on to all Adam’s progeny, and as the poet coined the couplet:

“The moment when our lives begin,  
We all begin to die.” (H. 498)

It is the church of believers that particularly feel and know his lying spleen as they seek to live a life of faith and prayer. So the devil comes back with the same lies as at the beginning, with the twist of denying the promises in the blessed Lord Jesus, to confessing and seeking pilgrims. With his “Yea, hath God said,” he adds, “Ye shall not surely live,” as he tempts and lies to poor, seeking believers who have to look alone to the blessed Lord Jesus. He makes many strong attacks upon the pilgrims as

they pray their way along. He assaults them in all their various exercises to “win Christ,” and constantly assails them as they hope in His mercy. He tells them that there is no hope for them, for their sins are so great that they cannot be saved, or that they are not among the elect people of God. He also accuses them about their many sins, mistakes and shortcomings. The Apostle Peter alludes to “manifold temptations” in his first Epistle (see chapter 1. 6). For the comfort of the church the Apostle Paul wrote, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but 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). William Gadsby penned,

“Trust in Him, ye tempted saints;  
Tell Him all your sad complaints;  
He a present help will be,  
Give you strength and victory.” (H. 720)

No believer is exempt from the thrust of this great destroyer and cruel persecutor of the saints. Our sinful and unbelieving nature is fertile ground for Satan’s mischief. This powerful adversary is determined to destroy a saint if he can; therefore the pilgrims realise they are in an enemy’s land, as they so find themselves doing business in the deep waters of sin, self and Satan’s temptations. It is a needful petition that the Lord sets before us in His Word: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matt. 6. 13). David used similar language when he prayed, “Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies” (Psa. 27. 11). May the Lord help us each to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6. 12) and to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3. 14).

There are two particular lies, that are being touted and promoted in the earth today, which come from the satanic pit of darkness. They are *evolution* and also *climate change*. They are being blasted at us from every direction in this fallen world. To those who are favoured with an ear of faith, it is like the sound of the croaking of frogs in their stagnant pools. Sadly and solemnly, fallen man would rather believe in lies than the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Evolution is strictly only a theory. It has not been proved scientifically. Nevertheless, many scientists and modern man in general would gloss over the fact that it is unproved, and rather believe a lie than to own that the first three chapters of Genesis are verily true. Such live in denial of our creation, our complete ruin in the Fall, and the vital gospel promises of the blessed Saviour. Take away, modify or detract from the first three chapters of Genesis, and it destroys the glorious

Scriptures of truth. Man in his natural state loves darkness rather than light. Jesus said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3. 19).

The other modern lie, and more recently promoted than evolution, is climate change. This lie denies the promise of God to Noah and his children: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8. 22). No doubt, there are fluctuations and cycles with the climate of the earth, as the years roll by and the centuries pass. This may be safely gleaned from reading history or looking at historical facts, and we are currently living in a warming cycle, and it is possible that increasing populations, industry and man's activity may be contributory factors. But the firm promise remains, and God is true, and every man is a liar that denies the precious Word of God. The fashionable cry is, "Save the planet," rather than the cry in prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18. 13), or, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17. 13). The Apostle Peter, by the Holy Ghost, wrote, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Pet. 3. 3), denying the truths of the Scriptures. The multitude of men that are busying themselves to save the planet and build for a better and brighter future are completely hoodwinked by Satan, and know not that one day they will see Jesus face to face.

We believe that the three climatic zones will continue (maybe with small variations as to their latitude) as affirmed in the days of Noah: the tropical or torrid zone; the temperate or moderate zone; the polar or frigid zone; "while the earth remains" (see Gen. 8. 22). The promise of God is a firm promise, therefore, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3. 4) that denies these things.

We especially feel for our younger friends, who will often be hard put to it to hold fast to the truth, as and when they have to go out into the world of studies and work. It may become much more difficult for them to go into the field of scientific research or into lecturing and teaching, as mankind turns away from the Word of God in these latter days. May the Lord keep them and save them from the evils that abound in our day.

"Blessed is the man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Psa. 40. 4).

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Sin hath the devil for its father, shame for its companion, and death for its wages.

Thomas Watson

## **CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) PLAGUE OF 2020 A.D.**

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The Apostle Paul declares in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, “That the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (chapter 5 verse 2). This refers to the coming of the glorious day of the Lord. We can also equate such a word with the sudden pandemic of the Covid 19 virus. How we have all been taken by surprise at the rapid spread of this virus among the nations of the earth. To write in plain English, “We have all been caught napping.” The apostle so confirms the truth, that fallen man is a sinfully-complacent creature, in the following verse 3: “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”

Whilst we hope that there may be some alleviation from this scourge through God’s mercy, how true the above text is of this generation, with all the earthly schemes, projects and calculations, crossed and turned upside down, including international finance. The hustle and bustle and speed of modern life is suddenly closing down. Sadly this has affected collective worship, based on sound government advice. Thankfully with modern information technology systems, many pastors, ministers and deacons are able to preach or read services to their congregations. The government instruction is not based on an anti-Christian or anti-religious attitude, but is given for the welfare of the people, to try to stay the spread of this very dangerous virus, to which at the moment, there is no known antidote.

Humble believers are instructed by the Lord Himself, through the Apostle Peter, to “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king ... or unto governors” (1 Pet. 2. 13, 14). The Lord also instructs through the Apostle Paul, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. ... The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: ... Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same” (Rom. 13. 1-3).

Being confined to our homes, and so restricted in our movements, except for necessary business, is not easy to bear. So many of our readers, no doubt, normally lead busy lives in this age of rush and tear and tight schedules. May we each be saved from a rebellious spirit in all the restrictions imposed upon us, for it is so easy for us to begin to fret, grumble and complain, and to wish to get back quickly into our normal way of life. It is a great mercy if we are not yet lying on our death bed, or suffering great pain, and sinking into death. We know that indeed one day we must pass that way, sooner or later. May Almighty God sanctify

this present distress to us, that it may “work together for our good” (see Rom. 8. 28). What a wonder it will be if it is sanctified to many about us, who have, at present, no concern for their never-dying souls.

“Give me a calm, a thankful heart,  
From every murmur free;  
The blessings of Thy grace impart,  
And make me live to Thee.” (H. 1010)

The Apostle Paul in his address to the elders at Ephesus, when calling at Miletus, said concerning the “bonds and afflictions” that would befall him, “But none of these things move me” (Acts 20. 23, 24). The apostle wrote, “Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard” (Col. 1. 23), and again, “That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (1 Thess. 3. 3). We have in heaven such “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2. 17), who fully understands and sympathises with poor and needy sinners who are anxious about the welfare of their never-dying souls.

The dear people of God are not exempt from fiery trials, for we live at a time that we read of in the prophets: “For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” (Isa. 26. 21). But for their comfort the Lord says unto His people in the preceding verse, “Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” May we truly hide in the risen Saviour.

Psalms 91 expresses something of the present distress, but this is blended with the exceeding great and precious promises. He opens, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Surely this must be at the feet of Jesus, who is sitting upon the throne of grace. The psalmist wrote of “the pestilence that walketh in darkness” and “the destruction that wasteth at noonday” (verse 6). He also spoke of “the terror by night.” This describes the unseen enemy at the present time. It will be a wonderful favour and mercy to experience, “There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling” (verse 10). The Lord speaks through the psalmist of those who set their love upon Him and who call upon Him (see verses 14 and 15). The promise in His great and sovereign grace is, “With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation” (verse 16). May the Lord so favour us.

We sincerely express our love and sympathy to any readers, and their loved ones, who have been or will be affected by this serious virus. O may the Lord truly favour them with sparing and healing mercies, and

above all grant His rich blessing in their precious souls. The Lord be very merciful to us each.

“Plagues and deaths around me fly;  
Till He bids, I cannot die;  
Not a single shaft can hit,  
Till the God of love sees fit.” (H. 64)

These things will not destroy the believer, but will profit his soul.

*(To be continued)*

## **GOD BRINGS ALL THINGS INTO JUDGMENT**

*Sermon preached by Peter James Simmonds at Ebenezer Chapel,  
Pick Hill, Horam, on Lord's day evening, January 2nd, 1994*

**Text:** “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment” (Eccles. 11. 9).

What grace is needed to bring this word to you tonight. Necessarily, I must speak to the young. I say, and I mean it, that I bring this word in love. Now there may be one that says, “That means that you are going to tell us off, for ministers always say that, when they say, ‘I bring it in love.’” But, you older ones particularly, have walked this through haven’t you; and if you have not, I have! I want to speak to the young particularly, although this word has a very great relevance to those that are older. How many of you older ones, in looking back, have guilt upon the conscience? Well, if God has pardoned that sin, that guilt, all is well, but the Lord will not let you forget it. Why is that? Because of pride, that is why.

Now I want to speak to the young ones. “Rejoice, O young man in thy youth.” This does not exclude you girls here tonight. “Let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.” Is the preacher saying, Do what you like? No, he is not. How many of our younger friends are at that age, perhaps in their teens, when they know what is good for them. They think it! They know what they are going to do, where they are going and woe betide anybody that stands in their way. Solemn, isn’t it? because there is a “**But**” here. “But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

So let us consider one or two things that take place in the hearts and the minds of the young. Firstly, you may well be saying to your parents, or parent, “You might be able to tell me what to do now, but you wait

until I am eighteen and then I will do what I like.” Have some of our older ones said that? God saw it; God heard it. Ah, dear friends, does it bring you to this: “I am vile, I am vile”? But then, young friends, what are you rebelling against? “Well we want to do what we like; this religion business is all very well, but it cramps our lifestyle; we cannot go to the cinema, we cannot have the television, we cannot choose our friends, and so on.” Well, says the word, “Walk in the ways of thine heart,” and do it; choose your friends, go into the cinema, have your television, but “**know thou**” – the certainty of it! “Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

You see, young friends, you might say, “Well, my parents, seem to worry too much.” Do you know why they do? Because they have walked this path, that is why. They are wiser. Say you, “Well if they have passed this way they have no right to tell us what to do.” O yes, they have! They have every right, God’s right to tell you what to do, and any parent that lets you go off and does not stop you in word or in other ways, is failing as a parent. I do not mind what you say about it because the Word of God is clear. “Train up a child in the way he should go” (Prov. 22. 6), and this is the way.

Young friends, if you saw a man at Beachy Head who was blind, walking towards the cliff edge, and you took no notice, what sort of person would you be if you did nothing to warn that person, and to call to them, and to lead them away from the cliff edge? That is what your parents are doing. Go on, says the word, “Let thy heart cheer thee.” Go and get into all these things that you want to do, to all these friends, so-called friends that you want. “Walk in the ways of thine heart.” You see your parents have a concern. What for? That you should walk in the things of God, that you should fear Him, to take heed to His Word and that you should not bring distress and trouble upon your own heart and life; but there is more. They long for the salvation of your soul, and that is the root cause. Dear young friends, this is in love. Parents can see it; going towards the tip of Beachy Head, they can see you going on and you will not heed, and unless God comes in His mercy into your soul, you will go over the top. O yes you will.

Now there are two judgments here. A child of God will know and feel His judgment in this life, and that judgment is by the Holy Spirit. But, a child of the devil will know no judgment here below. That judgment is coming, and this judgment will be: “I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7. 23). So then, young friends, where are you tonight? Who are your friends? Are you just waiting for this day to end so that you can go into the world and mix with your friends again? This goes further than our younger friends, you know. There is a blessed feeling, I cannot express it in any other way, but you

know if the grace of God is in your heart, the Lord's day will be a special day. You will long to come up to the house of God to meet with the people of God. You may come in, the vilest of them all, but there is that love to God and His truth and His day. Well now, your parents cannot give you that, they cannot give you grace, but they can pray.

Do you think that when your parents correct you and lead you away from some of the things of this life that they leave it there? You see some of these young people say, "Mother is always moaning; I never seem to be able to do anything right." Well, she has got reason to say so. I have to be careful what I say, because I am opening my own heart. But do you think that your mother or your father leave it there? Not a bit of it. They take you to the throne of grace. You may not pray for yourself, but your parents do, and I tell you some of the things that they say: "Lord, I cannot do anything with them, but deal with them in mercy; bring them to see the error of their ways; bring them to Thy feet and give them grace; make them one of Thine." How many of us here tonight have wept real tears, heart tears on account of these things that we have put our parents through?

Some of you, your parents have gone; you cannot bring them back, but if you could, what would you say? "My dear father or my mother, do forgive me." You see, dear friends, to our older friends, this is part of the judgment, this is the judgment in your soul; you are made sorry: repentance is the gift of God and you are made sorry before God for all those things that you remember and which God brings to your notice from time to time. You have no stone to throw against another, have you?

Well, young man, or woman, "Let thy heart cheer thee." What cheers you? The company of the world? Well, there are many here that enjoyed the company of the world when in their unregeneracy; they lived it up, as we say. Where are they now? They have shame upon the conscience at the recollection of those former days. Dear friends, our young friends, if you go into the world to find your own friends, it will bring you nothing but trouble – nothing but trouble. You cannot mix oil and water, and how we need to remember this, and the older ones do too. "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). Yes, we must always be civil and courteous to those round about us, but we do not have to live their life. May God prevent us and keep us. You may not have any friends out in the world, but you will have the answer of a good conscience before God.

What about the fashions of the world? and "walk in the ways of thine heart." What about the fashions of this life? Ah, you say, you are dragging everything up. Yes, yes I am, because you will be brought into judgment on this account. You will have to suffer for it if you are a child



of God. You will have to mourn over these things if you are a child of God. But what about the fashions of the world? Just a word to our girls. I have had three daughters and I have had all the arguments put before me. Well, it started with the jeans, and I pointed to the Word of God in these things, and I was told this: "Well, if you think that this is a man's garment, you had better try them on." But you see, the heart was not right. You see, we can make all the excuses, but God sees the heart and He knows why you have these things. You may think that it is big, but if the fear of God is in your heart, you will not have anything like that; no you will not, for fear of being lost.

Another thing – the paint. That is all I can say. *The paint* that the girls put on their faces to make them look *beautiful*! – or so they think. Ah, dear friends, it is the heart, the heart! Through grace the hidden man of the heart will shine, that will shine; that will be beautiful, yes it will. The grace of God when seen is beautiful. The preacher says, "Walk in the ways of thine heart," go on and do it if it pleases you "and in the sight of thine eyes." You want to be like the world, go on and do it. "**But**" – but – "for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Now this judgment; as I said, the child of God is brought into judgment in this life. When a child of God is fitted and taken to heaven, there will be no further judgment.

You see Christ is the great Judge and He will divide the people, the sheep from the goats, those that will go into heaven and those that go into hell. If you are a child of God, you will know God's judgment against all sin in your heart and He will bring you to repentance on account of it. He will bring you to it; you cannot do it yourself, but He will bring it to you, and this is part of the work of grace in a sinner's heart, to be brought to remember their former sin. You will not get away with it; no friends, you will not. God has marked it. O as I stand before you, I am one with you. When I look back upon my past life and even now, O how much there is to bring down, down, down, into self-abasement. Ah dear friends, each one of us, as we go home tonight, may we remember the sins of our youth, and may God give us godly repentance on that account.

Solemn it is to contemplate the final judgment day when the righteous Judge – Christ Jesus – will remind the wicked of every sin that they have ever committed and then send them down into the pit without hope. O that the blessed Spirit may work in your young hearts tonight. O that you may hear that voice, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33. 24), even Christ. Well, there I shall leave it. I make no apology for bringing this text, it is the word of God as it has been revealed to me, and as I have walked through it. May the word – and it is the application that we need – be applied to our hearts. Amen.

## GRACIOUS GIFTS

*Prayer meeting address given at Sandwick, Lewis  
by James Tallach (1896-1960), pastor at Kames (1931-1952)  
and Stornoway (1953-1960)*

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**Text:** “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1. 7).

The Holy Spirit has left with us these words of advice and encouragement which Paul addressed to Timothy as one called to the ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These same things are true of the gospel now, and ever will be. “God hath not given us the spirit of fear.” These truths have been cherished in the church, and will be kept by the Holy Spirit until God has fulfilled His purpose and the last soul has been gathered in. The gospel of a crucified Saviour is the door by which the sheep enter the fold, and go in and out and find pasture. Much error about the gospel is spread by the kingdom of darkness. Let us seek to be preserved from this.

We will consider:

1. The gospel of which the apostle speaks, and the spirit of it.
2. What that spirit is not: it is not the spirit of fear.
3. What it is: it is the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind.

1. The substance of true Christianity is not in name, but in spirit – divine grace and life. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (verse 12). Paul believed in Jesus, an ever-present, living Person with invincible power. He did not forget this, and he exhorted Timothy not to forget it, and we have it from the Holy Spirit so that we may not forget it. This gospel comes up against the mighty forces of evil, against principalities and powers, and the whole kingdom of darkness. Forces inimical [hostile] to the gospel are many: the outwardly immoral, the Pharisee, Satan, coming as an angel of light. It is necessary for those who love the gospel to know where they stand, the foundation upon which their faith and confession is built.

God has not given us the spirit of fear. Let us not forget this, even in the face of all opposition. This gospel is solidly founded upon the Word of God. Paul always appealed to the Word of God for direction in experience and practice. Let us not listen to the many voices of our enemies, but turn to our Bibles, meditating in secret places where God’s presence and blessing are promised. The authority of the gospel is the infallible Word of the living and true God. Let us take the Bible as our friend and read it prayerfully. It is founded upon the sacrifice of a crucified Redeemer, and its central glory is the glory of the cross. That

is the glory of this gospel which we seek to preach in your hearing. Paul says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6. 14).

Many do not see it like that but pervert it and cast reproach upon it, just as was done to Christ in the world. There are some to whom it is the very essence of life, all their hope and salvation and desire. If it disappoints, what have they? They have turned their back on the world, and yielded their heart by faith to Jesus. They were enabled to believe upon and receive Him, and on Him their feet are established. He is their Hope, their Rock of Glory, their very life. If that is the case with you, let me tell you what is true of you – "God hath **not** given you the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Some may have begun to think seriously on this matter, and are truly concerned on account of sin. You enquire, "'What must I do to be saved?' (Acts 16. 30). So much that I hear and feel is opposed to the gospel that I do not know what to think." Listen to what the apostle says, and think seriously of these words of God: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (verse 31). From His fulness we may draw power, love and soundness of mind.

2. Let us examine what this spirit is not. This is no coward's gospel. Some fear that if they receive the gospel they will lose all manliness, independence and strength of character. This is a powerful temptation, but it is no gospel of fear. It saves from hell. Nothing can face up to the realities of life except the gospel of redeeming grace, where it is made effectual to salvation. God hath not given us the spirit of fear in relation to the gospel itself. We are sure that Christ is what He is and that He will come out victorious in the end. The church of Christ has taken her stand upon this Rock. The stormy seas of changing ideas have been dashing against it these many years, but the Rock abides. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6. 15). "Every knee shall bow to Him" (see Rom. 14. 11). Only when we step off the Rock have we cause to fear. It is all very well to scoff now, but when Christ comes into His own, where will Judas be, and Pilate, and the scoffers of today? We are devoid of fear as to the outcome. Many a fear and temptation the church of Christ has, but she sees in the purpose of God that which assures her that all will be well. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? ... I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God" (Psa. 42. 11).

In the verse following our text Paul says, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." Many show their fear by a sense of shame. They are ashamed even to appear in the house of God, or on their knees seeking God, or of making any profession of the gospel.

“The fear of man bringeth a snare” (Prov. 29. 25). But blessed be His name, there are some who now glory in the cross of Christ, the very gospel of which they once were ashamed. Let us be ashamed of our shame. Why should we be ashamed of Him who bore reproach and shame for His people? How *can* we be ashamed of Him? What is the reproach of man in comparison with the love and esteem of such a Saviour? When Christ comes into the heart, He becomes the beloved Saviour that He is. Our only fear should be that of offending Him. Even in prison with the shadow of martyrdom hanging over him, Paul says, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear.” You remember the two Margarets who in persecuting times were put to death by drowning, for the testimony of our Lord – suffering for the gospel, and yet clinging to it. Their eyes were on eternity, and on their glorified Redeemer, and they remained unmoved. What is the reproach of a man in view of eternity?

3. But we come now to what this spirit is: “The spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” There is no power that can overcome the power of the devil but the gospel. What can stand up to the forces of evil, except the gospel of redeeming grace? This is the only power against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. What can stand up to evil in the heart and in society? Nothing but the gospel. No other power can. Be thankful if it has found a place of power in your heart.

It is also the spirit of *love*. Often a regrettable degree of the spirit of controversy enters the church on earth over things which are not essential, but the spirit of the gospel is this – sitting at the feet of Jesus, beholding Him on the cross. It is the spirit of love. In preaching the gospel, Paul went to Rome and met with persecution, danger, enmity, but he gave love, and persevered in face of all opposition, “if by any means he might save some” (see 1 Cor. 9. 22). There is in every true gospel minister’s heart the spirit of love to his people. How he yearns for, and seeks their good. He is thankful for the least sign of seriousness and concern in the hearts and lives of any of his flock. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3. 16).

This gospel carries also solemn sanctions and duties. It imposes the restraints of a deep and divine effect, for the highest good of the souls of men, for your soul. The devil says, “Oh, that gospel is so straight-laced.” But do not listen. That is the voice of the greatest enemy of your soul. His whole object is to entrap you. At last it will be seen like the hook hidden in the sweet mouthful. Woe to the poor sinner that swallows the bait. Whatever your view may be, the gospel is preached in love, and with a desire for the good of your soul. Here is eternal life, based on the love of the Redeemer. What greater blessing could your heart receive? Love, infinite and divine, invites you to come to Christ.

It is also the spirit of a *sound mind*. David said, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire" (2 Sam. 23. 5). The devil said of Paul and he still says of all who embrace the gospel, "He is mad! He has lost all balance!" Grace calls to separation from the world. The world said that Paul had gone mad. Was it a mad man who wrote in this same Epistle to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing"? (2 Tim. 4. 7, 8). No, he spoke the words of truth and soberness. He counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. By the grace of God he was what he was. May each one of us here draw out of the Redeemer's fulness, grace for grace, so that it may be said of us also, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

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## MISJUDGING OF CHRIST'S WAYS UNDER SUFFERING

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Aberdeen  
March 14th, 1637

Dear well-beloved brother,

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.

Upon the nearest acquaintance (that we are Father's children), I thought good to write to you. My case, in my bonds for the honour of my royal Prince and King, Jesus, is as good as becometh the witness of such a sovereign King. At my first coming hither, I was in great heaviness, wrestling with challenges; being burdened in heart (as I am yet), for my silent Sabbaths, and for a bereaved people, young ones new-born, plucked from the breast, and the children's table drawn. I thought I was a dry tree cast over the dyke of the vineyard. But my secret conceptions of Christ's love, at His sweet and long-desired return to my soul, were found to be a lie of Christ's love, forged by the tempter and my own heart. And I am persuaded it was so. Now there is greater peace and security within than before; the court is raised and dismissed, for it was not fenced in God's name. I was far mistaken who should have summoned Christ for unkindness; misted [hazy, not clearly seen] faith, and my fever, conceived amiss of Him. Now, now, He is pleased to feast a poor prisoner, and to refresh me with joy unspeakable and glorious! so as the Holy Spirit is witness that my sufferings are for Christ's truth; and God forbid that I should deny the testimony of the

Holy Spirit and make Him a false witness. Now, I testify under my hand, out of some small experience, that Christ's cause, even with the cross, is better than the king's crown; and that His reproaches are sweet, His cross perfumed, the walls of my prison fair and large, my losses gain.

I desire you, my dear brother, to help me to praise, and to remember me in your prayer to God. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in our Lord Jesus,

Samuel Rutherford

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### THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*By Charles Hodge (1797-1878) of Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A.*

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On this subject there has been little dispute in the church. The Spirit is so prominently presented in the Bible as possessing divine attributes, and exercising divine prerogatives, that since the fourth century His true divinity has never been denied by those who admit His personality.

1. In the Old Testament, all that is said of Jehovah is said of the Spirit of Jehovah; and therefore, if the latter is not a mere paraphrase for the former, He must of necessity be divine. The expressions, Jehovah said, and, the Spirit said, are constantly interchanged; and the acts of the Spirit are said to be acts of God.

2. In the New Testament, the language of Jehovah is quoted as the language of the Spirit. In Isaiah 6. 9, it is written, Jehovah said, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." This passage is thus quoted by Paul: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive" (Acts 28. 25, 26). In Jeremiah 31. 31, it is said, "Behold, the days come ... that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel," which is quoted by the apostle in Hebrews 10. 15, 16 saying, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a Witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts." Thus constantly the language of God is quoted as the language of the Holy Ghost. The prophets were the messengers of God; they uttered His words, delivered His commands, pronounced His threatenings, and announced His promises, because they spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They were the organs of God, because they were the organs of the Spirit. The Spirit, therefore, must be God.

3. In the New Testament, the same mode of representation is continued. Believers are the temple of God, because the Spirit dwells in

them. Ye are “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2. 22). “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?” (1 Cor. 6. 19). In Romans 8. 9, 10, the indwelling of Christ is said to be the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, and that is said to be the indwelling of the Spirit of God. In Acts 5. 1-4, Ananias is said to have lied unto God because he lied against the Holy Ghost.

4. Our Lord and His apostles constantly speak of the Holy Spirit as possessing all divine perfections. Christ says, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men” (Matt. 12. 31). The unpardonable sin, then, is speaking against the Holy Ghost. This could not be unless the Holy Ghost were God. The apostle, in 1 Corinthians 2. 10, 11, says that the Spirit knows all things, even the deep things (the most secret purposes) of God. His knowledge is commensurate with the knowledge of God. He knows the things of God as the spirit of a man knows the things of a man. The consciousness of God is the consciousness of the Spirit. The psalmist teaches us that the Spirit is omnipresent and everywhere efficient. “Whither,” he asks, “shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?” (Psa. 139. 7). The presence of the Spirit is the presence of God. The same idea is expressed by the prophet when he says, “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD” (Jer. 23. 24).

5. The works of the Spirit are the works of God. He fashioned the world (see Gen. 1. 2). He regenerates the soul: to be born of the Spirit is to be born of God. He is the Source of all knowledge; the Giver of inspiration; the Teacher, the Guide, the Sanctifier, and the Comforter of the church in all ages. He fashions our bodies; He formed the body of Christ, as a fit habitation for the fulness of the Godhead; and He is to quicken our mortal bodies (see Rom. 8. 11).

6. He is therefore presented in the Scriptures as the proper Object of worship, not only in the formula of baptism (see Matt. 28. 19) and in the apostolic benediction (see 2 Cor. 13. 14), which bring the doctrine of the Trinity into constant remembrance as the fundamental truth of our religion, but also in the constant requirement that we look to Him and depend upon Him for all spiritual good, and reverence and obey Him as our divine Teacher and Sanctifier.

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The wronged side is the safer side.

Richard Sibbes

## FIGHTING THE FIGHT OF FAITH IN OLD AGE

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63 London Fields,  
Billinge, Wigan,  
Lancashire.  
WN5 7LS  
May 9th, 1996

*To Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom*

Dear Ben,

I received your kind and brotherly letter this morning. I do value it, and most sincerely thank you for your kind, prayerful interest in one who feels so unworthy. It is nice when there is such feelings as expressed in one of our hymns, 1082, second verse. We sometimes feel there is such a lack of it. Nevertheless, may we be thankful for those who are our real friends, and show it, but above all may we be thankful that our good and gracious God has shown such love and merciful interest in us in what He has done for us, in His great mercy. If He had passed us by, He would have been just, but like our precious hymn says,

“But O, amazed, I see the hand  
That stopped me in my wild career;  
A miracle of grace I stand;  
The Lord has taught my heart to fear.” (H. 200)

I hope I am not deceived. I feel such a poor thing; sin and unbelief work so powerfully in me that,

“Marks of grace I cannot show;  
All polluted is my breast,” (H. 356)

and feel very much the truth of what dear Paul said: “I know that in me ... dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7. 18). Well, that is true of the whole human race, but not all know it so as to cry for mercy.

I have just arrived home from hospital where they have done some tests which were painful indeed. Their object was to see how far the trouble had spread, as I have difficulty in walking. The specialist said, and so did my very good doctor, the cancer had spread into my bones. Well, I have a lot of praise for the medical staff, who have shown their very kind interest in me, and thankful to our God for so directing their minds and granting them skill. We have much to be thankful for in these days, though they are evil. This affliction has come as a great surprise to me and others. I have been blessed with eighty-two years of good health, farming all my days, through the good providence and mercy of our God. What can I say? What should I say? Only that the Lord has dealt bountifully with me, whatever be His will for the future. It seems bodily I am feeling my latter stages worst. Eighty-four years this July I shall



have lived if spared, and it is verily true, as we read in Psalm 90, “We spend our years as a tale that is told” (verse 9). But O, will there be some good passages in it, wrought by God, especially the new birth? We did not bring ourselves into this world, neither can we create ourselves anew in Christ Jesus. Well, as one feels the outward man decay and the mud-walled cottage shake, may the inward man be renewed day by day, and the Lord perfect that which concerns us.

“He’ll break the strings of nature soon,  
And bid the prisoner fly  
Beyond the reach of sin and gloom,  
His glory to enjoy.” (H. 553)

We do pray your little break from the arduous task of editorship will be blessed of the Lord for your mutual benefit. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “Come ye yourselves apart ... and rest a while” (Mark 6. 31).

Love to you both and all your dear family, in which Ruth joins me.

May I say, I have been prescribed injections, which are to be used every twelve weeks to slow the trouble down, if the Lord will. (“Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?” – Job 7. 1) But O my prayer has been the same as the psalmist’s was: “Spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more” (Psa. 39. 13).

Tom (Melling)

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## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 125)*

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### *Its Foundation*

When the divine Architect designed His church, He provided an immovable foundation upon which, when founded, the building should be perfectly invulnerable, permanently secure – not from storm and attack, but from any real injury. “**In all these things** we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8. 37). “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation” (Isa. 28. 16). No less than the eternal Son of the Father is here intended. None but Himself could bear the weight of the super-structure, or sustain the responsibility of the church’s eternal salvation. Peter’s confession of faith, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” elicited from the lips of Jesus the testimony, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.... Upon this Rock I will build My church; and

the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16. 16-18). Against it they attempt, as against Him they attempted. Tried indeed, but He came through all trial unscathed, and they shall do so who, being united to Him, cleave to Him by pure and living faith. While He is despised and rejected, “disallowed indeed of men,” He is “chosen of God, and precious,” both to His divine Father and to all them that believe. Though the carnal builders refuse Him, He is become the head stone of the corner to His church, which is the Lord’s doing and marvellous in the eyes of all who are delivered from the blinding power of the god of this world, being called out of darkness into God’s marvellous light (see 1 Pet. 2. 4, 7, 9; Psa. 118. 22, 23).

This foundation is, then, the eternal Person of the only-begotten Son of the Father. The laying of Him in Zion may be considered in a three-fold way. First, as He was laid in eternity by a divine decree. “Before His works of old,” Jehovah the Father who possessed Him as His own eternally-begotten Son, set Him up “or ever the earth was.” “Foreordained” He was, to be the propitiation for sins (Prov. 8. 22, 23; Rom. 3. 25, margin). The decree, foreordination, covenant and oath of Jehovah did not affect the divine Son’s eternal personality as “the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2 John 3), but He who ever was in that relationship, and being “with God, **was** God” (see John 1) – therefore unchangeable, was elected in the Trinity to be the foundation of the church. An ineffable [unutterable] mystery which, as known by faith, produces adoration, wonder and love.

Secondly, this foundation was laid in the incarnation of this Person, Not sheer Deity, but incarnate Deity is the Rock upon which the church is built. This is the great “mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3. 16), in order to the laying of this foundation beneath the church of the redeemed from among men. To know God herein is eternal life, and eternity will be required to explore the blessed mystery. Every possible trial, the curse of the law, death, this Stone endured victoriously, in thus becoming to His people the Rock of refuge, of salvation (see Psa. 89. 26; 94. 22). Blessed are all they who are not offended in Him, for He is a “Stone of stumbling and for a Rock of offence” (Isa. 8. 14) to the unbeliever.

Thirdly, He becomes laid as a foundation of hope in the heart of every true believer, every Spirit-taught penitent sinner. “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” (Rom. 15. 13). What cannot a believer hope for who builds on Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Hart says,

“Saints, raise your expectations high;  
Hope all that heaven has good;

The blood of Christ has brought you nigh –  
Invaluable blood!" (H. 803)

This, sinners feeling themselves deserving of hell, can do – hope all that heaven has good, when they view by faith

"God's dear Son,  
Wrapped in humanity, to die  
For crimes that I had done!" (H. 950)

But any modification of His Sonship would invade His eternal Deity, and reduce Him (be it said with utmost reverence) to impotence in regard to salvation. How precious, then, to the helpless, guilty sinner, is the true, proper, only-begotten Son of God. Upon Him alone must he hang his immortal interests, as it is written, "And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house ... all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flacons" (Isa. 22. 24). And the tried pilgrim trusting alone in the merits of Christ and His precious, sin-atoning death, has beneath him "the everlasting arms" to support in every trial, and to make him victorious in death.

But the erection of the building on this foundation, which is the work of the heavenly Zerubbabel by His good Spirit, we hope to enter upon when we come to consider more particularly the material of the church. Oh! eternally happy they who shall be found "among the living in Jerusalem" when, the building complete, our anti-typical Zerubbabel "shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it," every great mountain having before Himself become a plain (Zech. 4. 7), when the whole building shall be fitly framed together and grown, through the development of the purpose of Jehovah, "unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2. 21).

### *Its purpose and end*

It is written, "The LORD hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. 16. 4). Again, "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4. 11). "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11. 36). In a very especial way Jehovah hath designed the church for Himself and for His own glory, world without end. For while all His works praise Him, His saints shall bless Him (see Ps. 145. 10), and that eternally, when there shall be time no longer.

But how, since God is essentially self-sufficient and incapable of being more glorious and blessed than He eternally was, can the creature glorify and bless Him? In a word, one might say, He is manifestly glorified in all His works – they display a little of what He is as essentially glorious. But in regard to the church, we would express our conviction that God is glorified in her by adoption, redemption,

justification, sanctification, and ultimately by glorification, body and soul, in complete conformity to the image of His dear Son. And even as the church is called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ her Lord (the Son over His own house), so truly her fellowship is also with the Father (see 1 Cor. 1. 9; 1 John 1. 3). As the Lord Jesus declared, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17. 3) we believe that this knowledge is the source of all true worship; and worship is the sacred expression of the soul’s adoration of its God, wherein the eternal Three – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost – condescend to be glorified. The sinner blesses the Lord, as he himself is blessed by Him: “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). The saint is sometimes enabled to bless the blessed God for being what He is, as distinct but not separate from His bestowing blessing. But, alas, knowledge of Him seems oftentimes so small, sin and death and hell are such tremendous realities, that “hosannas languish on our lips, and our devotion dies” (see H. 25). But sometimes before faith’s eye is the prospect of gratifying the soul’s sincerest and highest ambition –

“When I see Thee as Thou art,  
I’ll praise Thee as I ought.”

As the glory of God is in the church by Christ Jesus, world without end (see Eph. 3. 21), so in measure He makes Himself known in all ages: “In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel” (Psa. 76. 1). And He is made known by the judgments which He executeth, and in His wise and holy providence towards His own people; for all which they shall praise Him.

The word *church* bearing the signification of a “complete select assembly,” indicates the ultimate design of Jehovah to bring under one Head, the entire congregation of the saints: “In that day shall there be one LORD, and His name one” (Zech. 14. 9). Scripture sets forth this entirety as distinct from the church on earth at any given period of the world’s history: “The general assembly and church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven”; “The whole family in heaven and earth”; “The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ... our gathering together unto Him” (Heb. 12. 23; Eph. 3. 15 ; 2 Thess. 2. 1). John “looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Rev. 14. 1). This “general assembly,” when the dear Son of God incarnate, the Redeemer of sinful men by His own blood, shall lead home His own ransomed ones, saying to His divine Father, “Behold I and the children which God hath

given Me,” presenting them “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,” is to be for the eternal praise and glory of the blessed God. “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Heb. 2. 13; Jude 24; Eph. 3. 21).

To the eternal God shall the “general assembly and church of the Firstborn,” with the whole company of the elect angels, ceaselessly ascribe blessing, honour, glory and power, and shall worship Him for ever and ever. And although the redeemed to God from among men alone can render thanks for their salvation, and praise the Lamb for shedding His precious blood for the atonement of their personal sins, yet the holy angels “who desire to look into” the mystery of man’s redemption, mingle in the refrain, “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). “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” when the tares are burned in “a furnace of fire” (Matt. 13. 42, 43). Conformity to the image of God’s dear Son, to which the elect from among men are predestinated, shall then be fully realised; and they shall obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the glory which His Father gave Him, He has given them (see 2 Thess. 2. 14; John 17. 22).

From a consideration of her vast and unending privileges, the wondrous purpose and use for which God designed His church, even His own glory, it might be thought, what creature would not covet a place therein? and indeed what creature, being corrupt, can claim to merit admittance thereinto? But alas, “Who hath believed our report?” (Isa. 53. 1). Yet the only alternative to a place among the people of God, is awful beyond words: “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ... Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25. 31-46). Then they that are ready shall go in to the marriage, and the door shall be eternally shut (see verse 10). This awful, solemn, gracious division, then to be eternally fixed, separating into two camps the whole human race, is the outcome of the sovereign mercy, grace and love of God alone. For seeing that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” and that there is therefore in that respect “no difference” (Rom. 3. 23, 22), all without exception must otherwise have perished eternally under the justice of divine wrath against sin.

*The material constituting the church*

Thus far we have very briefly considered the church chiefly in its mystical, virtual aspect, as originally conceived in the mind and purpose of God. As enabled, let us now come to the actual constitution of the church, and then notice the institution and order of individual gospel churches upon earth.

Perceived in the heart by the light and power of the Holy Ghost, the above solemn truth of sovereign election makes the soul, so affected, pant in spirit with the psalmist, "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation" (Psa. 106. 4). Thus, through the power of quickening grace, is commenced a solemn exercise which, in the Lord's own time, issues in deliverance from guilty, tormenting fear, and a sacred assurance of salvation by the forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Christ, sealed upon the heart. Sacred, happy hour!

"How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!" (H. 198)

Thus some, equally sinners by nature with all mankind, being effectually called unto repentance, are set apart for God (see Psa. 4. 3), as "vessels of mercy ... afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9. 23); while others are left to exemplify the longsuffering endurance of a just and holy God towards the "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (verse 22). Anticipating the unbelieving objection of carnal reason, the apostle says, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (verse 20). It has been truly said that God has no other material but sinful men out of which He forms saints (see Isa. 51. 1). The preparation of the material of which the church of God is composed is a consideration second only in importance to the great end for which it came into existence. "By grace are ye saved, through faith" (Eph. 2. 8), briefly expresses this great work. Longer or shorter discipline – many overturnings and emptyings, searchings and convictions – does the Holy Spirit patiently administer to bring the favoured people of God's choice to a hearty submission to divine sovereignty in regard to mercy and salvation.

The stopping of the mouth of excuse and complaint, the cutting off of all hope on law grounds, is a good work, and the subject of it is pronounced "blessed" by the Lord Himself: "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of Thy law" (Psa. 94. 12). By this the way of the Lord is prepared, room is made in the heart for Christ. This shall culminate in obtaining "rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked" (verse 13). That rest is Christ, laid in the heart, the hope of glory. Thus shall the prophecy be fulfilled, "All

Thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of Thy children" (Isa. 54. 13 and John 6. 45 compared).

When the Lord Jesus Christ, pointing out a little child, declared, "Of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18. 16), He was not teaching (as some erroneously assert) that childish "innocence" instates one in the church, but rather that everyone truly brought into the kingdom of heaven (the church), is reduced by the Holy Ghost's convincing, humbling, meekening instruction, to a teachableness; a childlike simplicity and sincerity, to a sense of entire helplessness and ignorance, and to an utter dependence upon the grace, mercy, power and wisdom of God in Christ.

"Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (John 6. 45). These are they who, convinced of their sin and made contrite-hearted, tremble at Jehovah's solemn Word; with them He declares He will dwell (see Isa. 57. 15; 66. 2). And His presence constitutes a house of God: "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28. 17). Such being chosen from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, and called by the gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (see 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14), are constrained to acknowledge themselves sinners' chief, and to own themselves debtors – not indeed to the flesh, to live after the flesh, but debtors to their Lord and Redeemer; for whom and for whose honour and glory they would in their right mind, "suffer the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that they might win Christ, and be found in Him; not having their own righteousness, but that, which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (see Rom. 8. 12; Phil. 3. 8, 9).

And forasmuch as the law of faith excludes boasting, through which law they are justified, and by which they live, they confess themselves entirely unworthy of that grace upon which they are compelled to hang; depending upon the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, they seek to "keep themselves in the love of God" which is in Christ Jesus, and from which nothing shall separate them (see Jude 21; Rom. 8. 38, 39). Recognising that nothing but sovereign grace alone has made them to differ ("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), they seek to be considerate of their fellow men, loathing themselves for ever entertaining high-minded thoughts, and endeavouring so to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col. 4. 5), and to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Tit. 2. 10), as to cut off occasion from those who seek occasion to speak against the truth; and to walk in humility, love and union with their

fellow-believers. Hope in the mercy of God, as felt, subdues the desire in the sinner's heart for pre-eminence in this world, modifies worldly ambition, sets the affections on things above, and creates that pilgrim spirit of which Paul speaks: "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13. 13, 14).

The Scriptures abound with precepts which are most acceptable to the gracious soul when under the powerful reign of grace, and he would, as enabled, wholly regulate his life thereby, for his citizenship is in heaven (see Phil. 3. 20). But his sense of shortcoming is most painful. One of his very bitterest things to suffer is that "when he would do good, evil is present with him; so that he cannot do the things that he would" (see Rom. 7. 21) – a reason for deep humbling, a cause of much wretchedness and shame, but, blessed be God, not for despair: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (see verse 25). Although all the exercise of living faith in its strugglings against sin, its earnest pressing after a revelation of Christ and deliverance through union with Him, partakes of the nature of worship, as does every look of faith, every sigh and groan over sin and after holiness, yet there is wanting something more to produce that sacred, satisfying worship which refreshes the soul of the worshipper, and which in its eternal perfection and ceaseless exercise is the employ of heaven, wherein Jehovah condescends to be glorified (see Isa. 61. 3; 2 Thess. 1. 11, 12).

According as one is favoured with the shedding abroad in the heart of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, will be the flowing forth from the penitent soul of sweet, sacred, spiritual worship, with the secrecy of which the stranger is not to intermeddle (see Prov. 14. 10). At times – all too brief and seldom – such is the foretaste of the everlasting song, that the language of the hymnwriter suits well:

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

There are hallowed moments of "joy and peace in believing," as well as times of heart-bitterness, in the Christian's experience.

The material composing the church of God, then, is elect souls, such who shall undergo the instruction briefly set out above, being the subjects of that work of regeneration. "They shall all be taught of the Lord; they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (see Isa. 54. 13; Jer. 31. 34; Heb. 8. 11, 12). And this experimental religion wrought in the heart of each



true member of Christ, does not depend upon external circumstances, nor is it confined to any one particular outward organisation, but is common to believers in every dispensation.

Before passing on to consider the institution of the New Testament church and the establishment of individual gospel churches, we propose (as enabled) a short survey of the development of God's purpose in relation to His church from Adam to the coming of Messiah.

*(To be continued)*

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## OBITUARY

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**John Frederick Lee**, a member of the church at The Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, passed away on December 15th, 2018, aged 96.

Our father was born in the flat over his uncle's shop in Yiewsley, Middlesex on Sunday, October 29th, 1922. He was the first child and only son of Jabez and Agnes Lee. At this time, they attended the Strict Baptist Chapel at Colnbrook. Our father was very young when his parents moved to the Crofton Park area of south east London, thus commencing for him a lifetime of moving from place to place. Although over the next twenty years he was to live at three different addresses, being in the same locality his parents attended Ebenezer Chapel, Malham Road, Forest Hill throughout these years, during which time they were both baptized.

Our father had a good memory and occasionally recalled these early days of chapel attendance. He never once related any desire to leave a stated attendance at chapel with his parents, expressing tenderness of spirit, rather than rebellion, in his childhood and teenage years. For instance, he has spoken of sitting on the stairs listening to his father and occasional visitors talking about their spiritual exercises, and feeling a drawing out of his own spirit as a result.

Our father's childhood was spent during the depression years between the wars, and circumstances conspired to make these years particularly difficult in the Lee household. In our father's own words: "Times were hard for my parents financially and, as time went by and I grew a bit older, I was aware of their worries in this respect. There were times when the rent was due and being called for on the Monday, and on the Saturday, there was not the wherewithal to pay it! However, as far as I know, there was never an occasion when the rent was not paid when due! Either the necessary amount would drop through the letter box by post or by an anonymous donor, or a friend would put into one of my parents' hands on the Sunday, a sum of money to cover the rent and more. 'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

these see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.' (Psa.107. 23, 24).

"In 1932 my father (Jabez Lee) fell quite ill, and was away from work for some three months. I was a lad of nine years of age at the time of Dad's illness and, before going to bed, I often used to go and sit at his bedside for a few minutes. Sometimes he would ask me to read a portion from the Bible. On one of these occasions, he asked me to read from one of the gospels. I cannot recall the exact portion, but it was a chapter on the crucifixion. Whilst so doing, I must have said something to the effect that I wished I had been there. Dad's retort was, 'I hope you were, my son.'"

Our father completed his schooling aged fourteen and commenced work as a messenger boy for a bank in the City of London. Not long after, the Second World War commenced, heralding a further change in our father's situation. There now commenced a short period of time when our father lived with his maternal grandfather at Hilperton, near Trowbridge, attending The Halve chapel in Trowbridge. In October 1940, our father had his eighteenth birthday, which meant registering for war service, and shortly after he joined the Home Guard. There then followed a waiting period, it being August 1942 before he was "called up" to join the Royal Air Force. Our father has said nothing of this waiting time. No doubt the optimism of youth was very much alive, but for him, and many others, this must have been a time of great anxiety, perhaps even more so for their wives and parents. There now followed four years' national service, mainly in the Middle East. He sailed around Africa on a troop ship that was torpedoed on its next voyage.

At this time our father had not had a clear call by grace. However, we are sure that his apparent disregard for the dangers before him was not entirely fatalistic. He was not given to exuberance or adventure and certainly left his home with a heavy heart. Even so, when he spoke many years later of the gracious prayers of his mother following him, it is clear that at the time he did not have the care for his own life and soul that she had.

Upon returning to civilian life in 1946, our father had to find employment, which he obtained by speculatively entering a work premises, asking for work, and being taken on in employment by the company as a result. This providential appointment gave rise to several moves in the following fifteen years. In each case a Strict Baptist place of worship was provided to attend. During this period, in 1954, our father married Betty Falkner at Worthing. In all these providential changes our father rarely if ever received a word from the Lord, but freely spoke of the Lord opening and closing doors in ways that made the way unmistakeable.

He could see and acknowledged the Lord's hand in what were some very trying circumstances, financially and for the wider family.

In the early 1960s his employment settled at Bristol, leading to regular attendance at Bethel Strict Baptist Chapel, Bath, where Mr. P.M. Kilmister took up the pastorate. It was here, around 1970, that the Lord began truly to stir our father's spirit. Up to then, although he walked soberly, he had not yet followed in the footsteps of the flock in believer's baptism. But those that watched for his soul were starting to see their labours coming to fruition. In addition to Mr. Kilmister, Miss Mabel Carr (a member of the church at Bath), in particular, had our father laid upon her spirit, and she became a mother in Israel to our father as he passed through the taking-down work of the Spirit. This coincided with a time of bringing up a young family on a low salary, no doubt requiring many errands to the throne of grace.

He was brought into gospel liberty early one memorable morning when the word of the leper outside Jericho sounded powerfully in his heart: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (Matt. 8. 2). Immediately with divine power the words followed. "I will; be thou clean" (verse 3). At this time of love, he felt able to apply for membership of the church at Bath.

Our father was baptized by Mr. Kilmister on December 10th, 1971, at the Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, as Bethel, Bath had no baptistry, being in temporary accommodation at this time. This was around the time when his mother-in-law was brought down to her death over a period of six months whilst staying with our parents. It was a time of great stress in the family, but never once to our recollection did our father show annoyance with the situation and in many ways proved to be a gracious support for his father-in-law.

Our father truly was a wonder to himself, as the humbling influence of the Spirit he began now to feel, never really left him. At times, right to his end, when he saw not his signs, this would spill over into unbelief that the Lord really had no thoughts of peace toward him and that he was an interloper in the church. It caused him much anguish and showed others the value and need to pray for great faith and not to be content with little faith. Consequently, our father greatly valued a discriminating, experimental, Christ-centred ministry of sin and salvation and could not abide anything that hinted of "sewing pillows under armholes." He needed this to keep his fainting spirit alive and fed. In this respect Mr. Clement Wood was a means the Lord was pleased to use from time to time, and they were favoured to have times of fellowship at the Studley Bethesda Home many years later.

Our father took a keen interest in the work of the Trinitarian Bible Society. In the 1970s and 1980s he was an agent for their literature in the

Wessex Auxiliary – a small, practical gesture of his love to the Lord, His Word and His people.

In the late 1970s, Dad would comment that his grandfather and father had been sent out into the ministry when they were his age. He sometimes saw this as the Lord's judgment and His sovereignty. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the keen fears our father felt for his soul's destiny, the Lord regularly blessed him with a door of utterance at the prayer meeting, with various inhabitants of Zion pointing to our father's prayers as a means of the Lord's blessing.

In 1979, with retirement from secular work and the end of schooling for three of his children, Dad felt led to start attending at Ebenezer Strict Baptist Chapel, Melksham. We believe that this was something of a bow drawn at a venture, the removal from Bath having been made clear, but where to? The friends at Melksham were true examples of practical Christianity to us as a family, before the house move took place.

Circumstances brought about much soul-searching and brought Dad into a low place, where all his religion became brought into question. On one occasion he had resolved to stop going to chapel entirely, but with the words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16. 33), he was pacified and pressed on. Eventually, in the Lord's time, in January 1994, the Lord brought about the circumstances that necessitated a move to attend the Old Baptist Chapel at Chippenham. Although the pastor, Mr. G.D. Buss, did not see our father on his first visit to Chippenham, he had an overwhelming feeling that our father would be there. Now began a time of true spiritual feeding for our father, more so than at any other time in his life. Restlessness gave way to contentment.

By 2003 old age was starting to be felt and, not having any family in the Chippenham area, our parents, with many mixed feelings about leaving their pastor's ministry at Chippenham, ventured to move to South Chard where their daughter lived. After a quiet period of settling in, at the end of 2006 his wife, Betty, was diagnosed with cancer. This brought about a prospect our father never envisaged, of her being taken first, he being eight years her senior. This was a great blow to him, and although he could not see it clearly, the Lord gave him grace and strength sufficient for each day. At a prayer meeting at this time he attempted to quote the verse: "I could from all things parted be..." (H. 1105) but never got past the first few words; and so the inner warfare was manifest to all present.

Our mother passed away little more than a year later. She would have been amazed how well he coped for ten years after her death. "Christ *truly* is the Keeper of His saints" (see H. 772). Even so, there were many downsittings and uprisings. What became an increasing

burden to him was the Lord's silence. The Lord had given him a promise when he started attending Chippenham: "Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16. 22). He longed to see it fulfilled, but had to be reminded of the blessing in that word "again" – it testifies to a previous meeting.

During his time at South Chard, Dad helped with proof reading the *Friendly Companion* and sermons taken down at Chippenham, right up until the year of his death.

His final taking down was mercifully quite rapid, passing from good health to the grave in just six months. This commenced during a period of respite care at the Studley Bethesda Home, from which he never returned home. First, he was laid low with sciatica, then taken seriously ill with pneumonia in August 2018. Throughout this period the Lord was silent. Upon enquiry about a visit from the Lord he would shake his head and say, "Abandoned." Eventually, sufficient recovery was granted for him to return to Bethesda, and a slow increase in strength ensued. Then in November he was brought down again by a slight stroke and readmitted to hospital. Whilst there he suffered a more debilitating stroke which took away his speech almost entirely.

During this visit, the Lord's servant, Mark Aston, had the words, "Go ... and tell John" (Luke 7. 22) impressed upon his spirit. At first, he thought this was the Lord's leading into a preaching text. Then it came to him that this referred to John Lee. So he resolved to go, and enquired of the Lord what He would have him tell to John. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31. 3) was the commission that came with power. So, Mark did the Lord's bidding and conveyed the message. On speaking to Mark afterwards about his visit, he described how he felt much the Lord's presence while with our father and how Dad clasped his hand and seemed reluctant to let him leave. On a later visit, his daughter asked him if he found Mark's visit a help. He replied by nodding his head and resting back on the pillow, appearing to be quite calm. And so, after this our father's demeanour became much quieter and although he could not speak of it, seems to have been taken as an earnest of the fulfilment of the promise our father carried.

He was released from hospital again, after Bethesda agreed to continue to undertake his care, for which the family will be ever grateful. However, it was only to be for a few days, as our father became weaker. After some indecision, the medical decision was taken for a return to hospital, where he passed away peacefully two weeks later. His pastor was the last person to see him.

Mr. G.D. Buss conducted his funeral service at Chippenham and his interment at Tatworth Cemetery, Chard, Somerset, on January 4th, 2019. The hymns our father chose for his funeral (1105, 633 and 410) were a solemn lesson for those of us that remain.

His children

*Note by his pastor*

It was my privilege to become acquainted with our dear friend John, whilst fulfilling three months' trial at Chippenham. After taking up the pastorate, a close bond developed whilst he and his family worshipped at Melksham. When the Lord constrained him to leave Melksham and attend Chippenham, the bond was sealed and deepened. He became a most loyal member and is remembered with affection. He was given the grace of seasonable prayer. There were occasions when the way he was led in prayer had a prophetic voice, which after-events proved to be of the Lord. Graciously yet firmly contending for the old paths, to the end he knew what was needed for salvation and would not rest until he was assured in his soul. Standing by the grave of John and Betty, one felt a most sacred peace and sweet assurance that when our Lord returns, immortal, incorruptible bodies will be raised from their tomb like their Master's whom they faithfully and quietly followed in their earthly pilgrimage. "The memory of the just is blessed" (Prov. 10. 7).

Gerald D. Buss

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Master Robert Bruce** – Minister in the Kirk of Edinburgh, by D.C. Macnicol; 296 pages; £12.50; clothbound; published by The Banner of Truth Trust and obtainable from all good Christian bookshops.

This biography was first published in 1907, republished by Banner of Truth in 1961, and has recently been re-issued as a book which is of particular interest in these distressing days in which we live. It is an account of a most godly Scottish minister whose preaching was especially blessed during his later years, when by the king's orders he was in exile at Inverness and unable to live in his own home or preach in Edinburgh at the Church of St. Giles, where he was the minister.

Master Robert Bruce was born of noble birth about the year 1554 (Master simply refers to the degree of Master of Arts which was conferred on him in 1572). Bruce would have been about eighteen when John Knox died in 1572, and it would appear that he was acquainted with him during his college years at St. Andrews. He lived and suffered for the truth's sake till 1631 during some of the most tumultuous years of Scottish history. Much of his lifetime was in the reign of King James VI of Scotland (later King James I of England as well), who exercised despotic powers over all whose influence he resented, including the kirk (church), which, on Presbyterian principles was acting as a powerful body in its

own right. This close interaction between the court of the king and the church was a tinderbox for disagreement; the king attended church; the godly ministers were sometimes faithful in pointing out the sins of the court, and the king would not hesitate to interrupt the minister.

In such days it cost something to be faithful. Such times were very different from our own, but some understanding of them is necessary to appreciate the life of Robert Bruce. As a biography the book is written with an historian's eye for detail, and the reader who is unfamiliar with the period of history to which it relates may find it difficult to keep track of the people and places mentioned.

Bruce had studied law in deference to his parents' wishes, and went to France and Belgium to continue his education, but it is evident there were some secret workings in his heart which reached their climax in 1581 when he suffered deeply under the terrors of a broken law. In 1583 he began his studies in theology and his public ministry three years later, but it was evident that even then he was often sorely tempted, even as to the very existence of God. In 1587 he became minister of St. Giles in Edinburgh, and the sanctified trials he had passed through enabled him, though with trembling, to preach "as one that had authority."

Being in Edinburgh and having often to preach before King James led to many conflicts between the kirk and the king which finally led to the banishment of Bruce to France in 1600. He was allowed to return the following year, but the intrigues of the king finally prevailed in 1603 to depose him from his ministry at St. Giles. In 1605 he was imprisoned for a short time and then banished to the city of Inverness, which at that time was a place of lawlessness. Bruce was able to preach regularly, but at this time the effect of his labours was largely hidden. In 1613 he was allowed to return to his house in Kinnaird, Stirlingshire, but the success of his ministry, whether in private meetings, in the open air, or in churches, provoked more opposition, and in 1622 he was banned for a second term of exile to Inverness. Initially there was opposition, but others received him in love as the Lord's servant. Before long the warring clansmen crowded to hear him and from all over Ross-shire many would cross on the ferries to hear him preach. There was a great awakening, and many in years to come bore testimony to how greatly God owned the testimony of His servant in his exile. In 1624 he was permitted to travel south for the marriage of his daughter, and with the death of King James VI in early 1625, he was allowed to return to his own house at Kinnaird, where the gracious effect of his ministry and visits were evidently continued to the end.

Robert Bruce was a man, both in his gifts and through grace, raised up by God in a time of much opposition, and being taught deeply in his own soul of the truths he proclaimed, he stood firm when many around compromised. He was a man of prayer. He suffered much, but enjoyed much fellowship with the Lord Jesus in His sufferings, and the testimony of John Livingstone was, "No man, since the apostles' time, spake with such power." The account of his blessed and peaceful death has often been printed.

Perhaps no biographer can truly empathise with a man like Bruce in the secrets of his walk with God, but there is enough in this book to show a little of what God can do when He works and raises up men to "turn the world upside down." We can only recommend the book and seek that God would raise up such men in our day.

John A. Kingham, Luton

### THE SEEKERS' PROSPECT

*"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4. 9).*

What sweet words are these, "A rest yet remains,"  
Where saints shall be free from sorrow and pains;  
Though cast down and weary, they rest shall obtain,  
Though Satan oft says that their hope is but vain.

Ye tempest-tossed souls, dejected, oppressed,  
Who sigh and who groan, for you there is rest;  
Your sorrow and sighing to singing shall turn ;  
Your heart, though oft cold, with love shall yet burn.

As onward you move, a taste of His love  
Will make you look up, and soar far above  
The vain, empty pleasures of earth and of time,  
And help you to dwell on the promise divine.

Your faith is oft weak, your foes they are strong,  
Yet soon you shall join yon heavenly throng.  
Thy Lord and Redeemer, Himself has thus spoke,  
Nor can He, nor will He, one word e'er revoke –

"A mansion I go for you to prepare,  
That you in My joy and glory may share:  
I'll give you for ever a place near My heart,  
And from Me, I promise, you ne'er shall depart.

"My face you shall see, My glory behold,  
And share in such bliss as never was told;  
The song of salvation for ever shall sing,  
To Me, thy Redeemer, thy Saviour and King.

"I've seen all thy fears, beheld all thy woes,  
How Satan and sin thy way do oppose;  
Through Me thou shalt conquer thy foes, then be brave,  
For I thy Redeemer am mighty to save.

"Fear not little flock, through Me you shall live,  
My Father to you the kingdom will give;  
And each seeking sinner who thirsts for My grace  
Shall find in My presence a sweet resting place."

P.E. Parsons

The least grace is a better security for heaven than the greatest gifts or privileges whatever.

John Owen



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
JUNE 2020

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

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**CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) PLAGUE OF 2020 A.D.**

*(Continued from page 134)*

We remember from childhood years at junior school, a teacher making a remark when teaching us about the Black Death in England from 1348-1350 A.D. and the London Plague in 1665, that it could not happen today, with the advance of modern medicine. We believe that such a sentiment has been rife among the people of the advanced world in recent years.

Since the beginning of the outbreak and emergency restrictions, four verses of Scripture have rested on my spirit.

1. "For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isa. 26. 21). "The LORD cometh out of His place." What does it mean? The omnipotent God of eternity is displaying His mighty hand in judgment, by an almighty look, or an almighty nod, and His eternal thought moves and unfolds in time to perform His great purposes to bring all things to a blessed fruition, and to gather His saints unto Him. In all the mighty acts of the Lord, He comes out of His place to perform His word, as we read in the Lord's communion with Abraham over Sodom: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know" (Gen. 18. 20, 21). This may seem strange language, but the Lord is emphasising that He is scrutinising everything with His omniscient eye. We read in a psalm of Asaph, "God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psa. 75. 7). David declares that "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. 7. 11). He has certainly come out of His place and brought about this pestilence among the nations. He has displayed His long-suffering toward our generation as things have waxed worse and worse, and it is salutary to remember that "The Lord is not slack ... as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3. 9). Men may scoff and say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" yet we are told that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. 3. 4, 10). May we each be given wisdom, together with repentance and faith, to observe this pestilence as the mighty hand of God among the nations.

2. “Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” (Jer. 5. 9). The Lord, through the prophet, declares this against the Jews, who had been so favoured and blessed by God. Almighty God said to them, “I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?” (Jer. 2. 21). We realise that Israel was a theocracy, that is, governed by God, setting forth the glorious truth of a chosen people, “a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people” (Exod. 19. 5). We Gentile nations are not theocracies in the sense of the Old Testament covenant, for the Lord is rich unto all who look to Him, as we read, “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10. 12, 13). What a favoured nation the United Kingdom has been! We believe we can safely write, that in all the parishes in the history of the British Isles, that at one time or another the precious gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ has been preached. We most firmly believe that there is still that peculiar number of seven thousand souls in these islands who have not bowed their knees to Baal (see 1 Kings. 19. 18). May the Lord in His tender mercy hear the prayers of His praying remnant that He will not smite us with the vengeance that this once highly-favoured land so richly deserves. For we have sinned so greatly against the Lord, and turned our back and not the front. We think of the evil legislation in recent years, including the Sabbath trading and same-sex marriage and many other matters.

In order to show Judah the evil of their ways, Divine Wisdom spoke in such a way as showing surprise at their dreadful departure from God. “And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; **which I commanded them not, neither came it into My mind, that they should do this abomination,** to cause Judah to sin” (Jer. 32. 35). As we consider the force of the divine reproof to the Jews, may we, also, who profess our hope in the blessed Lord Jesus, lay to heart our own worldliness and love of material ease and prosperity in these modern times. The Lord help us to humble ourselves before Him, and confess our sins unto Him, and turn unto Him in the Spirit as instructed by the prophet Joel: “Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him” (chapter 2. 12-14). May we not only know the spirit of reviving among us in Zion, but

may the Lord be pleased also to hear and answer the prayers of His people on behalf of our nation.

“When Abram full of sacred awe,  
Before Jehovah stood,  
And with a humble, fervent prayer,  
For guilty Sodom sued;

“With what success, what wondrous grace,  
Was his petition crowned!  
The Lord would spare, if in the place  
Ten righteous men be found.

“Britain, all guilty as she is,  
Her several saints can boast;  
And now their fervent prayers ascend –  
And can those prayers be lost?

“Are not Thy righteous dear to Thee  
Now, as in ancient times?  
Or does this guilty land exceed  
Gomorrah in its crimes?

“Still there are those who bear Thy name,  
Here yet is Thine abode;  
Long has Thy presence blessed our land;  
Forsake us not, O God!” (H. 1145)

One thing we can truly say: “He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy” (Job 37. 13). May we sinners receive the correction, and the spiritual realm of the seed of Israel truly benefit, and may there be a blessing of mercy and grace to us in it.

3. “Ye have not passed this way heretofore” (Josh. 3. 4). The Israelites were about to pass dry shod through Jordan into the Promised Land, and to conquer and take possession. The dear saints of God in these latter days are on the same journey as the ancients. How did they conquer? The answer is, “By faith.” “But he that putteth his trust in Me **shall** possess the land, and **shall** inherit My holy mountain” (Isa. 57. 13).

This current lockdown (which we find rather trying to the natural mind) is unprecedented in our lifetime. May we find instruction from the psalmist. “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” (Psa. 121. 1, 2). May the sweet promises in that song of degrees be experienced as our portion. In these difficulties may we know the good hand of God upon us. “I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them” (Isa. 42. 16). What a crooked thing it is for pastors not to be able to preach face to face with the flock

of God under their pastoral care and charge. Itinerant ministers cannot visit the flocks in their ministerial circuit. Deacons, church members and praying brethren cannot meet and commune in humble fellowship, or visit the sick, or relieve the poor and needy. Parents cannot meet their families in natural, loving, family relationship, or grandparents see their grandchildren, and those that are newly-born. We may see pictures of them over the internet, for which we would be thankful, but that is not as pleasurable as meeting and seeing them in the flesh.

We especially feel for those who live alone and cannot see anyone, also we think of the widows and widowers, and the afflicted who may be so restricted. The Lord be very gracious to them, and favour them with a sacred sense that His eye is upon them continually. May the Holy Ghost enable us each in these difficult times to draw near unto God, that we may say with Asaph, “But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Thy works” (Psa. 73. 28).

4. “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21. 28). This word has particularly rested on my spirit with some weight, and it is so pertinent to the present time. In this chapter, Jesus had been teaching the disciples of two major events in the days to come. Firstly, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by Titus, a Roman general (who later became an emperor), and the forced dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles; and secondly, the end of time and His second coming to “judge the world in righteousness.” We read in verse 6 of the destruction of the temple, “the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” In verses 23 and 24 we read of the dispersion following the great calamity that was to befall the Jews for their wickedness in crucifying the Lord of life and glory. “For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” There is a similar word in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans: “That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (chapter 11. 25). In this particular chapter the apostle writes of the restoration and receiving of the Jews again. The Jews now possess their land again and are favoured with a flourishing state, which, no doubt, is God’s favour to them in accordance with the instruction in Deuteronomy: “But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth” (chapter 8. 18). They are a very industrious people, but still living in the great sin of unbelief in rejecting the blessed Lamb of God.

We read in 2 Corinthians of their reading of the Old Testament: “The vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away” (chapter 3. 15, 16). God will work in His own time, to take the vail away.

In the warnings by the Lord Jesus of the signs of His second coming, He spoke of pestilences (Covid 19 being one of them), great earthquakes, famines, wars and commotions, distress of nations, the sea and the waves roaring, and also signs in the heavens. We wonder whether our dear families will see “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (verse 26).

Jesus also spoke of the parable of the fig tree. “Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand” (verses 29-31). “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away” (verse 33).

*(To be continued)*

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### **A PASTOR’S 40TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE**

*Addresses at the 40th Anniversary Service for Mr. Gerald D. Buss,  
Pastor at the Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham,  
on Wednesday, January 1st, 2020*

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*Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom:*

Beloved friends, I count it a sacred privilege today to speak at the fortieth anniversary of my dear friend and brother, your pastor.

Now, as you have just heard, forty years ago, I was speaking at the recognition services, and the text was in Acts 12: “And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me” (verse 8). It was an exhortation, especially to your dear pastor. And, in the name of the Lord Jesus, I exhorted him to gird himself, to bind his sandals on him, to spread his garment about him and to follow the Lord Jesus. Well, through grace, you have obeyed the exhortation. And I believe that during those forty years which have followed, you have seen your dear pastor walking it out, and throughout our congregations, and it has been to the praise and the honour and the glory of God.

Now, at the twenty-fifth anniversary, we were looking back. The text on that occasion was in 2 Corinthians: “Therefore seeing we have

this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not” (chapter 4 verse 1). And that was a thanksgiving for twenty-five years. Through mercy today, it is a thanksgiving for forty years. And, beloved friends, it is a mercy to be graciously maintained, divinely supported by the Lord. Now, on that twenty-fifth occasion we thought of “this ministry” which your pastor received from the Lord Jesus, and how he had been maintained in it. Every gospel pastor at times has those temptations to faint. But, although they often feel faint, through the Lord’s mercy, they are not permitted to faint. And then Paul tells us the secret: it is on the ground of mercy. And that is a solid ground for a gospel minister, both in his preaching and in his prayer and in his pastorate: mercy through blood.

Now, the word on my spirit, just for a few minutes, looking forward. You will find it in Luke 24 verse 29: “But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.”

This is a prayer to the risen Saviour, and I can think of no more suitable prayer as we look forward to the unknown way – a prayer for the abiding presence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. “Abide with us: for it is toward evening.” Now, it is not the evening time of this pastorate. But when a minister has been pastor for forty years, we have to say, we must say, “It is toward evening.” Oh, but our vital need – the Lord’s abiding presence. And I am sure that your dear pastor can say, looking back, looking forward, above all, looking up: “Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation” (Psa. 27. 9). A prayer for the Lord’s abiding presence, both with pastor and congregation at Chippenham. Wherever would we be if the Lord were to leave us, if the Lord were to forsake us?

So really, venturing on this subject, the spirit of Moses when he looked forward to the coming years. What was his prayer? Really, in spirit, it was the same as this: “If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence” (Exod. 33. 15). We cannot go on. The only reason we have continued is because of Thee. We cannot go on without Thee. May Thy presence abide with us. Oh, but that glorious answer! Oh, that it might be graciously fulfilled here today, and in the coming days at Chippenham. “And He said” – and I do like the emphasis on those three words: the faithfulness of God. “And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (verse 14).

“What more can He say than to you He has said,  
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?” (H. 329)

Lord, “Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” Well, we need the dear Lord Jesus to abide with us in so many things.

We need the Lord Jesus to abide with us in everything. But, briefly, I just want to mention three this afternoon.

First of all, Lord Jesus, may we know Thy abiding presence with us in the preaching of the everlasting gospel. Now it is a glorious gospel that we are commissioned to preach. May it be glorious here today, may it be glorious in the coming year, still at Chippenham. It has been glorious. Oh, but don't we need the Lord's gracious presence in the sanctuary! To feel it, to know something of the Holy Spirit's work, taking of the things of Jesus, showing them to us. It is a glorious gospel. It is described like this: "The unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3. 8).

But, what would it be, the best sermon, without the Lord's gracious presence, the Lord's gracious help, giving a spirit of hearing, working in sinners' hearts, calling sinners by grace, blessing the gospel to them, and feeding the souls of the Lord's people with the bread of life? It is only the Lord Himself can do that. May many at Chippenham be brought into the Lord's banqueting house and may His banner over them be love. And may the church at Chippenham, because of the Lord's presence, and only because of the Lord's presence, may the church at Chippenham be as a well-watered garden. And in the pulpit may there be that spring of water, whose waters can never fail, flowing from everlasting love and always flowing by the way of Calvary. So, Lord Jesus, abide with us still, and may we know Thy abiding presence in the sanctuary, in the preaching of the gospel.

Now secondly, the Lord's abiding presence in supplying every need. Now, a pastor has many needs in providence and in grace, in preaching, in needing wisdom in dealing with the flock, ever seeking that help from the sanctuary and strength from Zion. May the Lord graciously supply every need by His abiding presence. "None but Jesus." "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8). And you know what the promise is: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4. 19). "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

Then, thirdly, and most important of all, in these coming days may the Lord's gracious presence be known, and in all that His name might be honoured and glorified. May that ever be the theme. "None but Jesus."

"None but Jesus!"

From His blood their hopes arise."

(H. 918)

So, to the dear pastor, the beloved congregation: "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" (Num. 6. 24-26).

*Mr. Joseph E. Rutt:*

I do have a word on my spirit for this occasion. You will find it in Psalm 23. I shall read the last verse.

“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.”

That is my prayer for you, my friend. It is my desire for you, that the Lord will grant it.

Psalm 23 is a precious psalm. It is full of comfort. In many of the psalms we read of the trials and the stresses the psalmist was passing through, but here, in Psalm 23, is all comfort. May you know the comfort of this psalm today, and in the coming days.

The reason that we can speak of goodness and mercy and an eternal dwelling place is because of the glorious Person in the first verse, the Shepherd. “The LORD is **my** Shepherd.” How many of us can say that today? Not: The Lord is *a* Shepherd, but: “The LORD is **my** Shepherd.” It is that personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, which is vital in our profession, in the ministry and in every respect of a believer’s life. That union with Christ is something that is absolutely vital. But who is this Shepherd that David speaks of? And pondering over this question, it opened up to me like this. Well, we have a beautiful description of Him in Psalm 22 and Psalm 24, either side of this beautiful little psalm.

Years ago, I heard or read of a jeweller. He had some precious jewels to set in a ring, and his great concern was this, that he must get light *into* those jewels, and he must get the light *underneath* the jewels so that you could see exactly what they were and show them off to the best advantage.

Well, the Holy Spirit has done just that by placing these three psalms together in Scripture. We have the Shepherd described in both of the psalms. It tells us who He is. Psalm 22 – we think of the words of Jesus: “I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep” (John 10. 11). The great psalm of the cross. And it is through the teaching of the glorious truths in that psalm we can see the suffering Saviour. It opens with: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” It closes with: “He hath done this.”

I am no linguist, but I understand it could equally say: “It is finished.” And there you have the cross: the work of Christ for the sheep, what He has done to purchase them, how He has shed His blood, how He has suffered for them, how He bore the wrath of God, how our sins were laid on Him. And there you get light shone into Psalm 23. This is the Shepherd. Here is why there is comfort and peace. Here is why, even in the valley of the shadow of death, there is comfort and peace. It is because of the Shepherd.



But then, on the other side, Psalm 24, we read more of the Shepherd. The Shepherd is the King of glory. Read from verse 7 down. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory." And there we see the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now risen, exalted in heaven, at the right hand of the Father. We see two wonderful descriptions of the Lord Jesus Christ: His Person, His work. And now He is in glory in heaven. This is the Shepherd, One that the sheep can go to today, the One that sustains His people, upholds His people, helps His people, strengthens His people. And, oh! by faith we get a glimpse of who Christ is, the eternal Son of the everlasting God, a real Man, yet very God, the Shepherd of the sheep!

So here is David's comfort. And that has been your comfort for forty years, and a few others here, too. Christ, the Comforter of His people. Why, you read down these verses, and as faith is enabled both to look at Psalms 22 and 24 and ponder, as it were, the rich diamond of truth in every single verse, fresh light is thrown onto it; fresh glory, fresh perfections, fresh beauties. They all flow from Christ. And like that jeweller with his jewels, the light shines and bursts forth and you see fresh wonders in Emmanuel, fresh wonders in a precious Christ. That is what sustains the ministry at Chippenham and at Bethel, Luton, and I hope at Matfield, but fear to say it too much. We prove that line of the hymn by John Kent true: "Christ exalted is our song" (H. 145). You go through the psalm, and it is the comfort of the Shepherd, in every single verse.

We come to the verse particularly on my spirit, Gerald. "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."

That first word, "Surely." Or equally, I understand we could put "Verily, verily" there. David's faith rises and he could say, "Surely," in the light of the glories of the Shepherd, the beauties of the Lamb, the wonder of His Person, the wonder of His grace, the wonder of His perfections. In all that He has done for me, His mercy to me, His help through the years, strengthening in the midst of trouble – "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me." And so it is, my friend. There are two golden sentinels standing behind you. One is called "Goodness" and the other, "Mercy." They are going to follow you. They cannot stop. Why? Because of the Shepherd. They "shall follow me." What a wonderful truth! The goodness of God – who can describe it? Who can fully enter into it? God is good; Jesus tells us that. God is good. He is

all goodness. He is indescribable. The human language has no words fully to describe the full goodness of God. This glorious attribute is eternal, everlasting, unchangeable. And it is going to follow “all the days.”

And coupled with it – “mercy.” David well knew that he needed mercy. He was a sinner. So are we. Poor sinners. It is sinners that preach the gospel. The wonder of it! But, with goodness and mercy following, goodness to supply every need, goodness to help in every time of trouble, goodness to provide, not only your providential needs, but all your spiritual needs, everything you need, in your labours that lie before you. “Goodness and mercy **shall**.” Oh, may your faith rise up today for the “shall,” Gerald.

We do not like to go beyond ourselves, but that has been my prayer for you: that this “surely,” this “shall,” might be known and felt. We need mercy. We are sinners. We need cleansing. We need washing. And our sermons need cleansing. Our prayers need cleansing. Our hearts need cleansing. And yet, despite what we are, the Lord enables us to preach on. It is a miracle of grace to me that we can preach on, knowing what we are. How often we have to say with the apostle: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7. 18). It is true of us all. The apostle felt it; we do.

To the church at Chippenham: pray for your pastor. You do not know the half of what a minister passes through: wrestling, wrestling against himself and indwelling sin and temptations. But when goodness and mercy follow, it answers it all. Pray for this for him: goodness, coupled with mercy.

“Goodness and mercy shall follow me” – not some days – “**all** the days” – every day. We do not know what is before us. But, Gerald, whatever lies before you, “all the days” goodness and mercy will be there. What God has been to you, He ever will be to you “all the days.” Why, there may be days of sorrow, days of fear, days of temptation, days of difficulty. Every pastor has them. Remember in “all the days” these two golden truths are following you. They are like the water from the smitten rock in the wilderness that followed Israel right through all her journeys. That precious water from the smitten rock, water from Calvary – there is goodness; there is mercy. And, oh, when that flows – the sweetness of it! The preciousness of it! How precious when it flows, even as we sometimes speak, goodness and mercy following.

Or, if you will, it is like the first verse in Revelation 22: “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” That is where it flows: from God and the Lamb, through a crucified Christ. That is where goodness and

mercy will lead the preacher to preach. That is what makes the doctrine of the cross precious to the preacher and we pray to the hearer.

And now those streams of love and peace and pardon and mercy. I pray for that here at Chippenham and wherever the Lord's people gather, that goodness and mercy might be known and felt.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Your journey is not over yet. More temptation, more perplexities, more trials. We have been labouring a long time together; we know that is coming, for it is "through much tribulation" (Acts 14. 22) you inherit the kingdom. But these two things will make amends for it all: goodness and mercy. Jesus is all-sufficient, completely sufficient for every trial, every difficulty and every perplexity, sufficient in all our short comings, all our fumbings, all our unworthiness. Yet "goodness and mercy" make amends for all.

Then, when it is over: "I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." That is the prospect before us. We have something to look forward to. Have you? Something to expect. Something we are utterly unworthy of, completely unworthy. Yet goodness and mercy have showed us, granted us a glimpse into heaven and into glory. It takes me back to when I came to see my pastor (Mr. Ramsbottom), in my seeking days, years ago, when I said, "I am not going to stop seeking until I lay hold of Christ!" And he put his arm around my shoulder, and said: "Joe, you have got to die to do that." How true it is! But goodness and mercy I believe will bring us there. The goodness of God.

"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." The apostle speaks of it, doesn't he, in the Corinthians? "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1). That is the prospect. That is what lies before us. That is our hope, to reach that sacred place where there is no sin, no guilt, no temptation – nothing but Christ and holiness. May the Lord bear you up, Gerald, and bring you safely through, bring us each safely through, and His church to heaven and to glory at last.

"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."

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Some years ago Mr. Gerald D. Buss told me of one or two favours from the Lord, when taking up the pastorate. It would not be prudent to mention them. God has been faithful to His dear servant at Chippenham, and performed His word to him. Ed.

## BROTHERLY COMMUNION

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Redhill,  
Surrey.  
Undated

My dear Friend,

The receipt of your kind letter gave me much pleasure. You are often in my thoughts, and if inclination could have its way I should have paid you a visit before now; for this rusty bit of iron often needs some polishing and sharpening, and I have found visits to your home profitable that way....

We have much illness here and congregations are very thin. Mr. C. cannot be with us very long. His case perplexes me much; there is an undercurrent manifest in dark hints and insinuations. I should be thankful to see these things cleared up. They would not affect me so much were it not for what I see and feel within, and the fears I often have about my ministry. O the crudity, the barrenness, the too-much-of-myself that I see in my preaching! When people speak of being profited, I can hardly believe them.

A while ago, when somewhat perturbed about a matter, these words calmed my heart: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD" (Isa. 54. 17). For a while it was a strength to me. But I do feel to need some further token that I am where and what I am by the will of God, and *that He is with me as my God*. Lacking this, everything looks dark, and fears run high that all is wrong. Sometimes preaching is sweet work, and prayer a privilege; but O, at other times what a weariness! I get heart-sick of my poor blunderings.

Not long ago the line, "Jesus takes the highest station!" (H. 972) came into my heart suddenly, with an overpowering sweetness, and I lay softened at His feet, begging Him to take the highest station in my poor heart. It continued for about half an hour; then I found other things coming in and pulling my heart away. How this argues my baseness and inconstancy, that I can so soon grow weary of Him! This spirit in me frightens me. Sometimes I try to lay all this before the Lord, and tell Him how much I need His almighty work in my heart, and all the reconciling effects of the atonement to be really made known. That "live coal ... from off the altar" (Isa. 6. 6) I want laid on my lips and in my heart. I ask for three things – a good token for my own soul; another concerning my ministry; another for my pastorate.

John Raven

## ENCOURAGEMENT TO CONTINUE

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52 Culverden Park Road,  
Tunbridge Wells,  
Kent.

March 7th, 1946

My dear Mary,

Thank you for your letter of January 29th. I am pleased that the Lord has made your way plain to join the church at Galeed. There appeared to be no prospect at all of your returning to Hastings and as it would seem that, for the time being at least, your abode will be in Brighton, it is far better for you to join a church in that town. Of course, you will never forget your "first love," but to my mind it is unscriptural to retain membership with a church where there is no reasonable prospect of properly maintaining that membership.

It has pleased the Lord closely to follow you about with His Word, and His many gracious manifestations towards you have, to my mind, spoken to you very plainly. The Scripture says: "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh" (Heb. 12. 25). I am glad you have been made willing to obey that voice; and now I pray that the rich blessing of God will ever attend the step you have taken, and that your connection with Galeed will be followed by marked spiritual growth and prosperity. Further, may it please the Lord to go on to verify that verse in your experience:

"All thy wastes I will repair;  
Thou shalt be rebuilt anew;  
And in thee it shall appear  
What the God of love can do." (H. 273)

Through mercy, my daughter is still progressing very satisfactorily.

I am glad you have found I did not delude you when I plainly told you that the time would come when you would again enjoy the Lord's smile; and I have rejoiced with you in your very blessed experience of this.

I gratefully appreciate your kind and prayerful wishes. Do not hesitate to write again, whenever you feel disposed to do so.

With Christian love, and every good wish,

Yours in sincerity,

Ernest A. Brooker

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The fruits of faith are very tender, but the root of faith is more hardy than any root that you can think of in the whole of creation.

*J.K. Popham*

## A SEASONABLE WORD IN TROUBLE

*By Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)*

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I shall never forget one memorable season of trouble that I was in many years ago. I cannot tell the depths of distress I was plunged into. I wished to have done with time and sense, weary of life, longing to be gone, feeling I could not bear it. I was in such a way I cannot describe it, and all at once this passage dropped upon my heart: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee" (Isa. 41. 10). All my trouble left me, all was gone; peace and light and joy and gladness filled my heart. It was enough – "Fear thou not; for I am with thee"; and I *felt* the Lord *was* with me.

"How could I sink with such a prop  
As bears the earth's huge pillars up?"

I could have gone to heaven then. The Lord was with me. "I will be with him in trouble." And the Lord says more: "I will deliver him" (Psa. 91. 15). O what a precious promise! Whatever the trouble be, "I will deliver him." Deliverance is from the Lord. He not only supports and sustains us in the midst of trouble, keeps our head above water, but He can actually deliver us out of it. He can cause us to stand on dry ground. He can raise us up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay where we are sunk, and set our feet upon a rock, and establish our goings. "I will deliver him." Have you no deliverances to record, no mercies of any nature? Can you not look back and see when and how the Lord delivered you? "I will deliver him."

"I will honour him, and set him on high" (see Psa. 91. 15 and 14) – on the top of the rock, and then the waves may dash and beat their fruitless efforts at his feet. They cannot move the rock. The immovable Jehovah set me on the rock that is higher than I, and higher than these floods, and higher than the range of men and devils. I will raise him up out of the reach of all his foes; they shall not be able to come near unto him. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psa. 91. 1).

"It shall not come nigh thee" (verse 7). O precious promises! I remember that word once on a memorable occasion coming to my soul: "It shall not come nigh thee." There was a trouble hanging over me like a thick thundercloud, and that word gave me much quietness: "It shall not come nigh thee." I shall never forget how the word came to me in a dream of the night. Now, I am not for dreams and visions in a fanciful way, but I had this dream at this particular time. It seemed as though a cloud was over the whole face of the heavens, and at length it burst into a most awful storm and tempest. The lightnings flashed and the thunder roared, and a thunderbolt fell at my feet, but I was as calm and unmoved as I am now. This word seemed to drop at the very moment, and I had

no fear; no, not the slightest. I shall never forget the time and the sweet effects. They were with me when I awoke, and continued for days. "It shall not come nigh thee."

When Noah was shut up in the ark – Noah and the favoured few – you know how they were tossed about, the rains coming down from heaven, the waters rushing and dashing below. The windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and while they were thus dashed upon the waters, not a drop came in unto them that were within. "It shall not come nigh thee." So you see the believer may be surrounded by these troubles, and yet: "It shall not come nigh thee." And there is something more in the expression used in reference to the making of the ark: "Thou ... shalt pitch it within and without with pitch" (Gen. 6. 14). Now, it is a most remarkable fact that the word *pitch* in Hebrew signifies also *atonement*. Now see, the slime or pitch with which it was daubed within and without kept every drop of water out. Now, this very expression for slime or pitch in the Hebrew signifies also atonement, and is it not the atonement that keeps out the water? Is it anything but the atonement that can keep the soul from the waters of God's wrath, and from the floods of vengeance that shall sweep away the world of the ungodly? It is nothing but the atonement. It bears them up, and keeps out every drop of rain.

"It shall not come nigh thee." "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about" (Psa. 32. 10). "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5. 11). God cannot exact payment twice for the debt. He is satisfied; He has declared that He is well pleased with the righteousness of His beloved Son. He exacts no more; His justice demands no more; and therefore fury is not in Him. "I will set him on high.... I will ... honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation."

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### PRIVATE PRAYER

*By Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

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Private prayer is a city of refuge that no power nor policy, no craft nor cruelty, no violence nor force, is ever able to surprise. Though the joint prayers of the people of God were often obstructed and hindered in the times of persecution, yet they were never able to obstruct or hinder secret, private prayer. When men and devils have done their worst, every Christian will be able to maintain his private trade with heaven. Private prayer will shelter a Christian against all the national, domestic and personal storms and tempests that may threaten him. When a man is lying upon a sick bed alone, or when a man is in prison alone, or when

a man is with Job left upon the dunghill alone, or when a man is with John banished for the testimony of Jesus into this or that island alone, O then private prayer will be his meat and drink, his shelter, his hiding place, his heaven. When all other trades fail, this trade of private prayer will hold good.

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## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 153)*

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### *The church of the Old Testament*

We are to notice, next, the church of Christ on earth as manifested at different times under various dispensations wherein the worship of God was institutionally observed. For the great and gracious Head of His church has, in His goodness and wisdom, condescended to design and establish an earthly church-state for the outward, mutual, public exercise and expression of that inward, secret, spiritual heart-worship, begotten in the individual soul by the Holy Ghost. Though it might not be improper to say that, strictly, a gospel church-state as an organised institution did not exist before the Day of Pentecost, yet no less true was the worship of God under successive divine dispensations from Adam's day till the "time of reformation" (Heb. 9. 10). The true knowledge of God which is requisite for real, spiritual worship, is a matter not of acquisition, speculation or evolution, but of *revelation*. The ever-living and blessed God being the only true and unalterable Object of worship, though the outward form and means of public devotion has changed with divine dispensation, the *character* of worship remains always the same. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4. 24), holds for every period of time.

The revelation of God in Christ commenced in Eden, newly defiled. Hence true gospel worship originated there. Though comparatively dark the outward means, the self-same light of the knowledge of the glory of God – just and holy, yet gracious and merciful, pardoning sin through sacrifice – shone in Adam's soul by the first promise, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise thy (the serpent's) head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (see Gen. 3. 15). Not one of those innumerable "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Pet. 1. 4) subsequently delivered to the church is more truly gospel than this.

We would ever esteem the privileges and regard the responsibilities of the clearer light of New Testament dispensation; but Adam no less than Paul, Noah as well as John the beloved disciple, David equally with Peter the apostle, Manoah and his wife uniformly with Aquila and



Priscilla, Ruth the Moabitess as truly as Lydia the seller of purple – were and are members of Zion's sacred city. All without exception of the Old Testament saints, together with every New Testament believer, will be indispensable to complete that temple of grace whose top-stone shall receive the acclamation, "Grace, grace unto it," and where "God shall dwell among them and be their God, and they shall be His people" (see Rev. 21. 3); "and there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22. 3). Nor will it diminish the happiness, neither sully the glorious holiness of heaven's perfect and tireless worship, that Manasseh, Mary, the penitent cross-thief, and (may not some humbly hope?) ourselves, shall be fellow-citizens and of the same household of God! The wonder to each one there will be that *he*, who merited hell, is favoured to be one of that redeemed company. The lively hope of this makes supportable the trials incident to pilgrimage through a hostile world. This hope is truly sanctifying: he "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 3).

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

There can be no true worship without true doctrine. Where this is, in its vital efficacy, there is the true church. In her God is known in some measure. Moses' doctrine dropped as the rain, his speech distilled as the dew, when he would publish the name of the Lord (see Deut. 32. 2, 3) – that great name which had been proclaimed to him when in a "clift of the Rock" (Exod. 33. 22): "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exod. 34. 6, 7).

Adam was not deficient in doctrine. It was taught him and Eve when God clothed them with coats of skins and passed the promise quoted above. Abel's sacrifice accepted and Cain's offering rejected, discovered the doctrines of sacrificial substitution, of imputation, and of sovereign election; and Abel's faith (in the exercise of which he worshipped and for which he was a martyr) goes down illustrious to the world's end. Noah worshipped God when, "moved with fear, by faith he prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (see Heb. 11. 7); in it he saw the "shelter of the Almighty," and he was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2. 5). Abraham learned doctrine, being brought to the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 16. 26); the divided heifer, the she-goat and the ram slain, speaking to him of the "blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13. 20). "And he received the sign of circumcision," and became the

“father of all who believe, who walk in the steps of that same faith, though they be not circumcised.” He was further instructed concerning deliverance through substitutionary death, by the ram caught in the thicket when he was in the act of slaying his son, his only son Isaac; whereby he also learned the doctrine of resurrection from the dead: “From whence also he received him in a figure” (see Gen. 15. 5-18; 22. 1-14; Rom. 4. 11, 12; Heb. 11. 17-19). In the differentiation of Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, is seen the truth of divine sovereignty in election, of which doctrine doubtless both father and son received some intimation. For Isaac “by faith blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come,” distinguishing them by a divine intuition, preferring the younger; and on Esau’s protest, not only was Jacob’s superior blessing sustained, but emphasised: “Yea, and he shall be blessed” (Gen. 27. 33). So too, “By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph” – “guiding his hands wittingly” – “and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff” (Heb. 11. 21; Gen. 48. 12-20). Thus was doctrine – the teaching of God – productive of spiritual worship in the case of the elders who “obtained a good report through faith” (Heb. 11. 39). And worship is always connected with salvation through the expiation of sin by sacrifice – “I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD”; “We know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews” (Gen. 49. 18; John 4. 22).

Coming to Moses, we find the establishment of corporate worship under a priesthood, by which still more clearly was shadowed forth the New Testament gospel church-state which was to come. In the elect nation of the Israelites almost exclusively was confined the worship of God at that time; although provision was appointed for strangers to be admitted by circumcision (see Exod. 12. 48). This “peculiar people,” with Jehovah for their King and their God, a “nation of priests,” was properly a theocracy (*Warburton, Divine Legation, V. 2*), and by Stephen (Acts 7. 38) is called, “The church in the wilderness.” This organisation is said to have been a “figure for the time then present,” in which were “carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation” (Heb. 9. 9, 10). Its intentional temporary character did not militate against its divine importance, nor lessen the truth of its worship. Later, in the days of the prophets, thus God speaks of the church in the wilderness: “Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour.... In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them. Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and His people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? where is He that put His Holy Spirit within Him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm ... to make Himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as

an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? ... So didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious name" (Isa. 63. 8-14).

The material house and utensils for the ordered worship were all exactly delineated from heaven to Moses in the mount. There was the tabernacle with its four coverings: fine twined linen wrought with blue and purple and scarlet; next, goats' hair; third, a covering of rams' skins dyed red; and fourth, badgers' skins. It cannot be thought that these have no spiritual signification. This last outer covering, visible to all, hiding from general view the beautiful inner coverings, seems to set forth the meanness of Christ's appearance in the world as amongst men, His glory being veiled. Though He be "the brightness of Jehovah's glory, and the express image of His Person," yet in order that poor sinners might be reconciled to God and be brought nigh to Him in acceptable worship, He was "found in fashion as a man," and "there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (see Heb. 1. 3; Phil. 2. 8; Isa. 53. 2). In the eyes of the world, the church, too, has no beauty, notwithstanding God's description of her: "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework" (Psa. 45. 13, 14). The church and her Lord are alike the objects of the world's execration [abhorrence]: "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?" (Matt. 10. 25). "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (1 John 3. 1).

Divided by a vail (expressive of the need of mediation) the tabernacle had:

1. The most holy place within the vail, which had the golden censer, whose incense represented the merit of Christ mingling with the prayers, the approaches, and the worship of the people, rendering them acceptable therein before God; and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold (grace is hereby signified), wherein was the golden pot that had manna (setting forth the miraculous sustenance faith receives from the Bread of Life), and Aaron's rod that budded (indicative of the source of fruitfulness: "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hos. 14. 8)), and the tables of the covenant, symbolic of the unbroken law in the heart of Jehovah's righteous Servant, and fulfilled by Him as Surety; God being thereby satisfied and the believer thus delivered from the law of sin and death, brought "under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9. 21); and over the ark the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat, whereon appeared the Shekinah glory (typifying the dwelling of God among the people as a God of mercy, a prayer-hearing God accessible through the Lord Jesus Christ).

2. Without the vail was the holy place, in which were set the candlestick (the light of which, supplied by pure olive oil, may represent the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Christ, the "light of life," see Zech. 4.

1-6), and the table of shewbread, by divine direction to be eaten by the priest (perhaps intending the truth that “the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits,” alluding to the gospel ministry, 2 Tim. 2. 6).

3. Without the tabernacle proper was the outer court, enclosed with curtains. Here was the altar of burnt offering, upon which the priest was to burn the prescribed, slain sacrifices; and the laver for priestly ablutions [ceremonial washings]. In all this ceremonial worship is symbolised the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ and His one great sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the people. Of His entrance into heaven “with His own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us” (see Heb. 9. 12, 24) the high priest’s entrance into the holy of holies once a year with the sacrificial blood was a lively representation. What sacred delight would a spiritual Jew have when his faith was occupied with what would be to the carnal mind but irksome and useless formalities! How attractive, how welcome would be the holy atmosphere of divine propitiousness, when compared with the forbidding thunders of Sinai, where “the sight of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel”! (Exod. 24. 17). What a contrast would a penitent believer behold in the priestly mediation of the tabernacle service, to the so terrible voice of words that made Moses exceedingly fear and quake! Only such as could spiritually and experimentally draw this contrast would be capable of appreciating “the glory that excelleth,” and which “with open face” (not veiled) is seen in the glass of the gospel (see 2 Cor. 3. 8, 10).

It requires to be borne in mind that the minutest detail in material and construction, with every rite to be performed, was definitely specified. The several sacrifices, the ablutions, the sprinklings, the weekly renewing of the shewbread, the perpetual light on the candlestick, the covering cloud of incense, under which the priest must enter God’s symbolic presence for the people, “with the blood of others,” the garments he must wear for the various occasions – all were according to divine direction: “For, see, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8. 5). Moreover, it was called “The tabernacle of the congregation” – a phrase which comes to be synonymous with “church” in the New Testament: “The church in the wilderness,” with whom was the “Angel of His presence” which “spake to him (Moses) in mount Sina” (see Acts 7. 38; Isa. 63. 9-14; Ex. 25. 1).

Following the conquest and the division of Canaan between the tribes of Israel, and the times of the judges, Solomon’s temple at Jerusalem continued the representation of the church which was to be still more fully manifest under New Testament dispensation. David, the anointed king and successor of Saul whom God had given in His anger

and taken away in His wrath (see Hos. 13. 11), had “found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob” (Acts 7. 46; see Psa. 132; 2 Sam. 7). “But Solomon,” his son, “built Him an house” (Acts 7. 47) which was “exceeding magnificent” (1 Chron. 22. 5). Beautifully significant were King Solomon’s words at the dedication of the temple: “But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!” (2 Chron. 6. 18). “Contained,” Jehovah can never be, but it pleased the Father that the fulness of the Godhead should dwell bodily in Christ (see Col. 1. 19; 2. 9). Alluding to this, Stephen (Acts 7. 49) quotes Isaiah 66. 1: “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest?” whereupon the prophet proceeds to draw the distinction between a place for corporate worship, and the essential element in true worship: “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word”; “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 66. 2; 57. 15).

*God’s presence creates worship which no amount of organisation will produce.* And the church is where such worshippers gather together. But His own appointments Jehovah has condescended to promise to bless with His especial manifested presence, and the contrite-hearted ones will be found humbly seeking Him therein. For while there is no saving merit in observing the divinely-prescribed ways of outward worship, it is certain that God’s blessing will not rest upon the neglect thereof. Hence Solomon in his remarkable prayer (2 Chron. 6) invokes this and every other blessing upon the people who should pray toward this house “whereof Thou hast said that Thou wouldest put Thy name there” (verse 20). This indicates the prayer offered by faith in Christ’s name, for He is the great Antitype of Solomon’s temple (see John 2. 19-21; 14. 13). In Solomon’s temple was placed the ark of the covenant, hitherto dwelling in the tabernacle. God most graciously and gloriously owned King Solomon and the assembled people of Israel, by filling the building with a solemn, visible token of His gracious presence: “Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house” (2 Chron. 7. 1, 2).

After the death of Solomon, the sins of the kings and of the people provoked the Lord to send judgments until at length, in the days of Zedekiah, He rose against them in His wrath “till there was no remedy.” For they had “polluted the house of the Lord which He had hallowed in

Jerusalem” (2 Chron. 36. 16, 14). Nebuchadnezzar’s army burnt the house of the Lord, and the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and brake down the walls of the city, carrying away into Babylon the king and the people (with the exception of some poor folk to be vinedressers and husbandmen). The vessels of gold and silver also, and all the treasures of the temple were taken away, as spoil to Babylon. Then was fulfilled “the Word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (2 Chron. 36. 21). This instructs us that divinely-appointed privileges in regard to the worship of God, being abused or neglected, may be removed or suspended; and that the mere outward means though retained, when lacking the continued presence and blessing of the Lord, are neither beneficial to the users nor glorifying to God. A further encouraging lesson may be derived: that although the professing church of God may not escape the general evils of the times, yet in the worst of cases the Lord has some who, though in captivity, are truly His own people, and whose spirit God will raise to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem (see Ezra 1. 3-5).

God’s dwelling with Israel being typical of the covenant of grace (“I have given Him for a covenant of the people”; “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (see Isa. 42. 6; 55. 3, 4)), they being a type of the whole church of the elect, the type must be retained until the antitype (“Emmanuel, God with us” Matt. 1. 23) appears. Therefore, “in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the Word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation” (Ezra 1. 1) concerning the return of the captives and the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem; which notwithstanding much opposition, was accomplished in the sixth year of Darius, king of Persia.

Concerning this temple, Haggai (through whose prophesying the people prospered in the work) declared, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of Hosts” (Hagg. 2. 9). The former temple had been filled, as we have seen, with the emblematic presence of Jehovah, but *this* was actually visited by the very God-Man, Jehovah-Jesus, in the days of His flesh upon earth. Herein Simeon found peace, who having come by the Spirit into the temple at the time when the parents of the Lord Jesus brought Him in, to do for Him after the custom of the law, “Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation” (Luke 2. 28-30).

“In this place will I give peace” (Hagg. 2. 9) – and holiness: “When He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the

temple ... and said unto them ... Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up" (John 2. 15-17). Peace, with holiness, the gospel teaches and provides. "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil." "Love the truth and peace" (Psa. 97. 10; Zech. 8. 19). All this was doubtless figurative. The church is to be composed of elected, redeemed, quickened, justified, sanctified, glorified sinners, Jews and Gentiles. In their hearts faith is to be a purifying principle, when they become the "temples of the Holy Ghost" (see 1 Cor. 6. 19) and Christ is in them, the hope of eternal glory. Of the Gentiles, it is written, "Purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15. 9). "Holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, for ever"; "Whose house are we" (Psa. 93. 5; Heb. 3. 6). This strictness may also typify the exclusion from gospel church services of all that is not commanded in Holy Scripture, for, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14. 23) and the rule of faith is Holy Scripture; and the motive of faith is love; "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5. 6). Of all unscriptural innovations, the rule is, "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11. 16).

*(To be continued)*

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## LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

*The following letter was sent on behalf of the Gospel Standard Society*

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5 Roundwood Gardens,  
Harpenden,  
Herts. AL5 3AJ  
April 6th, 2020

*To the Right Honourable Boris Johnson, M.P.*

Dear Prime Minister,

The Committee of the Gospel Standard Society send their prayerful best wishes to you at this time of illness and sincerely pray that you may be granted a full recovery.

It weighs heavily upon our hearts that this nation, and the nations of the world, need the mercy and grace of Almighty God at this time, and we pray that He might be pleased to bless the endeavour of scientists, medics and professionals in tackling this virus outbreak.

We therefore urge the Prime Minister to call for a **National Day of Prayer**, remembering that this is a Christian nation by constitution.

There is much need of humbling to seek the Lord GOD, the Creator of heaven and earth, and to acknowledge in confession our personal and

national sins. There is a name which has been given for our help and salvation, whereby we may call upon Almighty God. This is the precious Name of Jesus. May God help us each to call upon Him.

We would notify the Prime Minister that we are dismayed, that at the very time the national effort is to save lives, there is the ever-increasing advance of abortion legislation which allows for the destruction of the unborn child. We refer particularly to the imposition by Westminster of a wide-ranging abortion law affecting Northern Ireland. This is especially distressing as it is imposed against the will of the Northern Ireland Assembly and populace. We are also deeply concerned about the temporary approval to allow women medically to abort their own children at home. Life is precious and unique, and for every one of us requires preservation. We merely speak on behalf of ourselves and every child in the womb, which once we were.

We assure the Prime Minister of our prayerful support in the faithful execution of his office, and we pray that democracy and freedom of worship will be maintained in this land, although, in principle, we support the **temporary** imposition of restrictions in order to help us through the current crisis.

Yours very sincerely,

David Christian  
Secretary

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## OBITUARY

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**Ruth Elizabeth Fuller**, a loyal and faithful member at Ebenezer, Richmond for over fifty-five years died in the Bethesda Home at Harpenden on July 5th, 2019 aged 87.

The following is gleaned from what she wrote between 2009 and 2011.

“I was born on March 11th, 1932 in the house where I still live. My parents had seven children of which I was the sixth. They lost one baby at seven months. I cannot say much about my father; although always an upright man, and strict about attending services, he never said anything about himself. He died in 1970. Our beloved mother was the one who had the daily care and anxiety of us, particularly in the war time when father was in the army, and the constant air raids made life very uncertain. We never had much money, but we had sufficient food; rationing was a good thing, because it ensured that everyone had basic foods. Dear Mother read to us and with us from the Bible every day and taught us to read it when we were very young. On Sunday afternoons



she played hymns on our old harmonium and we all gathered round and sang together. She was baptized at Richmond Chapel in 1925 and remained a faithful, praying member until her death in January 1962. She was only 62. We all had a great love and respect for her.

"I was a quick tempered and difficult child, I believe, and became very nervous during the war and did not sleep much. We were mercifully brought safely through those years with only minor damage to the house. My father and brothers were brought safely home.

"When I left school at sixteen, I did nursery training at a local place for two-and-a-half years, and lived at home, and attended chapel as usual, but only formally. I had no real interest.

"In March 1951 I started a residential training course in a small London hospital. I was now, for the first time, away from the control of parents or others. At first I attended Gower Street Memorial Chapel when off duty part of Sunday. I do not remember how long I continued, but I gradually stopped going. I began to mix more with those with whom I worked and learnt very quickly to do as they did, sometimes going to cinemas and public houses and many sinful things.

"In the second year of training I was sent to a tuberculosis hospital a few miles from Reading for a few months to gain experience in this work. I was now far away from any who knew me and away from other houses, etc., being in the country. The only other place was an army barracks and some of us became acquainted with those stationed there. I cannot speak of the sinful and daring way I behaved at this time. I tremble to remember. I can only say that I began "to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4. 19). Satan had a very willing slave. I completely forgot that God was watching me. I feel that my sinful life at this time and of future years was very much worse as I had been brought up under the sound of the truth and can never say I did not know. It is only due to amazing grace and mercy that I was not cut off and sent to hell.

"I was not left to continue long in this way as I was brought low with an attack of glandular fever and was sent home to convalesce. None of this brought me to any repentance, rather a fretful spirit because I was not used to weakness of body. I then returned to finish my training in London, continuing in a sinful life.

"I left this hospital in 1955 and lived at home again, doing some further training and then having a more senior position as ward sister. I left behind most of those associates, but still continued to meet at times one with whom my affections had become deeply involved.

"In January 1962, our beloved mother died after suffering a severe stroke in December. She lost the use of her right side and her speech, but was conscious until her last two days. I believe that she had a blessing

a few days before she died. I was alone with her and saw that she was looking very eagerly up at something I could not see, and looked very happy. This continued for a few minutes and then she came back to me. I believe at that time the Holy Spirit began a work of grace in me. I knew without a doubt that my mother was going to heaven, and I knew that I could never come there. I knew that I was a *sinner* – it seemed without hope.

“My whole life changed now as I had to try to look after my father and two single brothers and the home, as well as my nursing work. I tried to put aside the conviction of sin and worked hard to do all my duties. There seemed little time to read and I did not know how to pray. I continued for several months like this. The burden of sin became very heavy, and I felt no hope when I tried to read my Bible (which I had neglected for several years). I always opened on Leviticus, and found my sentence was to be stoned. I was working in a hospital for severely-disabled people, but had to leave it for a while as my health was failing and travelling difficult.

“I ventured at last to go to the evening service at Richmond. I crept in feeling everyone knew what I was (they had known me from a child). (She related to one how she crept in like a criminal, and said simply, ‘Because I was one.’) Dr. Wiltshire, a deacon (see *Gospel Standard* 1967), spoke very kindly to me when I came out. This encouraged me, and I continued to go from that time, soon attending all the services, sometimes feeling a little hope, but often near despair. I found I was quite unable to believe, although I tried hard, but seemed to get worse. Before I started going to chapel, the words, ‘Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?’ (Zech. 3. 2) seemed to keep following me. I tried to put it from me, not believing it could be for me, but it kept coming back for a very long time. I am ashamed to say I did not know where to find it and had to search for it.

“One evening our pastor, Mr. John C. Neville, preached from Isaiah 43. 13: ‘I will work, and who shall let it?’ I cannot remember anything that he said, but I was made to feel that I was hindering the work by not breaking off that friendship with one whom I loved. Circumstances in our families had meant that we had not met for some time. That night I had to write and tried to tell him why we had to part, and that it must be complete. I was very thankful to be enabled to do it. It was not understood by him, but I had to leave that. What an unspeakable mercy to have been brought out of that terrible way of life. I *know* that left to myself I should not have done so. I was determined to go my own way.

“After this I ventured to write to our pastor and tell him a little about myself, and about the effect that text had had. I thought he would despise me, but he was very kind and visited me before long. During the next few months I sank very low, and Pastor was very patient and did not

complain when I phoned him, sometimes late at night – not knowing what to do and tempted to give up. The Lord did not seem to hear my cries for help. I was afraid to go to bed.

“I cannot remember now how long I was like this. I believe it was a gradual feeling: ‘Who can tell, it may be the Lord will show mercy,’ and sometimes I had a little help in the services. I knew I should get back to work and managed to get a ward sister’s post at a geriatric hospital within walking distance from home. I did not feel able to do it, but I went to that interview with Caleb’s words in Joshua 14. 12: ‘If so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able,’ and I was strengthened to do that work for about two years. That word has been a help to me in impossible (to nature) situations through the years, and up to the present time.

“One Sunday, our pastor preached from Isaiah 41. 14 in the morning: ‘Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,’ and Isaiah 43. 12 in the evening, ‘Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.’ Both sermons seemed all for me, and I felt that I should speak of what I felt the Lord had done, but I tried to put it from me, as I did not feel a fit person for baptism. It would not leave me, and the words, ‘Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?’ (Luke 6. 46) kept me awake. I ventured very tremblingly to write to Pastor, and he visited me, and in due time put it before the church.

“After seeing Pastor, and waiting to come before the church, while walking to work one morning, I seemed to see a hand stooping down to pick up a filthy worm from the edge of the pit. I cannot describe the love with which it was done, but I believe it brought me to worship at His dear feet, but it did not last long. Also one morning soon after, I woke with the words, ‘My Beloved is mine, and I am His’ (Song 2. 16). I felt my burden taken away and was confirmed in the step I had taken.

“A few days after we had Mr. C.A. Smith (pastor of Jarvis Brook). He spoke from Mark 10. 45. I cannot remember anything now that he said, but it was sweetly confirming. Also at that service we sang hymn 940.

“‘Compared with Christ, in all beside  
No comeliness I see;  
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,  
Is to be one with Thee.’

“I felt that day to be able really to sing that verse, and have always called it ‘my hymn’ since then (I chose it at my baptizing). I always felt a great love to dear Mr. Smith; his face seemed to shine when speaking of Christ. I ventured to write to him later.

“When I came before the church I remember we sang hymn 76, and Pastor read the third chapter of Zechariah. I felt to say very little, and was surprised that I was received. I was baptized by Pastor on September 24th, 1963. He spoke from Acts 8. 37: ‘If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.’ I felt able to say that I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. While singing the fourth verse of hymn 940 I venture to say it was as my marriage vows – very sacred and precious – that He should have chosen me, the vilest of all. I believe I felt the Holy Spirit’s presence and was able to feel I could follow Jesus anywhere. I do not believe I have ever said this before; it was too sacred at the time and I kept it to myself. It is still precious, after forty-six years, and something *real* when everything seems dark oftentimes. I wish I could praise Him as I ought, but I have no words.

“I lived two or three days only in this happy place and was then brought down very quickly. While doing my work in the house a great darkness came over me, and the enemy said ‘What have you done? – professed to follow Christ and you are just a hypocrite.’ I did not know where to go or what to do. I could not pray. I was in a low place for a while, with a little relief at times. Our pastor, at the next prayer meeting, read the account of Christ being led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, which was a little help.

“I do not remember, because of the long time lapse, and I did not write anything down, when and in what order things were in the coming months. One thing I do know, although I believe I had been brought out of the outward sinful ways, and separated from those with whom I had been, I knew *nothing* at that time of my sinful heart. In the years ahead I had many lessons to learn and have continued, it sometimes seems, to get worse, and I wonder if I ever knew anything of Christ.

“For the next few years I was much of the time in darkness. I continued and was kept in the outward things but I feel, looking back, there was not much life in my soul. I worked as a district nurse for about eight years. During that time I had two very heavy trials which I thought I could never come through, and cannot speak of now. I had to be taught not to depend on man, but only on the Lord.

“I then left district nursing and went back to the hospital for severely-disabled people when I saw a vacancy for a ward sister. I had had to leave this after my mother died, and I *chose* now to return. I cannot say I felt I was led to it. The work was too heavy for my strength now, but I thought I could manage – I always thought I could manage. What a fool I have been, and what a long time learning to be unable to manage anything (and still learning).

“I was enabled to continue with increasing difficulties until about 1977. I was by then getting muscular weakness and exhaustion which

was the beginning of multiple sclerosis. I had to leave and have never worked full time since then. I did private nursing and agency work and anything I could. I believe the Lord enabled me to do this and work the hours which I was able. I was free then to attend the services regularly. I always had to do some Sunday work before.

“After retiring I continued working at home, and as my brother became ill at times I was able to help him – giving him insulin injections for about twelve years. I cannot remember any special help or words in these years, but I know I used to pray to be able to look after him, and was enabled to do so. He never attended any place of worship for many years or showed any concern for his soul.

“February 28th, 1996, my brother and I had been working in the garden at home together, and when he had had enough for his strength, I helped put the things away and he went upstairs. A short time after, I heard him make a strange noise and went upstairs to find him sitting on the bed unconscious, and as I lifted him onto the bed and tried to put him on his side, he breathed his last breath, aged 73.”

*After writing the above, Miss Fuller felt unable to continue her writings until 2011; then she wrote:*

“I have not felt able to write this and for a long time have left it. My reaction to my brother William’s sudden death was instant rebellion – I said aloud, ‘It’s not fair – he had no time.’ A few minutes later I realised I was speaking against God’s sovereign right to do what He will. I cannot say what I went through the next few days. I had to deal with practical things. My sister came the next day but was unable, through illness, to come again until the funeral. I was alone in the house with the devil laughing and mocking me. During the rest of that year I was brought very low. I think I was very near a complete breakdown in health. I was able to confess my sinful rebellion and I believe given submission to the Lord’s will in taking yet another loved one away. My other brother (Ernest) had married in mid-life and moved to Scotland, and had died there a few years before. I believe his redeemed soul is with the Lord.

“My wretched pride still continued to try to ‘manage’ my life, but I have found through the last few years I have had painfully and slowly to learn I can do *nothing* unless the Lord gives me strength. I do not find it easy to be nothing and to say, ‘Thy will be done,’ but I do desire to follow the Lord.

“A few years ago now I did have a real help. I had to have a deep brain and spine scan (MRI) which some may find easy, but I was required to lie completely flat – which I cannot do because my neck is crooked (I lose consciousness if made to lie flat). I was very fearful before going to the appointment. I was reading Isaiah 41 and when I

came to verse 10, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness,' these words were spoken to me with power, and I was enabled when the time came to lie still for an hour, and apart from a little dizziness felt no harm. I felt the Lord's presence holding me up. It was very sweet. I wish I was able to praise Him as I ought for His love to such a vile creature as I am."

After her brother died, Miss Fuller had to give up the allotment. She had a large garden and found it increasingly difficult to cope with this and her house. She became very low, and did not seem to get any answers when she cried to the Lord.

In October 2006 she had a most unexpected letter from complete strangers offering to buy part of her garden on which to build a small house. Her writings record: "At first I thought I could not do such a thing – then I remembered I had been begging the Lord for direction, so I had to pause and consider that this could be an answer. There were many problems, some of which seemed impossible, and I had no strength to manage anything, and I said, 'Lord, I know not which way to turn.' I heard so clearly the answer: 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them' (Isa. 42. 16). I knew His voice, and I believed."

Miss Fuller faced many trials and difficulties before this word in Isaiah was fulfilled, but the sum she received for her garden enabled her to make some improvements to her house, advised by her doctor, which enabled her to continue there until 2017. Concerning these things she wrote: "I did not feel it right to move house unless I had a clear leading from the Lord, but I felt a persuasion that I should alter the house and, perhaps, be able to have someone else living in part." All this took a long time, but she finally had a bathroom extension built downstairs, and a small kitchen made upstairs. She also had some new heaters installed. She did not want to move her bedroom downstairs, but felt reproved concerning this, so finally had the room altered and decorated. She was made to feel ashamed of her lack of submission, but wrote, "I felt a softening of my proud spirit, so undeserving of all these mercies. I do not want to admit to weakness. I feel the Lord has been showing me for a long time that I should do this, and in various ways made me to feel increasing weakness."

Here Miss Fuller's writings end. Her hope that one of the Lord's people would be led to come and live in her home was not realised. She declined the suggestion that the rooms should be advertised, as she felt that she would prefer to see the Lord's hand going before her in it and making a way.

When she sent the above writings to Mr. T.J. Pocock, whom she had asked to take her funeral, she wrote, "I often fear I have mistaken the way because I am so unable to love the Lord as I would, and sometimes feel so unfeeling. There have been one or two sweet moments. Some time ago when I was brought very low, quite suddenly and quietly I heard the words, 'Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee' (Song 4. 7). I said, 'Can this be for me? No spot in me?' For a few moments I was lifted right out of myself. How I long to get close to Him more often."

In March 2017, Miss Fuller suffered a mild stroke and was admitted to hospital. It was hoped that she would be strengthened to return to her home, but it became increasingly clear that this was not to be granted, and in June she became a resident in the Harpenden Bethesda Home.

During the two years Miss Fuller was in the Home, she became increasingly frail and increasingly silent.

At her funeral, Mr. Pocock said: "On one of my visits to her in hospital, finding her mourning the Lord's absence, and greatly tried about her standing, I said, 'Has the Lord never spoken to you, then?' She lay deep in thought for a while and then her face brightened and she with some savour and evident renewing of hope said, 'Yes, He has.' She was one who was made to look for His appearing. In His felt absence she said to more than one of us, 'Do you think He will come?' We hoped and prayed that the Lord might manifestly bless her again as her life drew to a close. We did not see that, but it does not alter what the Lord had made known to her over many years. As I pondered over these things since hearing of her death, my thoughts have gone again and again to the words in John 13. 1: 'Now ... Jesus ... having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.'"

The funeral was held at Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond on July 26th, 2019. The hymns were 76 and 766, the second being chosen several years before by Miss Fuller. She was interred in Richmond Cemetery with her brother. Her requested epitaph: "A sinner saved by sovereign grace."

Clement E. Wilkins

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## NOTICE OF DEATH

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**Peter Cornwell**, a faithful minister of the gospel, passed away into eternal rest on Monday, April 13th, 2020, aged 93 years. He had been a member at Hope Chapel, Mount Bures, for many years, formerly a member at Bethel Chapel, Luton, and latterly after transfer to Bethesda, at Galeed Chapel, Brighton. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2. 19).

## TELL JESUS

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O tell it, O tell it to Jesus,  
 The wonders of grace He has done,  
 The kindnesses He has shown to us,  
 As we, in the race, now do run.  
 He has been our Rock and our Shelter,  
 When troubles have pressed like a flood.  
 Nor would we have anything altered,  
 Knowing well it has been for our good.

O tell it, O tell it to Jesus,  
 Our blessed Redeemer and Guide;  
 At last He will land us in heaven,  
*If right* – at the eventide.  
 But we must now pass onwards  
 In our life – the way may be dark.  
 We do feel we're the worst of all sinners,  
 But we're safe if we have just a spark.

O tell it, O tell it to Jesus,  
 Our Friend and our Comforter too.  
 His grace all-sufficient has helped us;  
 Many trials He has now brought us through.  
 O bless and praise Him for all things,  
 The comforts we here now enjoy,  
 The health He so richly affords us;  
 To praise Him should be our employ.

O tell it, O tell it to Jesus,  
 Blessed Guide, blessed Portion and Friend;  
 He's brought us through many a struggle;  
 Our sorrows in singing shall end.  
 If wise, found in the right pathway  
 That leads up to heaven above,  
 He'll gather us then in His garner,  
 No more from Him ever to rove.

When we come to the end of our journey,  
 May we tell Him in praises so sweet,  
 And join in the loud Hallelujahs,  
 And lay ourselves low at His feet.

Amy Ruth Buck

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We remember Mrs. Buck as a faithful member at Providence Chapel, Rotherfield. She was called to walk through some very deep waters, when her husband took his own life. The Lord truly supported and helped her. Ed.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JULY 2020

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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 EDITORSHIP OF THE GOSPEL STANDARD  
MAGAZINE

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It is with great sadness that we announce that our dear friend Mr. Timothy Rosier feels he has to lay down the editorship of the *Gospel Standard* magazine after the July issue, because of unavoidable pressures at home.

The Gospel Standard Committee received his resignation with great sadness and yet understanding of the pressures our friend has been labouring under.

Under God, our friend has continued the same high standard of doctrine, experience and precept which our former Editor, Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom set for so many years. We believe his appointment was of the Lord, and we deeply appreciate all his labours.

The Gospel Standard Committee met remotely on Friday, June 5th, and after prayerful consideration, unanimously asked our friend Mr. Stephen Rosier to take on this burden on an interim basis until January 2021 when, if the Lord will, the position will be reviewed, which he has graciously accepted.

We commend our friend to your prayers and desire that we may see that the good hand of the Lord is still on the *Gospel Standard* magazine as it has so evidently been since 1835.

G.D. Buss  
Chairman of the Gospel Standard Committee

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JESUS RECEIVETH SINNERS

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“This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them” (Luke 15. 2).

This was spoken by the Pharisees, in a derogatory way, as they despised and hated Christ, for they were earning salvation by their own works. Their sneering statement was a tremendous truth.

What a wonder of wonders we have here! An infinite, holy and sin-hating God, receiveth poor, sinful rebels in the Person of the lovely Lord Jesus Christ, God’s well-beloved Son. These sinners that come, are those whom God has chosen from all eternity, and given to His beloved

Son, Immanuel. The pure doctrine is, they come to be received by Jesus, by the drawing love of the Father.

Well, what sort of sinners are they? Are they the cream of mankind? Are they sinners who are not as bad as some sinners? Are they sinners that God knows that if He gives them space and time, they will naturally become wise, improve their lives, so that they are worthy to be saved? Are they sinners that have at last been able to fulfil the law of God? No! No! For these poor sinners know that they are completely lost, absolutely ruined, abandoned wretches and infidels by nature. We think of the dying thief, the poor, mad Gadarene, and abandoned Manasseh, Mary Magdalene possessed by seven devils, an infidel John Newton, or Joseph Hart, who penned his own case.

“Enemies to God and goodness,  
Great and small, since the fall,  
Sink in lust and lewdness.” (H. 799)

Why are they coming? Because they need a great salvation. They need everlasting mercy. They need all their sins to be washed away. They need a complete saving all their journey through. They need preparation for the swellings of Jordan, that they may pass over safely into the promised land. They need the angel of His presence every step of the way, and in their many trials and tribulations, they need the mighty God of Jacob, to command deliverances for them. They come to be saved by grace.

“I need Thy presence every passing hour;  
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter’s power?  
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through clouds and sunshine, O abide with me!”

They have to come in all their spiritual conflicts and temptations. They have to come with all their trials, burdens and cares. They have to come asking for more grace that is alone sufficient to bring them safely through to the end. They have to come casting all their cares and worries upon Him. They are sweetly taught in all their comings to plead the infinite merit of a precious Christ.

Where do they come to? Why! They come to that blessed place called the throne of grace, or as typified in the ceremonial law, the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. They come to what is sometimes called the footstool of mercy and grace. They come to the feet of the dear Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. They come to the only refuge for sinners which is provided by a faithful God who is of infinite compassion and of tender mercy.

“Approach, my soul, the mercy-seat,  
Where Jesus answers prayer;

There humbly fall before His feet,  
For none can perish there.” (H. 388)

Are they received? Yes! Yes! The Scriptures show plainly that coming sinners are received. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11. 28). Jesus also said, “And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37). Whatever the burdens, sins and trials, the poor, seeking soul shall prove, “He is faithful that promised” (Heb. 10. 23).

Who receives them? The dear Lord Jesus who is now in heaven, and He fulfils His word, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them” (Isa. 41. 17). Jesus is that true, loving and faithful Friend of sinners who come repenting toward Him, because they believe that He is the Christ.

“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.” (H. 593)

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6. 17, 18).

“Returning prodigals shall find,  
Though they are base, their Father’s kind.” (H. 806/2)

Jesus receives them! Their supplications are received, their persons are received, and they are blessed. This is all through the love of Christ and the merit of Christ. These are sweet seasons, and they can truly say with David, “I love the LORD, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live” (Psa. 116. 1, 2). When the Lord hears our poor prayers, may we truly lay His goodness much to our hearts. Sadly, we can so easily forget, for we are such leaky vessels.

As we look back, may we value the former mercies received, and may we take courage to continue in the faith, “Looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12. 2).

“The gospel bears my spirit up;  
A faithful and unchanging God,  
Lays the foundation of my hope,  
In oaths, and promises, and blood.” (H. 83)

“Blessed is the man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies” (Psa. 40. 4).

## TO OUR READERS

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It was my intention to inform the Gospel Standard Committee in July that I must lay down the editorship of the *Gospel Standard* at the end of the year. Now with the long lockdown over the coronavirus, it has greatly affected our dear youngest son who has Down's Syndrome. He just cannot understand why his life has changed so dramatically, and is now demanding so much more attention from us. He is friendly, and misses the social contact with family, chapel friends and others. Therefore because of many pressures it is with great reluctance and sadness that I must lay it down with this July issue.

I must acknowledge the gracious help of Almighty God in the editing of the *Gospel Standard*. Also I thank Mrs. Alison Kingham for her excellent help in preparation for printing, together with the kind help of proof readers. I must also thank the readers of the *Gospel Standard* for their encouragements and testimonies of spiritual profit.

May the Lord be with the newly-appointed Editor, and grant to him all needed help, wisdom and skill from Himself, the great Head of the church. Numbers 6. 24-26. Editor

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## CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY

*Sermon preached by Thomas Hull of Hastings on July 3rd, 1881*

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**Text:** "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6).

This is a short sentence, but of mighty import. The words are few, but they overflow with wisdom, grace and love. They are soon read, but they never can be fathomed. They are far beyond the line of human reason, and they far exceed the stretch of human knowledge and creature understanding. In these few words we have God's great mystery, the mystery of grace and of Christ. How little many that read them and hear them think that herein lie couched the infinite wisdom of God, the untold depths of His grace, and the evidence of His secret, everlasting and unchanging love to His own Zion! "Great is the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3. 16); "Christ," being God manifest in the flesh, "died for the ungodly." To me this appears the very centre of Bible truth and of the economy of grace. Every part of the Word of God, of the covenant, and of the gospel point to this one truth: "Christ died for the ungodly." "If this foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (see Psa. 11. 3). Ah! and what would the ungodly do? for all the righteous are by nature ungodly, and they are made to feel themselves to be so. But not

all the ungodly are righteous. There is not a righteous soul upon this earth but is plagued with ungodliness; but there are many ungodly sinners who know nothing of Christ's righteousness. God's people know something both of the mystery of sin and of the mystery of godliness; but the world is dead in sin, and dead to God. Solemn thought! Oh, sinner, there is no heaven for you unless you are brought to repent of sin and believe in Christ, who "died for the ungodly."

But many here present this morning are, I feel sure, interested in the subject of the text; and we may divide them into two classes, and try to show how suitable this blessed truth is to the case of each. First, there are those who are anxious to know their interest in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, second, there are those here who have felt the virtue and efficacy of it, and who are still proving this to be the foundation of their hope and the substance of their faith, "Christ died for the ungodly."

First, then, let us look at the encouragement there is in these words for those who are convinced of their sin, and anxious to realise the atonement of Christ. They have been made to feel the ruin sin has wrought, and the awful distance at which it has placed them from God. Yet all such as are thus brought to feel that they are alienated from God will be enquiring after Him. "What!" say you, "will those that are alienated from God be enquiring after that God from whom they are alienated?" Yes, because, notwithstanding all their fears, He has put something in their hearts that hungers and thirsts after Him, something that pants to know Him, and that longs to get near Him. He has put a new principle in their hearts that fears to be wrong, and desires to be right with God, and the soul that has this new principle says, "How can man be just with God?" (see Job 9. 2). Oh, friends, what an important question! How can a holy God look with favour upon an unholy sinner? If the heavens are not clean in His sight, and He charged His angels with folly, how, then, can I, who am all unholiness, stand before this holy God? I am vile, and full of sin, a hell-deserving sinner. How can I be just with God? How can I dare to venture near His throne or approach His mercy seat? How can I hope to find favour in His eyes?

Well, friends, God teaches every one of His people this lesson of their vileness in order that they may look away from themselves for justifying righteousness; and He makes them so sick of sin that they tremble at the sight of it, and are only too glad to look away from themselves, as God the Holy Ghost pours the light of the gospel into their souls. Everyone thus instructed wants to know if there are any means by which God and the sinner can come together – if there is any spot on which they can meet, and reconciliation be effected.

Well, if there is such a poor sinner here, let me say that to find this desired haven, you will have to look to “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23. 6), to Jesus, who is the centre of the gospel, the centre of the whole economy of grace. The secret of justification is in Christ; He is the Daysman set up for this very purpose to lay His hand upon both (see Job 9. 33), and so make peace; as it is said, “This Man shall be the peace” (Mic. 5. 5), and peace is never to be found elsewhere. This is God’s appointed way. “What!” says the poor soul, “can the holy Son of God be my peace?” Yes, “Christ died for the ungodly.” “But,” says the sinner, “how can I hope that the holy Son of God will be the Daysman betwixt me and God? How can I hope that I shall find favour in His eyes, seeing I am a stranger?” Why, our text blessedly explains the secret: “Christ died for the ungodly.”

If the subject of this text were taken out of the Bible, I should have no gospel, no glad tidings to preach to you; but here the grand secret is plainly declared and blessedly opened up – “Christ died for the ungodly.” There is no way to God but in, through and by Christ. But in Christ we can speak of Him as “a just God and a Saviour” (Isa. 45. 21). Here judgment and mercy meet together; here righteousness and peace have kissed each other; and here God and man are reconciled (see Psa. 85.10). Thus all enquiring souls are, sooner or later, led to this truth: “Christ died for the ungodly.” Yes, the Holy Ghost always leads seeking souls here. He first teaches them out of the law, but it is to give them “rest from the days of adversity” (Psa. 94. 13); and I will tell you how you will have to come:

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall;  
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my All.” (H. 764)

Will that do for you? “Ah!” says the poor sinner, “but will He take *me* in His kind arms?” I answer, “Christ died for the ungodly.” “Ah! but when He died, did He think of a wretch like *me*?” “Christ died for the ungodly.” “Well, but had He such a case as *mine*?” “Christ died for the ungodly.” But someone may say, “You do not know what an ungodly sinner I am.” I think I do. Paul said that he was the chief of sinners (see 1 Tim. 1. 15), and I feel to be the same. But I will suppose you are the blackest of sinners, and that your case is the most hopeless of all cases. “Oh,” says the sinner, “you are about right there.” Well, if the Lord Jesus Christ were to fail in your case, He would fail in all, because we are all alike here. Your case is your own. But mine is the worst to me. I have not your heart and you have not mine. You have your peculiar sins and infirmities, and I have mine: “The heart knoweth his own bitterness” (Prov. 14. 10).

There are a number of people in this chapel this morning who, if I were to ask them, would each say that theirs is the worst case. They would all be the vilest of sinners. All taught of God are brought to this one seat, the chief of sinners. They, every one, come to the dust and dunghill in themselves and they all sit down in the ashes, and cry out, "Unclean, unclean!" (Lev. 13. 45). Now, these are they whose case is met in this blessed truth, "Christ died for the ungodly."

When Christ Jesus came down from heaven, how was He welcomed, as He left His radiant throne on high to tabernacle here below? Why, we find in the first place, that there was no room for Him in the inn. Mr. Hart says,

"The crowded inn, like sinners' hearts,  
(O ignorance extreme!)  
For other guests, of various sorts,  
Had room; but none for Him." (H. 39)

He was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger. Such was the beginning of His life here below. Oh, what an advent! What a reception for the Son of God! The heavenly host proclaimed His advent, saying, "On earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2. 14). But did the multitude receive Him so? Oh, no. They would not believe Him; they would not believe that He was the promised Messiah. They crucified Him as an imposter, and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27. 25), and they had their request. They knew Him not, "for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2. 8).

When He came upon this earth, He came among those who, even at the commencement of His ministry, desired to take His life; for when He declared to them in the synagogue at Nazareth the truth of God's sovereignty, they "rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them went His way" (Luke 4. 29, 30). John says, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1. 11); that is, He came unto the Jewish nation, and nationally they rejected Him, for they crucified the Lord of glory. But there were a few among the Jews who did receive Him. "Oh," say some, "if we had been there we would not have been among those who crucified the Lord." Why, there are many now who profess to love the Lord, that hate His truth, condemn His justice, and think it inconsistent of God, as the God of love, to take eternal vengeance upon impenitent sinners.

Well, God gave us an evidence that He will by no means clear the guilty, when He punished the sins of His people in the Person of His dear

and well-beloved Son; for, if Christ had not died, every soul must have suffered the curse. The only way of delivering the ungodly was by the Lord Jesus Christ assuming our nature and becoming the Redeemer; therefore He came in the flesh, was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Gal. 4. 4, 5). So it is said, “He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isa. 53. 12). Thus God Himself provided the way by which He could, honourably to Himself, justify the ungodly.

Oh, what a blessed mystery this is! “Christ died for the ungodly,” that the ungodly might be justified. He took the place of rebels, that rebels might be delivered from going down to the pit; He stood in the breach, and made up the gap, that sinners might be reconciled to God. Our iniquities were made to meet upon Him, and He died the accursed death, in order that death might be swallowed up in victory; and so it is said, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15. 55-57). Thus “Christ died for the ungodly.” No man “can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Psa. 49. 7), neither can he recommend himself unto the favour of God; for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3. 23). All were by nature aliens and strangers, “having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2. 12). “Children of wrath, even as others” (Eph. 2. 3).

But the Son of God came to those who were in these very circumstances. He took up the case of His own people, became their Representative and their Surety unto God, and He “made peace through the blood of His cross” (Col. 1. 20). That blood was not shed for Himself. No; He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7. 26), but it was shed that His people might be redeemed – redeemed from sin, redeemed from under the law, redeemed from the curse of God, redeemed from hell, and brought nigh to God. All this was done by the precious blood of Christ, which was shed on Calvary’s tree. How suitable, then, is this blessed gospel, which declares the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Friend of the ungodly, who, as the Surety of the covenant, made atonement for their sin, that they might be called “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8. 17).

God’s people were all chosen in Christ from eternity; they were all heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ before Christ died. Yes, the covenant of grace was made before the foundation of the world was laid, and Christ was in that covenant. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost were all parties to it, and God’s people



were all chosen therein and united to Christ. But in that covenant it was also ordained that we should be redeemed from sin by the death of the Lord Jesus, so that there was no covenant of grace instituted apart from Christ and His death. Yea, all grace benefits flow to us through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, with respect to the whole economy of grace, we find that He has the pre-eminence over all things; He was set up from everlasting; as it is said; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre" (Psa. 45. 6). It is an everlasting kingdom, an everlasting righteousness, an everlasting salvation, and an everlasting gospel, because the subject of it is God's everlasting love and grace.

"Christ died for the ungodly." What would all that is said of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible be apart from His death? Nothing to you and me; since, without it, God could bestow nothing of mercy, nothing of grace, nothing of love, upon the ungodly. Sin would have prevented our knowing God in any other way than as a consuming fire. Thus all the covenant of grace, and all the purposes of the infinite wisdom of Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, point to this one fact: the death of Christ. It was the centre of all God's pre-ordination; He made everything in our salvation to hinge upon the atonement of Christ. What a momentous subject, then, is this to poor sensible sinners – the most momentous in the Bible! What shall we say, then, of those who try to explain away the atonement of Christ? Why, they are thieves and robbers – ah, the worst of robbers too, for they would rob God of His glory, Christ of His kingdom, the church of the atonement, and of every spiritual benefit arising therefrom.

Some think that, because people are sincere, they will be sure to go to heaven; but they may be sincere, and yet be very far from Christ and from the truth. They may be sincere in their lives and their conduct; but, friends, it is not the mere stamp of sincerity that will do us any good, but the stamp of God's approval. Oh, sinner, if you are satisfied with anything short of God's approval you are wrong. But if God gives you His approval, you will have that which the world can neither give nor take away, and you will rejoice, not in your own works, but in Christ who "died for the ungodly."

But, in the second place, there are those who can bless God that they are saved from the delusions of Satan by an experience of redemption, and all such are "kept by the power of God" (1 Pet. 1. 5), and find comfort in this truth, "Christ died for the ungodly." They are not left in the devil's snares; no, for they are "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude 1); and Paul says of these, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to

salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess. 2. 13). No matter what devoted servants they have been in the devil’s kingdom, they are so no longer; for when God calls such, He breaks up their allegiance, dislocates their heart, putting it out of place with respect to Satan’s service, and sets it on the Lord Jesus Christ. And He not only separates the heart from the service of Satan, He also dislocates it as to the world, that He may set it “on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God” (see Col. 3. 1). I trust some of us can truly unite with one of our poets when he says,

“Join thou, my soul, for thou canst tell  
How grace divine broke up thy cell,  
And loosed thy native chains;  
And still, from that auspicious day,  
How oft art thou constrained to say,  
That grace triumphant reigns!” (H. 406)

But we could not have sung this had not “Christ died for the ungodly.” Oh, blessed river of grace! It rises above sin, above Satan, and overflows every heart that is the subject of it.

If you have had a glimpse of Christ crucified, and have realised His love and favour, God has taught you the best of secrets, “faith in the bleeding Lamb” (H. 792). It is by faith you feel your sinnership; and it is by “faith in the bleeding Lamb” you are enabled to look to God as your Father and your Friend. So Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph. 1. 3, 4). Oh, friends, beware of those that would rob you of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ! There are some who appear to come very near the truth, but yet are not of the truth; and these characters are the most to be dreaded of all professors.

I am at a point here, feeling sure that, if you and I enjoy anything of the mercy of God, we shall find it comes through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if you and I get to heaven we shall sing this song there: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1. 5, 6). Like as the sun is the centre of our solar system, so in grace the Lord Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, round which ten thousand – ah! ten thousand times ten thousand – stars in His kingdom all revolve, and not one falls from its place. They all pursue their course, all are under His divine control, and His divine power and wisdom are seen in the ordering of all their ways, both in providence and grace, from the beginning to the end. Take away the Lord Jesus Christ, and the church is thrown into utter

confusion. There is no beginning, there is no foundation, there is no hope, there is no abiding. The church of God would only be left in a state of ruin, of condemnation and eternal death. Oh, the deep mystery of grace! Oh, the exceeding riches of that grace! "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).

Oh, poor child of God, although feeling ungodly in thyself, thy faith and thy hope centre in the Son of God, the Friend of sinners! He that "died for the ungodly" loved us when in our undone state, pitied us when in our blood, and cast His mantle of covenant love over us, and said, "Live" (see Ezek. 16. 6). He loved us then. He loved us when in the grave of our natural corruption, when our eyes were blinded by Satan and our feet were posting the way to death; and He manifested His love to us by intercepting us in our way to hell, and by opening up to us the way to heaven; yea,

"He changed our heart, renewed our will,  
And turned our feet to Zion's hill." (See H. 76)

Thus we can look back and see the truth of the apostle's words, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8).

"Loved, when a wretch defiled with sin,  
At war with heaven, in league with hell,  
A slave to every lust obscene;  
Who, living, lived but to rebel." (H. 10)

Paul says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1. 15); so it was with Mary Magdalene, and the dying thief; and so it was with me, and with some of you. Oh, friends, we may well sing,

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to save my soul from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.

"O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace, Lord, life a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee." (H. 199)

Oh, what wondrous love is the bleeding, dying love of Christ! "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21). He not only came from heaven to suffer, bleed and die, but He rose again, and ascended up on high, to receive "gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD

God might dwell among them” (Psa. 68. 18). Oh, how ardently we at times desire that this great love may be made known to the seeking ones of whom I have been previously speaking – the “lambs of Christ’s fold,” the “weaklings in faith,” as Mr. Hart calls them! (See H. 804).

Many years have passed over some of us since the Lord taught us that we were ruined and undone sinners, without help and without hope in ourselves; and it has been many years since the Lord first led us to Calvary, from whence flowed the rich balm that healed all our wounds, revived our souls and allayed all our fears. This took place many years ago in my case, but I find that the old wound breaks out again. I thought and hoped that it would be quite healed, but I find the old venom of sin has gone to the very bottom, and it still rankles there. Oh, the depth of the malady of sin.

Well, friends, when Christ heals our souls, we are sometimes apt to think more of the healing than of the Healer; but this will not do. We love the healing, and for a time how we praise the Healer for the grace and peace thus brought to our souls; and while we have walked in the enjoyment of His love, we have said, “What happy souls are we! Who is favoured like unto us? Oh, there are none that have such cause for singing praise unto God as we have,” and then, perhaps, our hearts have grown proud and cold, and communion has declined, until a sudden pain has seized the heart. The old sore of sin has manifested itself again, and we have been in such trouble about it, because we could not understand our case. “Why,” says the soul, “I thought the Lord had taken away this pain, had healed this sore; but here it is and it seems worse than ever.” “Ah!” says the old enemy, “you thought you were all right for heaven; you thought you knew the secret of the peace and love of God in the heart. Now it is like water spilt upon the ground. You are out of the secret after all; for if the Lord Jesus Christ had made you clean, if you had had His blood applied to your conscience, as you hoped you had, you would never have been in such a state as this. You are not right after all.” Have not these insinuations sometimes dashed your hope to the ground? But they have made you cry again for mercy, and you have again been glad to find that “Christ died for the ungodly.”

These are some of the paths the old sheep have to walk in; and you young lambs that think, if you could but feel the blood of sprinkling, and have the love of God shed abroad in your heart, you should then go singing all the way to heaven, you will find the truth of the word, “It is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom” (see Acts 14. 22).

I do not wish to dash your hope, for I desire that you may have a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart; because if you have a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to your soul, all will be right, and you

will live with Him for ever. "Well," some may be ready to ask, "if the soul is right with God, what can possibly give it trouble?" Why, I want to know and feel the love of Christ, and when He draws near to my heart, I do know and feel it. "Well," say some people, "but you have the Bible." Oh, yes, I have the Bible, and the text I have now read is in the Bible: "Christ died for the ungodly," and the Bible also says that the Lord Jesus Christ has for ever redeemed all His people. Do we, then, want more than the Bible says? Well, the Lord Jesus Christ is in the Bible, and in heaven; still that is not enough for those to know who want Him in the heart. But, if the Lord Jesus Christ is in the Bible, in heaven, and in my heart too, then I have a three-fold cord which cannot be broken.

The fact of the Lord Jesus being in heaven will not take me there unless I am united to Him. Oh, sinner, He may be in the Bible, and in heaven, but He may not be in thy heart. Here is the point: what is He to me and to thee? Those souls who have felt the virtue of His death want to prove Him again and again, as Hart says, speaking of the fountain:

"But if guilt removèd return and remain,  
Its power may be provèd again and again." (H. 155)

This is how the Lord heals us afresh, when we are plagued with sin, and when guilt afflicts and bears us down; and when the enemy disputes our evidences, and tells us we are not interested in the redeeming work and blood of the Lamb of God:

"Jesus appears, disproves the lie,  
And kindly makes it o'er again."

The blessed Comforter also takes us to the cross, and shows us the pierced hands and feet of Him who "died for the ungodly," and then we can say, with the poet,

"Here it is I find my heaven,  
While upon the Lamb I gaze;  
Love I much? I've much forgiven;  
I'm a miracle of grace." (H. 158)

Oh, friends, here is the mercy of mercies: "Christ died for the ungodly," blessed be His name. This is the whole revelation of the gospel of grace, and the only point of rest for every poor, sin-plagued and afflicted heart. Oh, that we may be favoured to know and love Him more, and He shall bear the glory! Amen.

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What we are afraid to do before men, we should be afraid to think before God.

*Richard Sibbes*

## **CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) PLAGUE OF 2020 A.D.**

*(Concluded from page 165)*

We continue with the fourth verse on my mind since the outbreak of the coronavirus.

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21. 28). “Then look up, and lift up your heads.” This means lift up your heart, heads and eyes heavenward, with good hope and expectancy. Search the Word of God prayerfully and remember My word: “Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22. 20). The Apostle Peter wrote, “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Pet. 4. 7). In spite of all the fears and conflicts that the saints experience, the second coming of Christ will be truly a day of great deliverance. Joseph Hart penned this verse for the encouragement of travelling pilgrims to continue “looking unto Jesus,” as they commit their way to Him:

“Saints, raise your expectations high;  
 Hope all that heaven has good;  
 The blood of Christ has brought you nigh –  
 Invaluable blood!” (H. 803/2)

Faith in its sweet exercise will have a certain “good cheer,” because Jesus has overcome the world in which they suffer, and are so tried and tempted that they will not be able to endure unto the end. It will be a spiritual warfare to the end of each of our lives, and likewise to the second advent of Christ. “Look up,” and plead My victory over sin, death and hell. Plead Me as the Sin-bearer, for all the sins of the people of God were laid on Me, and I bore the judgment in sweat, agonies, blood-shedding and death. Plead My intercession at the “right hand of power,” faithfully and successfully to plead your cause in heaven’s court; for I have gone into heaven for that very reason. “My Father, and your Father” has received Me there, that you may be safe and saved at last. My blood speaks for you, and “My Father, and your Father” has given all power unto Me to govern your life, for the government of My dear people has been firmly placed upon My almighty yet loving shoulder; “and the government shall be upon His shoulder” (Isa. 9. 6). “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12. 32).

Also plead My name, for it is such a glorious name which will be held in everlasting fame and adoration in the world to come. For My name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9. 6). This name has been given for sinners to plead. Peter before the council, and “filled with the Holy Ghost,” said, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none

other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4. 12). Jesus Himself declared, "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John 14. 14). Jesus will come as the glorious Husband and Friend of His dear people.

"I, who heaven and earth have framed,  
Am thy Husband and thy Friend." (H. 273)

"For your redemption draweth nigh." What rapture, exceeding joy and sweet surprise the saints shall have when they "meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4. 17). They shall see Him as He is, "And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22. 4). They shall then come to enter in to what Christ has said, "that they may rest from their labours" (Rev. 14. 13). All their hard toiling, frights and fears, dreadful sinnership, tormentings from the great destroyer, cruel foes, weeping in distress, will be over for ever. Death will be safely passed, and they "shall see the King in His beauty" (Isa. 33. 17), as they worship Immanuel for ever and ever, and under Him, "they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22. 5). O may we poor, needy and anxious sinners be among those who will be safely gathered into the presence of the Lord.

We are sorry that our Queen did not mention the God of heaven in her recent broadcast to the nation about the coronavirus, and neither did the Prime Minister acknowledge the Lord's goodness in healing him from the coronavirus. How different from the broadcast of King George VI to the nation after the Second World War. I make this remark by the kind permission of the Editor of the *Friendly Companion*, that the President of the United States made much mention of God when he proclaimed a National Day of Prayer. (See *Friendly Companion*, July 2020.) The reading of that proclamation makes such stark contrast to the remarks made by our Queen and Prime Minister.

May the Lord take us each under the shadow of His wings, preserve us each safely to our appointed day of departure, and bring us each safely home to Himself.

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### CHRIST'S TRAVAIL OF SOUL

*An extract from William Bridge (1600-1670)  
of Norwich and Great Yarmouth*

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As for His soul. His travail was a sore travail, in regard of that, His travail was a soul-travail. It is here in special manner called, "The travail of His soul" (Isa. 53. 11). The soul, and life, and spirit of His sufferings, were in the sufferings of His soul. There was the vial of the wrath of God poured out, and there especially. The papists would persuade us that Christ did not suffer in His soul.

For the clearing therefore of this profitable truth (Christ suffering in His soul) I shall deliver myself in these propositions:

1. That Christ did truly suffer in His soul.
2. That He did suffer in His soul immediately.
3. That He did suffer and encounter with the wrath of God.

1. Our Lord and Saviour Christ did truly suffer in His soul; for, "It pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (Isa. 53. 10). And saith Christ Himself, "My soul is heavy unto death"; He was in great agony, insomuch as He "sweat great drops of blood" (see Luke 22. 44). Now an agony, signifies the sorrows of combaters entering the lists with the sense of their utmost dangers of life. Matthew tells us that He began to be very sorrowful; to be berounded [surrounded] or besieged with sorrow. "My soul," saith Christ "is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26. 38). The apostle says, that He "was heard in that He feared" (Heb. 5. 7). But amazement is more than fear. And Mark tells us, that He "began to be sore amazed." Yea, He was not only amazed, but He was very heavy. "And He ... began ... to be very heavy" (chapter 14. 33). It is the same word that is used in Philippians 2. 26: "And was full of heaviness." Now if our Lord and Saviour Christ was thus sorrowful, and exceeding sorrowful; amazed, and sore amazed; heavy, and His soul heavy even unto death, then surely, He did truly suffer in his soul.

2. I add in the second place, that as He did truly suffer in His soul, so He did suffer in His soul immediately. For look where the disobedience of the first Adam began, there the obedience of the second Adam did begin also. Now the disobedience of the first Adam was not only in his body, in eating with his mouth the forbidden fruit, but in his soul likewise, and he did eat with his body, because he did affect with his soul to be like God. There did his sin begin, namely in the pride and unbelief of his heart; and therefore the obedience of the second Adam was not only to be performed with His body, but with His soul, and to begin there.

Now Christ did truly suffer in His soul; for as His active obedience was spiritual in His soul, as well as corporal in His body, so was, and ought to be, His passive also. And if Christ's sorrow did not begin in His soul, why is it said, that He troubled Himself? "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping ... He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (John 11. 33); but according to the original, and your margin, "He troubled Himself." But because this trouble of His did begin from within. Upon this account He did sweat drops of blood, when His body was in good health, and free from every sickness. The body will not sweat, but when nature is oppressed, when it is under some outward burden, then it sweats. Christ was under no outward burden of disease; only death was now approaching, the fear of which alone, simply considered, could not make Him sweat drops of blood; for says He, "I



have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12. 50). Surely there was some other evil, the apprehension whereof, did immediately fall upon His soul, which did run and flow over into His body. Christ did suffer in His soul immediately. That is the second proposition.

3. As Christ did suffer in His soul immediately, so He did suffer and conflict with the wrath of God. I do not say that the Father was wroth, or angry with His Person; some do here distinguish of the wrath of God; sometimes it is taken for the hatred of persons, so the reprobates are called "vessels of wrath" (see Rom. 9. 22). Sometimes it is taken for the execution of corrective justice; so God is said to be "wroth with His own people" (see Deut. 4. 21). Sometimes it is for the execution of vindictive justice, and in this sense, say they, God is said to be wroth with Christ. But I rather say that Christ did stand for us, being our Surety. There is a difference between the affection of God's wrath, and the dispensation of it. Now Christ standing for us, and in our room and stead, did suffer and conflict with the wrath of God: that is the vindictive dispensation of it; for He was "made a curse for us," and a curse is a vindictive dispensation of wrath. It may be the Socinians and their friends will say that He was made a curse for us, because He died that cursed death on the cross for our good; but if ye look into the words, ye shall find that He was made a curse for us, so as that there was a translation of the curse from us unto Him, which curse was due for our sin; for says the apostle, "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). For it is written again, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (verse 10). Which curse, saith the apostle, Christ is made for us, we being thereby redeemed from it. Now is it possible that Christ should thus be made a curse for us, but He must suffer, and conflict with the wrath of God, which was due to us? and if He were smitten of the Father, then did He bear the dispensation of the Father's wrath and anger. Now it is said expressly in Isaiah 53, "It pleased the LORD to bruise Him" (verse 10). He was "smitten of God, and afflicted" (verse 4).

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Our physician makes these outward blisters in our bodies, to draw out the poisonous corruption that is in our souls: and therefore let us endure what He imposes with patience, and never murmur against Him for effecting His cure; knowing that it is but childish folly to abhor the medicine more than the disease.

*George Downname*

## IF THE LORD WILL

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“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (Jas. 4. 15).

When ministers and chapel correspondents made ministerial engagements in 2019 for 2020, we each expressed, “If the Lord will,” or, “God willing,” or similar expressions. We had no inkling or realisation of the effect of the Covid 19 virus on our way of life in the coming twelve months. Now with our changed way of life, it truly brings home to us the vital import of saying, “If the Lord will.” We really have to view the engagements for 2021 in a greater dimension with an “If the Lord will.”

We should always say, “If the Lord will,” but we can so easily slip into an unfeeling way of expressing or writing it. May the pandemic bring home to us the vital necessity of saying or writing, “If the Lord will,” with godly fear, humble faith and a reverential spirit of awe. Truly in all things, “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that,” and, “Looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12. 2).

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## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 183)*

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### *Christ's personal ministry*

There seems to be a distinct allusion to the temporary nature of the temple and its typical ceremonial worship in the words of Christ, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2. 19). Neither seeing His glory nor understanding His intention, the Jews were exasperated at the suggestion of their “exceeding magnificent” building being re-erected in three days, when it required forty-six years to rear. But He spake of the substance of which the temple was but a shadow (“The body is of Christ,” Col. 2. 17) – His own personal tabernacling with men, His death and bodily resurrection. Through “this same Jesus” all true acceptable prayer, praise and worship ascend, and all spiritual communion between God and men proceeds. The Antitype appearing, there is no more use for the type which therefore “vanisheth away.” The super-excellent glory they saw not, when He who is that glory entered their temple. Him they knew not, who is to be the glory of the whole church eternally. But neither the legal dispensation, which was “made glorious,” nor the ceremonial, had any glory by reason of (in comparison

with) this “glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (see 2 Cor. 3; 4. 6; Heb. 8. 13).

The sensuous is comprehensible to the carnal mind, but the ineffable [unutterable] spiritual glory of God in the Person of Christ can only be known by divine revelation. “He is despised and rejected of men.” “His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God” (Isa. 53. 3; John 1. 11, 12). Few, comparatively, in the days of His flesh, recognised Him as the Son of the living God. All such, then and now, are born of God (see John 1. 13; 3. 3). Christ’s verbal personal ministry was perfect but intentionally incomplete – to be carried on by His disciples after His ascension: “So great salvation; which at the first **began to be spoken** by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him” (Heb. 2. 3). Not until His return to the Father (“Now come I to Thee,” John 17. 13), did the Spirit powerfully descend in those especial ministerial gifts which were designed to produce in the world the “much fruit”: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12. 24).

The blessed Jesus preached, He made disciples and baptized (see John 3. 26; 4. 1). He exercised His prophetic office in declaring His Father’s words. All He undertook He perfectly performed, and the whole was invested with infinite merit. He went about doing good, He fulfilled all righteousness, He personally submitted to water baptism by immersion (an example to His followers). We affectionately remember the testimony of the officers, “Never man spake like this Man” (John 7. 46). In a very small measure, we trust we can humbly say with the Samaritans, “We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4. 42).

We would speak with caution and utmost reverence, but we do not consider it in the least derogates from the glorious perfection of Christ’s work to say that His chief business upon earth was not His verbal ministry, but His law-fulfilling obedience, His sacrificial death for sin. Indeed, His preaching being what it was – the kingdom of heaven, the gospel of salvation, repentance, faith, judgment – His ministry could not be fulfilled by word only; He must act. It was His not only to preach, but to obey, to suffer and die that the Scripture and His own righteous claims might be vindicated, and His people saved: “When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things” (John 8. 28). Emphatically, He came to save the lost, which requires that He not only must speak the words of God (see John 3. 34) but fulfill the will of God: “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the

body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10. 10). For this purpose He came: “I delight to do Thy will, O My God” (Psa. 40. 8).

In regard to the ministry of the disciples of the Lord in the days of His sojourn here below, although it was a true and spiritual ministry – they preached repentance, they had power over unclean spirits and over diseases, healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, etc., and Christ’s own testimony was, “It is ... the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” – yet in comparison with the post-Pentecostal ministry, theirs was very limited, both in knowledge and scope, but serving the divine purpose then intended. Said the Lord Jesus Himself to His disciples before His sufferings, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16. 12-14). Also it was declared, “The Holy Ghost was not yet given” – that is, in His especial post resurrection gifts – “because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7. 39). On the eve of His sufferings, the blessed Jesus, about to depart from His disciples, in His tender love and regard for them said, “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you” (John 16. 7). Again, “Verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father” (John 14. 12). What a holy of holies was the scene of His leave-taking as recorded in John 14, 15, 16, and His precious, intercessory prayer in the 17th chapter! Then, ordaining the observance of His supper in His church while time lasts, in remembrance of Himself, He hastens to fulfil the will of God, to realise in Himself for His people the spiritual substance of the Passover (now therefore abolished): “How am I straitened till it be accomplished”; “with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 12. 50; 22. 15). Having previously indicated the traitor, by him He is now betrayed, by Peter denied, by the Jews mocked and insulted and condemned, by the Roman soldiers crucified, by His God forsaken; then, “knowing that all things were now accomplished,” He receives the vinegar, utters the triumphant cry, “It is finished!” bows His head, dismisses His spirit. O wondrous, mysterious transaction!

### *The New Testament ministry*

One immediate result, in connection with His church, of Christ’s precious death, resurrection and ascension on high, is the ministry of the Word, strictly the New Testament ministry. Passing over, for the time

being, the sacred and all-important doctrines of His death and resurrection, let us notice the investiture of the disciples with the ministry. Christ Himself who purchased the church with His own blood (see Acts 20. 28), connected His precious sufferings and death with the ministry of the gospel, in those memorable words: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24. 46, 47).

The ministry exercised by the disciples during Christ's life on earth, although carrying the divine authority, "He that heareth you heareth Me; and He that despiseth you despiseth Me" (Luke 10. 1, 16) – was not of a different character, but certainly of a lesser extent, both in doctrine and in territory, than that of those who afterwards *reported* the things concerning the sufferings of Christ (then accomplished), and who "preached the gospel ... with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. 1. 12). That important but much abused-declaration: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 18-20), with the parallel word, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 15), embodied the discovery of God's gracious purpose to spread His kingdom beyond the Israelitish race to the "ends of the earth" – so fulfilling the ancient prophecies, which till now were obscure (see Eph. 3. 9; Col. 1. 26).

The apostles were encouraged to expect an especial visitation for this new scope of ministry, by their Master's direction and promise, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high"; He "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Luke 24. 49; Acts 1. 4, 8).

In comparing Matthew 16. 19, with John 20. 22, 23, it would appear that "the power of the keys" was actually given after Christ's resurrection. In Matthew that solemn ministerial authority is *promised*; in John it is *conferred*: "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This is not the "absolution" of the "priest" at "auricular confession," that hidden sink of immorality, that abomination of the papacy and its imitators, the

Anglo-Catholics. Rather, it is the divine authority of the Holy Spirit through the ministry conveying (unknown to the minister) the blessing of forgiveness to the troubled conscience of the penitent sinner, and fixing guilt upon the impenitent. An allusion to this may be in 2 Corinthians 2. 15, 16: “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.” And even the great apostle himself in such awful considerations says, “Who is sufficient for these things?” answering his own question: “Our sufficiency is of God” (3. 5). Blessed is that minister who in his measure is enabled to acknowledge the same source of his sufficiency for the solemn work.

*(To be continued)*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Martin Luther on the Flood;** translated by Henry Cole; stiff paperback; 43 pages; price £5.45 plus postage; published by and obtainable from, The Huntingtonian Press, 72A Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hants., SO30 4EB.

This book is the last translation by Henry Cole of Luther’s Commentary on the Book of Genesis. He died after he had translated the first four verses of chapter six. He had already completed the translation of the first five chapters. Luther’s commentary on Genesis is the result of a series of lectures delivered to his students at Wittenberg University. It was completed over a period of ten years and at the end of these labours of love he was taken ill and entered into his eternal rest.

Luther’s work on the Flood is a valuable work as he expounded on the apostasy of the antediluvian world and traced it through to his own generation. How much more pertinent to our own generation! It is a truly spiritual book, as all of Luther’s publications are.

There is an informative foreword by Henry Sant about Henry Cole, and also on his interest in and admiration for Martin Luther. There is a short appendix of Henry Cole’s view of the vision of faith.

We can warmly recommend this profitable book.

**Martin Luther on Christ’s Eternal Sonship;** an address by Henry Sant; stiff paperback; 20 pages; price £2.95 plus postage; published by and obtainable from The Huntingtonian Press, 72A Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hants., SO30 4EB.

This address was given by Henry Sant at the Gospel Standard Trust Annual General Meeting on May 18th, 2019. This is a valuable publication, as it touches upon a vital point of doctrine which is essential to our salvation: the eternal Sonship of our dear Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Henry Sant skilfully covered this great subject in the limited time he had.

This little book is well worth reading. Therefore we heartily recommend it.

## OBITUARY

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**Harold George Jempson**, pastor at Hanover Chapel, Tunbridge Wells, for twenty-four years, passed away on December 17th, 2016, aged 80 years.

*Taken from his own writings (written between August 2016 and his death in December when he knew that his illness was terminal):*

"I had not thought to put anything in writing, and feeling to have fallen so far short in every way, I heard Mr. Charles Warboys at Hanover (September 2016) speaking from, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' He mentioned in the evening 2 Corinthians 1. 4: 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' I was very encouraged that day and felt was it right to keep silent in light of that text in the Corinthians? I trust it is not presumption to note a few things. I can only say, 'I am what I am by the grace of God.' I stand amazed as to how I have been brought even to this present time.

"I cannot say I know of a certain day or time when a change took place. I remember when I had no real desire to attend the place of worship, but did so out of parental constraint. As a schoolboy, feeling very nervous, looking back I recollect how I had to seek help in my insufficiency. On one occasion I well remember being set some homework I could not understand. It drove me to tears, but sitting at a table in my bedroom, I believe I had to ask the Lord for help, and so suddenly it was shown me how to solve the equation.

"This and other such things, little in themselves, I never considered to show any mark of grace. So I spent my teenage years and did my National Service – much of that in Germany – kept mercifully from much outward sin, but no better in heart than those I was with. I had many a check to my conscience but nothing more. I do believe now that I had to pray my way along. But Oh, how in some matters I solemnly fell, and had to cry for mercy and forgiveness, and plead for help to be kept.

"On finishing National Service, I entered the family business (c. 1960) and was engrossed in it almost to the exclusion of all else. O how I was chastened for this over many years. Judgment and mercy was my lot. Terrible things in righteousness. One thing after another was smitten until I just longed to get out of it all.

"The family business was put up for sale, and at one stage it appeared it would be sold. Everything seemed to be reduced to ashes, but the sale was aborted at the last moment on the Monday after Sunday's service which was about Abraham giving up his son: 'The Lord will provide.'"

Father often used to relate this instance to his family, stressing how close he felt to be finished providentially. It was as a result of this failed sale (c. 1969), that the direction of the business changed. This little shop was converted to self service and a period of prosperity followed. His father had retired in 1968, and he worked in partnership with his brother-in-law for many years (till 1995). When taking over from his father, he often said how he longed to have the same God that his father knew to help him.

Those that worked with him in later years, will recall at times of great difficulty in the business, he would so often say in board meetings, "All we can do is pray." He would pause, bow his head and ask for the Lord's help in whatever the circumstance was, at the same time implying to those present they should do likewise. Those still living can testify to the urgency and reality of those petitions, and how wonderfully those prayers were answered.

He continues:

"We as a family came frequently to Hanover Chapel, Tunbridge Wells, and during that time, the burden was laid on me regarding baptism. I cannot point to any particular time when the Lord changed my heart. I can look back, and perhaps in looking back realise more how it was 'here a little, and there a little.' But still I felt I had nothing real. Many a time we heard the word of the Lord. We were fearful of bringing the children to the Sunday school and would wait for them out on the common. I could not face the very thought of public prayer. Once especially under the ministry of Mr. Moody, those very words which escaped my lips were brought out at the evening hour. I had to come. My desire was to come, yet I felt so unlike the Lord's people. I remember sitting behind the partition in the vestry waiting to hear what the Lord would say through His dear servant.

Mr. Moody spoke one cold wintry evening from, 'So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty' (Psa. 45. 11). What did it mean? I fought against it for a considerable time. I remember driving Mr. Moody on one occasion from Tenterden to Tunbridge Wells, and in conversation must have said something which made him say at the evening service, 'I have heard the bleatings of the lambs today.' It gave me a little hope that perhaps after all there was something of a spark of spiritual life in me.

"Some time later, Mr. David Cornford preached at Rye from, 'Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee' (Mark 5. 19).

"I dreaded the very thought of public prayer. One Sunday morning lying in bed, all of a sudden I had to sit bolt upright and said out aloud, 'I believe and am sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' I cannot describe one's feelings as I felt the words which follow:



‘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. 17).

“I had to go into hospital at the time our son Andrew was born, and felt we must have something. On the morning of the day I entered hospital, the words upon the calendar were: ‘My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest’ (Exod. 33. 14).

“Dear Mr. Moody came to Tenterden with the words, ‘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.’ We also remember Mr. C. Buss stopping in the middle of his sermon, perhaps only a second or two, but we felt it was minutes, and he said:

‘Did Jesus once upon thee shine?  
Then Jesus is for ever thine.’ (See H. 339)

“With helps along the way I eventually had to venture to speak to my father (deacon at Jireh, Tenterden). O the weight of it all!”

He spoke of his exercises concerning joining the church:

“Yet I felt I could not venture, I could not go. We are not a family to speak much on religion, but when my father did speak it was very real. I felt a burden concerning joining the church. I felt I must, yet how could I? I had had to cry unto the Lord and had received answers. I could not deny it, yet I was so often engrossed in time things. Then the Lord laid such pressure upon my spirit that I felt I had to open my heart to my father. One went to the bakehouse from Monday to Saturday intending to try and tell him, but Saturday night I could not pass over that step, dare not, until I had spoken to him. How kindly he spoke. He said, ‘Wait until after the service tomorrow, and I will tell the other deacons.’ That Sunday afternoon, Mr. Robert Field came with the words: ‘Go in peace.’ Many a time I came back from chapel feeling I had nothing, and have often thought of the eunuch. We remember once feeling as though someone sat beside one and said, ‘None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good.’ One Monday morning in the store room in much distress those words came:

‘Cast not away your little hope,  
Come hither, and behold the Lamb.’ (H. 1028)

“Well, I had to venture and I was accepted.

‘Is He thy Sun? On thee He’ll shine.  
Is He thy God? He’ll bring thee through.’” (see H. 1028)

He was graciously helped to tell the church at Tenterden a little of those things concerning the Lord and his soul. He spoke of answers to prayer in his early days, both at school and in the RAF, and that he had

been brought to desire something for his soul, the first intimation being the desire, "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation" (Psa. 106. 4) being applied. He mentioned the solemn exercise he felt before going into hospital for an operation and the promise given: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," and how after coming out he had a special hearing time under Mr. Moody who dwelt upon those words.

He then spoke of his exercises, fears and encouragements over the many months; and it was sweet to note how the ministry of a number of the Lord's servants had been used, having been brought to speak of those very exercises in his soul. Mr. Moody's ministry at Hanover had also been a great help to him.

The work of the Holy Spirit in his soul had brought the exercise concerning the ordinances and now he felt, though fearing to take a wrong step, he could not hold back.

His writing continues:

"At the church meeting, as I waited for the members' verdict, the lines of the hymnwriter came with power:

'Is He thy Sun? On thee He'll shine.  
Is He thy God? He'll bring thee through.' (see H. 1028)

and blessed be God, He has done thus far."

He was baptized by Mr. Moody at Jireh Chapel, Tenterden, on February 28th, 1968.

He continues:

"I am but a dull scholar and solemnly feel to fail; many are the years the locusts have eaten, but one says,

'All thy wastes He will repair;  
Thou shalt be rebuilt anew;  
And in thee it shall appear  
What the God of love can do.' (H. 273)

"The burden of the ministry was with me for many years, but at last I could resist it no longer."

He felt exceedingly tried about the whole matter. On the Lord's day evening at Rye, August 6th, 1978, Mr. Raymond Woodhams had spoken at the end of his sermon on the Lord's word to Peter: "Feed My lambs ... feed My sheep," and this had given him encouragement.

The exercise concerning the ministry had been with him for a long time. There had been a great realisation of the hand of the Lord being heavy upon him, bringing many fears and a feeling of the impossibility of the matter. He had from time to time received encouragements under the ministry and there were special occasions when words fitted his case,

both by reference to the ministry and of an entrance into his exercises. There were portions of scriptures particularly used, including the following:

“Be strong, and of good courage”; “Teach me to do Thy will”; “The thing proceedeth from the Lord”; “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”; “Feed My sheep”; “This is the way, walk ye in it”; “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.”

The exercise had increased, and he felt the time drawing near to tell his pastor he must speak. Mr. Woodhams at Rye spoke of Jonah being asleep in the side of the boat, and his father preached at Stone from, “He that openeth, and no man shutteth” (Rev. 3. 7).

He felt so keenly his helplessness in prayer, his nervousness and the impossibility of the thing before him being accomplished. In reading *Zion’s Witness*, the words of a verse of a hymn were fastened on him. They were:

“Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude.”

Although unable to find them, they abode with him. When at Bradford on the previous Sunday, the deacon had given out a hymn from an old book and the last verse was:

“Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude.”

He was graciously helped to speak before the church with considerable liberty on the words in Psalm 56. 3: “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.” He was unanimously sent out to preach by the church at Tenterden.

He spoke later of his ministerial exercises:

“Over the years I felt the burden of the word which Mr. Moody preached from: ‘When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’ We went for a holiday at Uffington, and I was in much bodily affliction at the time, and I paced the landing in the night. On the Friday I went to chapel, but I came back feeling an utter fool for ever contemplating the ministry. I walked Mr. Cooper’s fields in agony of spirit for about three hours that Saturday. On the Sunday afternoon I went to Blunsdon Hill where my father was preaching, and his text was: ‘Feed My lambs ... feed My sheep.’ I had to tell my father the exercise upon my spirit, and he said, ‘I know, but wait until you have to go.’ I said earlier to Mr. Moody, ‘I cannot imagine what it must be like to have to speak or stand before a people for an hour and a half,’ and he said, ‘Harold, one day you will have to go.’ He never lived to see it. He was the only one I was ever able to open my mind to, after my father. The Lord knows how to deal with us.

“Rebellious thou hast been,  
And art rebellious still;  
But since in love I took thee in,  
My promise I'll fulfil.” (H. 1032)

“I felt I must venture, and as we commenced we have to say it was a venture. There is nothing in one's self. We are poor and ignorant. One feels one's own failings, but it is by the grace of God we are what we are. I have often felt, and felt it keenly of late, that were it not for that restraining grace when amongst the world, where would I be? I cannot speak of great things, but know what it is daily to cry for mercy, and daily plead for pardon. Concerning forgiveness of sins, one has trembled that one has not had that clear evidence, but those lines were dropped softly many years ago: ‘Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you’” (John 15. 3).

He was a minister amongst the Gospel Standard churches for thirty-eight years, twenty-four of these pastor of the church at Hanover, Tunbridge Wells.

He spoke to the church at Hanover, Tunbridge Wells, on taking the pastorate:

“Friends, I can but say that over these last few years it has been a burden with me as to the right course, and what is the Lord's will for me. I felt that we dare not dictate unto the Lord any particular way, any particular blessing ere I ventured. The Lord dropped those words into my heart when driving through Frant and gave me the text for the Sunday: ‘Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul’ (Psa. 66. 16). I cannot express how that word Mrs. Dobell mentioned at the church meeting went home to my heart: ‘For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.’ I had never seen it in that light before. As you know, I tried to venture with it last Thursday evening, and must confess I felt somewhat in bondage as I felt I held back those things which really burdened my spirit. On Sunday I was led to take the same text again, and I cannot express how the Lord helped me.

“I often tremble as I come before you, as before any congregation, knowing so little of the truth, and having been led but in a small measure into the ways of truth. The Lord alone knows how I tremble as I think of the aged saints amongst us and those that have been long in the way. I believe the Lord spoke those words to me some years ago: ‘Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not’” (Jer. 45. 5).

He was deeply exercised about the ministry, particularly with regard to being sure as to the text he should preach from Sabbath by Sabbath

and during the week. So often the words came to him in a practical way. He related when driving in London to take a service and being without a text, he stopped at a set of traffic lights and a dove rested momentarily on the bonnet of the car, and then flew off. In a moment the words came to him, "The dove found no rest ...." A little later, stopping at another set of traffic lights, the dove settled on the bonnet again. His mind was set on the verse he should preach from (Gen. 8. 9).

The first time he preached at Allington in Wiltshire, he was much concerned about occupying a pulpit which in years gone by had been filled by such stalwarts of the gospel. The aged deacon took him around the graveyard and pointed to many of the Lord's people that lay in the graveyard, and he said within his spirit, "Whatever am I doing here?" "If I could, I would run away!" Those words were given him immediately: "Our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3. 5).

He was much encouraged on one occasion when hearing Mr. G. Chewter mention the text that was given him when he was baptized by Mr. Moody: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee" (Josh. 1. 5). This was at a time when he was much cast down by events in providence and in the ministry.

In November 2013, he lost his wife after fifty-three years of marriage. He was especially helped to speak at her funeral, and said, "The grief is deep and heart rending. As I sat in my chair a few days after she was taken, being alone, I cried aloud and said in anguish, 'She's gone; she's gone.' When immediately a voice came from heaven: 'The Lord has taken her; the Lord has taken her.'" He was much strengthened by this word from the Lord. It was a very blessed union. He felt deeply the Lord had provided her for him to sojourn together with in this world. In her quiet, unassuming way, she was a wonderful helpmeet to him, assisting him in his ministry and helping organise the Sunday School outings at Hanover over many years.

His interest in, and love and concern for his children, grandchildren and all the next generation was very evident. He took a deep interest in what they were doing and what they planned to do, daily and in the future. His constant prayer was that they should be preserved.

*Last days – his own writings:*

"My only hope is in the finished work of the Redeemer at Calvary. I remember how after a very difficult day in business years ago, I walked through our apple orchard before going to an evening service, and my cry was, 'If ever my poor soul be saved, 'tis Christ must be the way.' (H. 678). I fully expected the servant of God that evening (Mr. S. Mercer) to cut me off altogether. I looked for hell; He took me by the hand and led me in the preaching to heaven.

“This has been confirmed so much in my illness of late (late 2016). In the A&E at Pembury Hospital I listened to a sermon preached by Mr. G.D. Buss on the few words, ‘I will make darkness light before them’ (Isa. 42. 16). This was a great help in the present path of such darkness, but some of those burdens have been wondrously resolved while I have just looked on. Others remain, but He has said, ‘I will.’”

“I have had a good Master – but I am such a poor, unprofitable servant.”

“I can but say, ‘Not my will, but Thine be done.’ I feel a comfortable hope all is well; may I be given faith to believe what I have been constrained to preach over the years.”

“May all the glory be unto Him (November 2016).”

*Here his writing ends.*

As previously related, he knew his illness was terminal. He went home in early August and managed to put his earthly affairs in order in preparation for his end. There was a certain solemnity about being in his presence at this time, and also in his ministry. He preached from the desk until shortly before his departure. One particular sermon preached just before his end was on the 23rd Psalm: “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” The sweetness and solemn reality of the words spoken that day have remained.

He was hospitalised from early November 2016. At times he was much cast down on the hospital bed, which was evidenced by some of his utterances. However, there were times when his spirit was lifted up. In texting his daughter in early November he wrote, “Thankful you are home safely; shall ever I get home? Only one hope, Calvary and a finished work.” During another visit he kept muttering, “It’s hopeless; it’s hopeless.” One started to quote the hymn, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness,” etc. (H. 1106). He started to join in, saying the words, “On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.” A family member remembers reading John 17. 24: “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou has given Me,” etc. His eyes lit up when this verse was read, something the reader says he will always remember.

He passed peacefully away early in the morning of December 17th, 2016. His days of suffering are over and he is “with Christ; which is far better.” All those years of begging for the Lord’s appearance have now given way to eternal sight. “For ever with the Lord.”

His funeral was held with a good company of friends on Friday, January 3rd, 2017 at Hanover Chapel, Tunbridge Wells, taken by Mr. Jabez Rutt.

The family

*Last days*

We visited our dear brother and fellow labourer regularly for the last few months of his life and felt a sweet union of spirit in his downsitting and in his uprising. He was passing through not only great affliction, but deep trouble also, but we bless God his faith failed not. There were times in his weakness and trouble he felt overwhelmed, but the Lord graciously drew near and supported him. He was a man that greatly feared to presume. He needed a direct word from the Lord to confirm him in the way, which the Lord was pleased to give him, and this gave him rest, alone in the precious merits of his beloved Saviour.

We feel for the sorrowing church and congregation at Hanover Chapel along with his family, and may they prove the sweetness and power of those precious words as he did: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Jabez R. Rutt

Some years ago, our late friend quoted: "Always keeping Christ in view; He will bring us safely through" (H. 788). This has stayed with me over the years. Ed.

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### I AM A DEBTOR

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When this passing world is done,  
When has sunk yon glaring sun,  
When we stand with Christ in glory,  
Looking o'er life's finished story,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

When I hear the wicked call  
On the rocks and hills to fall,  
When I see them start and shrink  
On the fiery deluge brink,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

When I stand before the throne,  
Dressed in beauty not my own,  
When I see Thee as Thou art,  
Love Thee with unsinning heart,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

When the praise of heaven I hear,  
Loud as thunders to the ear,  
Loud as many waters' noise,  
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,

Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

E'en on earth, as through a glass  
Darkly, let Thy glory pass;  
Make forgiveness feel so sweet,  
Make Thy Spirit's help so meet;  
E'en on earth, Lord, make me know  
Something of how much I owe

Chosen, not for good in me;  
Wakened up from wrath to flee;  
Hidden in the Saviour's side,  
By the Spirit sanctified;  
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show  
By my love, how much I owe.

Oft I walk beneath the cloud,  
Dark as midnight's gloomy shroud;  
But, when fear is at the height,  
Jesus comes, and all is light;  
Blessed Jesus, bid me show  
Doubting saints how much I owe.

When in flowery paths I tread,  
Oft by sin I'm captive led;  
Oft I fall, but still arise;  
The Spirit comes, the tempter flies;  
Blessed Spirit! bid me show  
Weary sinners all I owe.

Oft the nights of sorrow reign –  
Weeping, sickness, sighing, pain;  
But a night Thy anger burns –  
Morning comes, and joy returns:  
God of comforts! bid me show  
To Thy poor, how much I owe.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Written at the age of 24, May 1837

(He died when only 29 years old)

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## NOTICE OF DEATH

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**Michael George Bailey**, a faithful deacon at Jireh Chapel, Tenterden, for over thirty-two years, and church member for fifty-two years, passed away to his eternal rest on Friday, June 5th, 2020, aged 85 years. He served for several years on the Bethesda Fund Committee and the Gospel Standard Trust. "The memory of the just is blessed" (Prov. 10. 7).



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
AUGUST 2020

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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 JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT DAY

There is a day coming in the which all who ever lived on this earth will be judged by the eternal God.

The greatness of this day is beyond our ability rightly to comprehend. The shining glory and majesty of the Most High: His infinite holiness, His infinite power, His infinite wisdom, His infinite goodness! Even the holy angels cover their faces before Him. The awful terror and deformity of sinners and their desperation in that day will reveal the true nature of that which is so often lightly called sin.

There are four things about this great day which we desire briefly to set before our readers.

1. It is called the day of God.
2. He will sit upon a great white throne.
3. The world will be judged in righteousness.
4. There will be a great gulf fixed.

1. **It is the day of God** (see 2 Pet. 3. 12). This may be called the day of days. It is also called in Scripture the last day and is that day which no other days shall eclipse or succeed. Yes, the Ancient of Days will now usher in the end of days. How little regard had sinners in their day to the Maker of all their days! How they may have scoffed and lived dishonourably, not seeking to love and glorify Him who is worthy of all their honour and praise. But now, all this wrong will be set right. Think not that God will suffer His honour or glory to be vilified in any degree. He will be glorified in that day, both in the condemnation of the sinner, and in the glorification of the saint. "But now the LORD saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2. 30). All that which GOD IS will eternally prevail in that day.

2. **"And I saw a great white throne"** (Rev. 20. 11). This is the day of the great King! "For I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 1. 14). A great throne, setting forth the absolute supremacy, power and authority of the King. A white throne, setting forth the holiness, purity and eternal righteousness of the King. The King who sits upon this throne is God, and He hath committed all judgment into the hands of His Son. Jesus is said to be the King of kings and Lord of lords (see 1 Tim. 6. 15). God will be seen in the brightness of His glory as He

shines forth in the Person of His only Son. This is a terrifying truth for the ungodly, but a most sublime and unspeakably precious truth for those who are the ransomed of the LORD. Their Redeemer is their eternal Judge. Will He not know, in that day, those for whom He died? Will He seal the eternal condemnation of those for whom He shed His precious blood at Calvary? O blessed be God, for setting the Saviour to be the righteous Judge of all the earth. But seeing King Jesus, the Lamb of God, upon the throne will only add to the unspeakable terror of those found in their sins in that day. And the more they heard spoken and taught of Him in their days upon this earth, so the more will their terror be intensified. Their judgment will be eternally sealed, when the most merciful and gracious Saviour, who never sent any away that came to Him to be saved, will be the One who will say, "Depart from Me" (Matt. 25. 41). That which the rivers, the sun, the rain, the fruitful fields and orchards declared of the Creator's bounty, will now be shining brighter than a thousand suns, in the very face of Him who was once pierced for sinners and bowed His head and died.

**3. It is the great day of righteous judgment** (see Acts 17. 31). This wears a most solemn and awful aspect for us. How many imperfections are ours, how many sinful infirmities, how many sinful words, thoughts and deeds belong to us! "God be merciful to me a sinner" is a most needful supplication to come forth from our hearts before we are summoned to stand before this great and eternal throne. How unspeakably precious Jesus Christ is in all His saving grace and truth. The saints never saw but a passing glimpse of His preciousness on this earth. But, O, in that great day of judgment, His preciousness and glory will be that which shall fill their hearts with such wonder and admiration that their praises of Him cannot but break forth into an everlasting song. May the Lord break our hearts and bring us down to His feet while we live our few days here. There are no feet like the sacred feet of the Lord Jesus.

The judgment is eternal and irrevocable. It can never be reversed or overturned. Likewise, it is perfectly just and absolute in its goodness. All things will be laid bare and open before the holy, all-seeing eyes of the great Judge. Evil and unrighteousness will be finally and eternally banished. What shall be judged? Everything that may be called our life. Our thoughts, our motives, our intentions, our words, our deeds, our omissions, our active sins, our passive sins, our neglect of good, our desire for evil. Nothing shall remain hidden (see Eccles. 12. 14; Rom. 2. 16). Everything will be brought before the revealing light of God's eternal truth. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1. 5). Light does not bend around objects. It reveals and discovers the reality of an object's size and shape. Likewise, the truth about our lives

will be discovered before that great white throne and before all the holy angels. What will be the standard of truth upon which the judgment shall be determined? The holy moral law of God, which is, first, to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and then to love our neighbour as ourselves (see Matt. 22. 37-39). What a blessed standard! But the Judge is the great Standard Bearer. Who more fitted to judge the world than He who has fulfilled that very same law and made it honourable! The books written in heaven about our lives will be opened. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after" (1 Tim. 5. 24). There may be degrees of anguish in a lost world, but all unite despairingly in this one dreadful sentence: there is no remission.

But stay, my trembling soul, to hope give place. For we read, "Another book was opened, which is the book of life" (Rev. 20. 12). Yes, Jesus, the Judge, who magnified the law and made it honourable, has also suffered and bled and died, and offered Himself as a sacrifice for His people's sins. In Christ, the precept and the penalty of a broken law are both perfectly fulfilled. This is the blessed truth of Jesus Christ that is proclaimed in the everlasting gospel. He has lived and died for sinners' sakes, and in so doing has redeemed His sinful people from under the curse of the broken law. So that now it would be unjust to condemn them (for He was condemned for them) and it would be unjust not to acquit them (for He offered His righteous life up to God for them and has been wondrously accepted).

How then shall the judgment proceed that shall separate the wicked from the righteous, that people for whom Christ died? The peculiar line of enquiry is revealed in the Scriptures by Christ Himself, "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?" (Matt. 22. 42). He is the sinner's only hope of reprieve in that great day. And again, it shall be perfectly revealed what each one before the great white throne thought of Christ while they lived on this earth, as we read in Matthew 25: "Inasmuch as ye did it" – or did it not – "unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it" – or did it not – "unto Me." Even a cup of cold water only, given to a disciple because he is a disciple of Christ, will never lose its gracious reward. Hypocrites cannot stand here. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10. 10). There is no pretence with God. He searches out man's heart. Likewise, not one sigh after Christ, not one longing for Him, not one groan unto Him, if it be from a sincere regard to His Person, shall ever be forgotten in that day. Happy day, when Christ shall answer His saints in the longings of their hearts! And thus, the great difference between the lives of the godly and ungodly will be discovered. It is just that the righteous have their happy portion in Christ because they earnestly desired Him, sighed after Him, and loved Him in

their life here. They loved what He loved and were grieved at grieving Him. This was the life of repentance and faith wrought in their hearts freely by the blessed Holy Spirit.

4. **A great gulf is fixed** (see Luke 16. 26). There are but two nations on the earth, and two companies shall be before the throne. No soul can cross from one company to another. The glorious and wondrously happy company at the right hand of the King, were chosen in Christ, by the electing love of God the Father, before the foundation of the world; they were redeemed by God the Son, Jesus Christ, at Calvary; and they were quickened into a spiritual life of faith and love by the blessed Holy Spirit of God. Thus, their eternal happiness and inheritance of the kingdom of God is just and very good, being attended with the shining attributes of all that God is: love, righteousness, mercy, grace, peace, truth, holiness, light and life. This day of Christ's coming the second time is the day of their eternal salvation. But O reader, we hardly dare describe the other company arraigned at the left-hand side of the judgment seat. The terribleness of their eternally-lost state is beyond all words to set forth! No matter how they appeared on the earth, hereafter their true character will be discovered to their eternal condemnation. In the earth, the tares grew with the wheat, and were not always discerned. Hereafter, they shall be gathered into bundles and burned, and the wheat will be safely gathered into heavenly glory. Not one grain of God's chosen wheat shall fall into hell! Then, O then, at that tremendous day, how unspeakably shining and bright will the glory of the Saviour of sinners, Jesus the Son of God, be to those who humbly believed in Him! There is none so precious and lovely as Him, neither was, nor will there ever be. No, not now, or for evermore.

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### GLORIFYING GOD

*Sermon preached by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom at Bethel Chapel, Luton,  
on Thursday evening, January 8th, 1970*

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**Text:** "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6. 20).

There is no more important point in Scripture than the honour and glory of God. The great concern with God is His honour and glory. Angels were created, the world was created, man was created for the honour and glory of the Lord. When Adam fell, the name of God was dishonoured. Sin always dishonours God. Sin does not glorify Him, and yet in the mysterious sovereignty of God it pleased Him to gain greater glory to His name through the Fall than if man never fell. Kent says:

“Here Satan was nonplussed in what he had done,  
The Fall wrought the channel where mercy should run  
In streams of salvation, which never run dry,  
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

The glory of God! The Lord Jesus in all that He did sought the glory of His Father. I read to you that sacred chapter this evening, the 17th of John, where the Lord Jesus speaks so much of the glory of God. What a mystery is the Trinity, but what a blessed truth! The Son glorifies the Father; the Father glorifies the Son; the Holy Ghost glorifies both the Father and the Son. Now I would just linger here. Everything the Lord Jesus did glorified His Father. When the Lord Jesus was born, that song was sung – it must have been the sweetest singing ever heard on earth by mortal ears, a little foretaste of heaven; an angelic choir singing, “Glory to God in the highest.” This was the great point in the Redeemer’s coming. I know He came to save His people from their sins, but He came that He might glorify His Father. In His life of obedience He glorified the law. There was more honour brought to the holy law of God by Christ’s obedience, than ever there was in the law condemning sinners for their disobedience. He magnified the law and made it honourable.

My mind goes to that occasion when the Lord Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify Thy name.” He had this holy zeal, this longing desire that His name might be glorified. “Father, glorify Thy name”; and a voice was heard from heaven saying, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again” (John 12. 28). Especially in His sin-atoning death the Lord Jesus glorified His Father. The love of the Father was glorified. Never was there love like this! The justice of the Father was glorified as sin is punished in the Son of God. In the death of Christ there is a glorifying of the Father.

And then the Father glorifies His Son. He did at His baptism; He did on the Mount of Transfiguration; He did on the resurrection morning; He did when Christ ascended. The Father glorifies His Son: “Him hath God exalted ... to be a Prince and a Saviour” (Acts 5. 31).

And then, friends, the Holy Ghost’s office is to glorify Christ: “He shall glorify Me” (John 16. 14). And in glorifying the Son, He glorifies the Father. This is a vital principle seen throughout Scripture – the glory of God.

Now here this truth is revealed, that *it is the will of God that His people redeemed by precious blood shall glorify Him*: “Therefore glorify God.” Friends, the wicked do not glorify God. Whatever religion they have, whatever outward schemes they have, the wicked do not glorify God. And if you are out of Christ, in a state of nature, you do not glorify God. Solemn word that: “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psa.

7. 11). What is that remarkable word in Proverbs? It speaks of the Lord hating a high look and a proud heart, and then it says this: “And the plowing of the wicked, is sin” (Prov. 21. 4). What does it mean? Well, the wicked really cannot do anything better, anything more honourable than attend to their daily task, such as ploughing; but even “the plowing of the wicked, is sin.” A sinner separated from God cannot glorify Him. There is only one way in which the Lord will be glorified with the wicked. That is, His holiness, His glorious righteousness shall be glorified in their condemnation. Solemn word that: “The LORD hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil” (Prov. 16. 4). God will be glorified in the condemnation of the ungodly, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God the Father. But it is the purpose of God that His name shall be glorified, and His name will be glorified in His people, “This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise” (Isa. 43. 21). The Westminster Assembly’s Catechism begins with this: “What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God.” I say these few things by way of introduction concerning this important point, the glory of God.

Now here the Lord speaks to His people and gives them this exhortation: “Glorify God”; and friends, it is a needful word. O may we ever be concerned on this point! Do we glorify God? The reason the Lord gives for it is this: “Ye are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6. 20). He points His people to the cost of their redemption: “Bought with a price.” We sing:

“He bought our souls from death and hell,  
The price, His own heart’s blood.” (H. 23)

“Ye are bought with a price.” And the Lord lays this in the conscience of His people, what He has done for them in dying love and sin-atonement blood: “Therefore glorify God.” You will never glorify God if it is only from a sense of duty, because you feel you ought. Let us be very clear on this point. It is our duty as creatures to glorify God, but we never will glorify Him if it is just duty. It is as constrained by dying love, it is with a sense of what Christ is and what He has done, that any sinner will glorify Him. “Glorify God.” All creation glorifies God. The heavens declare the glory of God. All creation praises Him, and it is His purpose that His people shall glorify His name.

Now just a few things here. One thing is this: “**Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me**” (Psa. 50. 23). I wonder how much of our lives consists of praise? We have much to praise God for. There are so many benefits in nature and in grace. It is a sad thing when our tongues are so often silent. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” It does not just

mean singing a hymn, friends. We can sing a hymn and there be no real praise in it. But there will be times perhaps when your voice is silent, but your heart flows out in holy gratitude to the God of all mercies, and God is glorified. *Faith glorifies God.* Unbelief always dishonours Him. Unbelief has low views of Him, but faith glorifies God. It sees God as He is, sees Him in all His greatness, sees Him in all His majesty. Faith glorifies God. We glorify God, friends, when we are blessed with a *spirit of reverence*. Irreverence never glorifies God. It is one thing the Lord is very jealous about: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psa. 89. 7). When we are blessed with a spirit of reverence, we glorify God. *When we obey the Lord* we glorify Him. When we are brought in willing obedience, God is glorified. A spirit of love shed abroad in our hearts glorifies God. A hard heart does not glorify Him, but when there is a little love flowing towards Jesus, then God is glorified. When the fear of God prevails in our heart, then we glorify God. When we are blessed with a spirit of submission, then we glorify God. When we admire Him for what He is, what He has done, when we are enabled to meditate on His glory, when we worship Him, then we glorify God.

"Therefore glorify God." You may ask this question: How can a sinful creature glorify God? Let us be very clear on this, friends. On the one hand God is all-glorious, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is essentially glorious. Just as wherever the sun is seen there is a glory to it, so glory is essential to God. His essential glory can never be increased; sinners cannot add to it. But there is a glorifying of God when we are able to view what the glory of the Lord is, *when we are able to ascribe this glory to His name*, when we are able to honour Him, when we are able to put the crown on His head. "Therefore glorify God." There is one thing that delights the Lord, and that is when His people long that He might be glorified. I have said this before. It is said concerning Whitefield, that in his preaching he was overpowered with a burning desire that God's name might be honoured; and his ministry was wonderfully blessed. I know this is high ground. I know sometimes we fail and we are on lower ground. Sometimes in our prayers, our desires, we seek that the word might be profitable, and that it may be powerful; that souls might be blessed and sinners converted. But may there be this – a desire that God Himself might be glorified. I believe this is one thing which will test the reality of our religion. To put it in a negative way, friends, you may be concerned whether you do want to glorify God. Consider it like this – does it grieve you when Christ is dishonoured? This is a great test of the reality of your religion, if you are grieved when Christ is dishonoured. You could stand it concerning yourself, but you cannot stand it concerning the Lord Jesus. O do you ever find it, friends?

I felt my very soul filled with indignation this morning. Perhaps some of you read it in this morning's papers. An ungodly minister who has been guilty of the most awful blasphemies, which never should have been allowed and for which he should have been suspended from his solemn office, has been rewarded for these awful blasphemies by being appointed a bishop in the established church of our land! Friends, where have we come to as a nation, and where is our established church coming to? Is it any better than an apostate church, when a man guilty of such awful blasphemies (which do not bear repetition), who openly, blatantly dishonoured the Lord Jesus, should be elevated to the office of a bishop? O does it not make you plead that the Lord will glorify His name? And does it not grieve you to hear the name of Christ being dishonoured, and does it not cause you to pray, not only that the Lord will raise up faithful men, but that He will put down unfaithful men? "Father, glorify Thy name." O to hear that voice from heaven declaring, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12. 28).

"Therefore glorify God." There is a *glorifying of God in the church*. I would say a few things on this, a glorifying of God in the church. The gospel ministry glorifies God. Let us be very clear concerning this. If the Lord Jesus is exalted in the gospel, though the people all reject it or refuse to hear it, the name of God is still exalted, is still glorified. This is one part of preaching that is often forgotten. It is to the glory of God. So Paul speaks like this: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish" (2 Cor. 2. 15). Whenever the gospel is faithfully proclaimed, it glorifies God, and God in heaven delights in it. "Therefore glorify God." We would seek the honour and glory of the Lord in the gospel ministry. And friends, let us be very clear concerning this – the reason why we contend so firmly for the doctrines of free and sovereign grace is that they glorify God. It is not because they are in our Articles of Faith, or because we are expected to believe them; but any other doctrine dishonours Christ. The reason why we love the gospel as setting forth the doctrines of grace, is because it puts the crown on Jesus' head. It glorifies Him.

"The only gospel we can own,  
Sets Jesus Christ upon the throne;  
Proclaims salvation full and free,  
Obtained on Calvary's rugged tree."

"Glorify God." There is this glorifying of God in the church. There is a *glorifying of God in contending for the truth*. We live in a day in which many, even among the godly, fail to see the vital nature of divine truth. How often we hear people say, "It does not matter," and they cannot see the importance of it! The Lord will bless His own truth; and where any church deviates from the truth, they may think it is something



that does not matter, but it dishonours Christ, and when Christ is dishonoured the Holy Ghost is grieved. Then soon it will be “Ichabod, the glory of the Lord is departed” (see 1 Sam. 4. 21). We cannot be too careful concerning divine truth. The eyes of the Lord, we are told, are ever upon the truth and it is precious to Him, and any deviation from the truth, however small it may appear to man, dishonours God. Friends, have you noticed in the ceremonial law, the tiny details the Lord insisted on? He did not leave anything to Moses’ choice; and if ever there was a godly, honourable man, it was Moses. But the Lord so laid down the details. He said, “See that ye do all things according to the pattern given thee in the mount” (see Heb. 8. 5; Exod. 25. 40). It is God’s religion, not ours. It is not for us to say what is important or what is not important. “Therefore glorify God.”

This, friends, should be the standard of the church of God, in all the concerns, in all the discussions, in all the decisions – the honour and glory of God. May we never be left to depart from this ground. May we be enabled to stand solid here – that the great point in the church of God is that the Lord’s name should be glorified; and if a thing glorifies God it is right, and if it does not glorify God, however many people it pleases, it is wrong. Our religion is before God, not before men. “Therefore glorify God.”

Now I want to *speak of it concerning our souls*. This word says, “Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit”; that is, in all that concerns you – things in providence, things in grace; natural things, spiritual things; great things, small things; things we have to do with in the church of God, things which concern our connection with the world. Now this concerns our souls, and the Lord says, “Glorify God **in your spirit**.” Let me ask you a question, friends, in love: Do you always glorify God in your spirit? Are we not often like this, when the Lord said to His disciples: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of”? (Luke 9. 55). A self-righteous spirit does not glorify God; a self-seeking, scheming spirit does not glorify Him; a selfish spirit, our own spirit, this does not glorify God. “Glorify God **in your spirit**.” How we need that word to be fulfilled: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit”! (Philemon 25). If the Lord saved you by His grace, then that grace is ever with you to bring you safely to heaven; but left to ourselves, there are times when there is not much grace in our spirit. “Therefore glorify God in your spirit.” It touches our souls.

Now the amazing thing, friends, here is this – that *whatever is for our good spiritually, is also for the glory of God*. This is an amazing thing, that the more you seek your real, spiritual welfare, the more you glorify God. When a sinner comes to the mercy-seat, seeking, asking, knocking, so conscious of his own unworthiness, he is glorifying God;

glorifying God as he seeks his own salvation. When you are brought to have sweet views of Christ in the gospel, you glorify God. When you long that Christ might be precious, you glorify God. Now this exposes one of Satan's errors. You come to the mercy-seat to pray. You beg, the Lord answers. And then there is a whisper: "Do not seek any more; be satisfied with what you have. A sinner like you does not deserve anything, let alone what you have got. You cannot ask for more." Watch it, friends! It is from Satan, not from God. The more you ask, the more you seek, the more the Lord gives, the more His name is honoured and glorified. Therefore glorify God in your knocking, seeking, asking, begging: "Glorify God." We sang of it tonight:

"The Lord delights to hear them cry,  
And knock at mercy's door." (H. 527)

He is glorified in it. "Therefore glorify God." And friends, if you glorify God as you beg and pray and plead for His blessing, you glorify God when you have it:

"Self-abasing, grace admiring,  
Made unto salvation wise,  
Matchless love their bosoms firing,  
O how sweet their songs arise:  
'None but Jesus!'  
From His blood their hopes arise." (see H. 918)

This is glorifying God as you are brought with a little love and holy gratitude for what the Lord has done. "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit."

There is a *glorifying of God in His ordinances*. A sinner depending on Christ, constrained by love, comes to tell what Jesus has done, and then takes up the cross and follows Him through the waters of baptism, and the name of the Lord is glorified. There is a rejoicing in heaven over this. There is a glorifying of the Lord at His table: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. 11. 26). It is one part of this sacred ordinance and there is a glorifying of God in it. It is ascribing all the praise and all the honour and all the glory of salvation to a crucified Jesus. "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit."

A child of God *glorifies the name of the Lord Jesus in his pilgrimage*. We have got a way to walk out. How it does glorify the Lord as you are enabled to walk by faith depending on Him, looking to Jesus, leaning upon your Beloved! And then it touches your life, your walk, and your conversation: "Glorify God." May it be the aim of each one of us, friends, that we may glorify God. Do you ever consider this word (it comes very close): "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of

God"? Then it touches what people might call *inferior things*. It touches things you do not want to do. It touches things which make you weary. But there is a glorifying of God in them as they are done with singleness of eye to Him. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10. 31).

Now there is a principle here, friends. *Sin always dishonours Christ*. May we have this principle in our hearts, that we dread to dishonour Him, that we dread to grieve Him. The Lord Jesus went to Calvary for His people and there He shed His precious blood and poured out His soul unto death. If you get a sense of this, then you will dread lest you should be left to grieve Him, left to dishonour Him. You will want to glorify Him. "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit"; "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

We live in *a day of prevailing evils*, a day when things which were once hated are now not just permitted, but they are admired, they are taken for granted. And our young people especially are coming against this problem, these new things which appear, these new fashions. Are they right or are they wrong? Are these things permitted? What is the right thing to do here? Well, on certain things the Lord has made it very, very clear indeed in His holy Word. But there are some of these things which were not known in Bible times, and so there is not a clear word concerning them, either for them or against them. But friends, there is a sure and certain test – Do these things glorify God? Are they to His honour? Now when you have a problem like this, seek that with God's help you might put it in these balances – Is it to the honour and glory of God? And if it is not to the honour and glory of God, then may you be given grace to stand. "So did not I because of the fear of the Lord" (see Neh. 5. 15). But what will people say? And what will they think? We are too extreme, we go too far, we are too narrowminded? Friends, it will not be long, a few more days and months and years, and the world passeth away and the fashion thereof, and when we stand before the great white throne and see the Lord in all His glory surrounded with all His holy angels, what people thought will not really matter then, whether we were extreme or went too far. There will only be one concern then, and that will be the honour and glory of God, when all fall down before Him. There is a clear principle here, and it is a very far-reaching principle, and of a very high standard. "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit." Perhaps you think these things are inward, but it touches the body, the things you do, the places where you go: "Therefore glorify God **in your body**."

Now friends, there is another thing. There will be times in your life when you are *seeking divine leading*, and you do not seem to get this leading, and perhaps it comes to the point where there is the parting of

the ways. Now if you are not clear what to do, the right thing to do is to stand still, not to move. There are some circumstances and some times when you can just remain still and not move. But then there will be other times when you come into a place where you must go this way or that, and you have not any clear leading, you cannot see any word in the Scriptures. May this be the way to consider it – what is it that most glorifies the name of the Lord? O beware of self-seeking motives! And beware of this, friends – there is a spirit abroad which lays too much emphasis on the opening of circumstances. I know there is this leading, the opening and closing of doors; but there will be times when you see something wonderful opening up and your carnal heart longs for it; but inwardly there is a whisper that this will not honour God. “Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

There is a very weighty statement here; your spirit, your body alike belong to God. Then it means that you have no say, you have no choice; “Glorify God.” Now friends, there is an amazing word which says, “Wherefore **glorify ye the LORD in the fires**” (Isa. 24. 15). A child of God sometimes is brought into the furnace of affliction and the fires of tribulation, and it is that God may be glorified there. O to seek grace to glorify God in the fires!

There is also that word the Lord spoke to Peter: “And by this He testified **by what death he should glorify God**” (see John 21. 19). Peter once denied his Lord, dishonoured Him. In his death he was to glorify God. Friends, I know Peter denied his Lord, but he was not left to do it again. They tell us that at length Peter was crucified like his Lord, except for one thing. He begged that as he was not worthy to be crucified like Jesus, it might be upside-down. Friends, Peter did dishonour his Lord, but he also glorified Him in his death.

There are some who have glorified God more in the day of their death than in all the days of their life. There was that amazing case of that godly French minister of the last century, Adolphe Monod. He was the leading Protestant preacher in France and at a comparatively early age he was found on his death-bed. He knew he could never leave that bed again, and he pleaded with the Lord that he might still be used to glorify His name. What happened? Friends crowded into his bedroom when he was dying, and he said a few things to them and those things were written down. Then they were published, and they were made a greater blessing to the people and more to the glory of God than anything he said in the days of his ministry in the pulpit.

“Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” *The great end of the people of God in heaven is to glorify God.* You read the Revelation. Perhaps many things will perplex you; but one thing will be clear – the saints in heaven, free from sin and infirmity,

with holy delight join in this one thing, that they might glorify their God. The songs of the redeemed are all to this end: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and who hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive riches, and honour, and glory, and power, and blessing" (see Rev. 5. 9 and 12).

"Therefore glorify God," and when you are able to glorify God, to ascribe glory to the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit, then there is a little sweet foretaste of heaven, a little foretaste of the place where the spirits of just men are made perfect. "Therefore glorify God." The Lord add His blessing. Amen.

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### THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

*Extract from Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)*

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Let us now ascend in spirit with Jesus, and contemplate *the glory of His exaltation*. That His ascension into heaven was His exaltation to a position of pre-eminent dignity, power and glory, the Scriptures of truth clearly affirm. Two quotations will be sufficient in proof of this. Thus the apostle speaks of the working of God's "mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him 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. 19-23).

Again, in another place, passing through a most affecting description of the humiliation of Jesus, the same apostle proceeds to draw aside, as it were, the veil of His exalted and glorified state. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 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. 6-11). How forcible and expressive are these declarations of the high position in heaven to which the Son of God was advanced!

In the first place, He entered fully and manifestly *into the glory of His Deity*. We may not for a moment suppose that His exaltation added aught to His essential Godhead. This could necessarily undergo *no change*. His humiliation could not take from, nor His exaltation add to, it. We can suppose the sun pouring light upon a stagnant pool, and yet remain as essentially unsullied as though its beams had but played upon the surface of the most pure and polished lake. Now what was the revelation of Jesus, but the pouring down of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness upon a sin-accursed and sorrow-stricken world? Yet the contact of our Lord with this vast mass of pollution and iniquity, was no detriment to His essential and personal holiness and dignity. His beams of light and glory extracted and absorbed no poison from this stagnant pool, but rather – O sovereign virtue of His grace! – exerted so divine, so cleansing, and so purifying an influence, that myriads once sunk beneath its pollutions, have emerged cleansed, sanctified and saved.

Now the exaltation of Jesus was the full, clear and manifest revealing of His Deity. He entered into the glory of His Godhead, so long veiled and eclipsed. He was reinstated in His original dignity, and reinvested with His former glory. Oh, how magnificently glorious did the beams of that Sun now shine, which but a little before had set in darkness and in blood! Yes, our Immanuel entered fully into His divine glory when He entered into heaven! There it had been from everlasting; there it existed during the period of His humiliation; and there, as a robe of dazzling light, it awaited to invest Him the moment He should pass within the vail of the heavenly sanctuary, and enter the portal of the celestial and eternal palace. Then came the coronation! Then the enthronement! Oh, what hallowed imagination can form an adequate conception of that scene? What tongue describe the splendour of that moment? Attended by a celestial retinue, each angel's harp strung and tuned for a higher strain of melody than that which broke in the stillness of night upon the plains of Bethlehem, He passed within the golden portal, file on file of adoring spirits lining the path that conducted Him to His throne. Then rose the loud acclaim of welcome, as ten thousand times ten thousand struck their golden harps, louder than seven thunders rolling and reverberating along the dome of heaven. Falling prostrate upon their faces, all the celestial host, cherubim and seraphim, and "spirits of just men made perfect," would worship at His feet, while every hand would be extended to place the crown upon His head, and every tongue assist to swell the coronation anthem, "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). Oh, let us catch their thrilling note, and echo back their lofty song:

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
 Let angels prostrate fall;  
 Bring forth the royal diadem,  
 And crown Him Lord of all!

“Ye souls redeemed of Gentile race,  
 Ye ransomed from the fall;  
 Hail Him who saves you by His grace,  
 And crown Him Lord of all.

“Let every kindred, every tribe,  
 Throughout this earthly ball,  
 To Him all majesty ascribe,  
 And crown Him Lord of all.

“We too, amid the sacred throng  
 Low at His feet would fall,  
 Join in the everlasting song,  
 And crown Him Lord of all.”

(H. 730)

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### ALL OF GRACE

*Extract from Christ Victorious by Hugh Martin (1821-1885)*  
*(See book review on page 255)*

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In every view that we can take of this first and greatest gift [God sending His Son into the world to save sinners], oh, is it not exceeding abundantly above all that we could ask or think! Herein is love, not that we have loved God – not that we even asked God to love us, or thought of such a thing, but that, unasked by us, unimagined and unthought by any, He loved us in His own unanticipated, unsolicited, unthought-of love, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

When the Lord regenerates us by His grace, and unites us to His Son by His Spirit, He does exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. When regenerating grace first visits a sinner, it is what that sinner had not asked and had not thought. Herein is that saying of the Lord true: “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” (John 15. 16); or that other saying of the Lord by the prophet: “I am sought of them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought Me not” (Isa. 65. 1). No man apprehends or finds Christ, but was first apprehended or found of Christ. No unregenerated man asks regenerating grace. No man dead in trespasses and sins is capable of truly desiring or intelligently receiving the regenerating grace. To think of grace correctly implies and demands the previous possession of grace. To desire grace truly and ask it aright, is the fruit of grace already given and received. Can you ask grace from God in faith? – and if not in faith, it is not His very grace, but some mistaken and deluding semblance of it that you ask.

Then whence is this faith of yours, this believing asking of grace? It is not of yourself; it is the gift of God. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2. 8). Can you so much as even think rightly, that is spiritually, of the grace of God? – and if not spiritually, it is your own carnal imagination that fills your mind, and not the real, true, holy grace of God, for the natural man knoweth not the gracious things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned. Whence is your ability so to think? "We are not able of ourselves so much as to think one thought as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (see 2 Cor. 3. 5). Your power to ask or think spiritually, your spiritual petition or spiritual idea, is from the grace of God given you when spiritually you could not think at all. Your believing desire and supplication is from the grace of God given you when you could neither pray nor think. The Lord has prevented you, anticipated you with His grace; He has been beforehand with His communication of it, when otherwise you had remained conspicuously destitute of it. His gift of it had preceded both *your asking and thinking*, preceded not only your actual asking and thinking, but preceded your ability to ask or think; has been the very origination, beginning and cause of your ever being able to ask it or think of it. And clearly, therefore, in God's first bestowment of His grace upon you, He did exceeding abundantly above all that you had asked or thought.

"Very bold doctrine," I hear someone saying. True, it is indeed. But Isaiah is very bold, and saith, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (see Isa. 65. 1). Exactly is it this doctrine of God's unanticipated grace, anticipating all solicitation, and transcending and preceding all thought and capacity thereof, that is the doctrine which is called bold, but which Isaiah was bold enough to proclaim with unfaltering voice. Good were it that all successors of his upon the mountains publishing glad tidings of mercy were always as bold in magnifying the sovereign, reigning, royal, prevenient [preceding], anticipating grace of God. The heady and high-minded may cavil at it. They may say – they have in all ages said: If none but those who already have it can seek it, if none but the already regenerate – regenerated before asking or being able to ask or even think of regenerating grace – if none but those already in possession of this same grace of God can either ask or think about it, we need neither trouble ourselves to think about it or ask it till it comes.

It may seem a very clever rejoinder. But it is melancholy work, man, rebelling against God, against the grace of God and the God of grace. Depend upon it, this same grace is on the throne, and you cannot depose it. Grace reigns, and will reign, and it will prove a desperate time to you when it is seen that you cannot bow the knee, nor say, God save



the king! but must quibble and cavil, and impudently assail the saving grace of God, and the God of all grace. And it is a most miserable cavil this, about never troubling yourselves about grace until it come, if you are spiritually and eternally dead and damned without it. One would rather think that if you are not insane, the inference with you would have been all the other way. The immediate effect of prevenient grace is to secure that grace shall be rightly thought of, grace shall be earnestly asked for, grace shall be sovereignly, royally given, given into your heart to reign there, till even conscience, that delegate of justice, shall itself become within you a throne of grace, a throne for grace to sit upon and speak from and shine from; and what therefore is your refusal to ask or trouble yourself till it come, as your well-nigh blasphemous suggestion runs, but a rejection of preventing grace itself – a bold and wicked conviction, that as for you it shall not come at all, a determination that it may strive as it may to lead you to ask and pray, but as for you, you see through the whole delusion of our Calvinism, as you call it, and have resolved to have done with its self-contradictions and absurdities? And oh! therefore, are you not a living proof that if Isaiah’s bold saying (for the thing is far older than Calvin), if Isaiah’s bold saying has been graciously accepted among the Gentiles, to the glory of God and of the gospel of His grace – “I am sought of them that asked not after me, I am found of them that sought me not” – his counterpart rebuke to perverse Israel is due to you: “But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people?” (Rom. 10. 21).

Yet, gainsay whoso may, it remains a fundamental truth of the “glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1 Tim. 1. 11) that to be able to think and ask the grace of God, is the fruit of grace already given, given when not asked, given when not even thought of, given when no capacity as yet existed to ask or think of it at all; and in that case is it not exceeding abundantly above all that had been asked or thought? Oh, child of God, when the God of all grace arrested you in your ungodliness and unconcern, when He convinced you of your sin and misery, when He drew a veil to your view over this poor and perishing, unrecompensing, unsatisfying world, and all its semblances and seducing offers, and with it drew at the same time the veil from the world to come, with all its solemnising realities; when He compelled you to cry out, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16. 30), when He revealed to you that Jesus, whom His love and wisdom had appointed without your asking, and beyond all your thought, to be a perfect propitiation for your sins (oh, only think of it! – three Persons in the Godhead, *the same in substance*, equal in power and glory – the same in substance, and one of Them the propitiation for your sins), a perfect propitiation for your sins, your

perfect peace with God, and your life everlasting; when He disposed and empowered, “procured all, and enabled” you to lay the weight of the grand eternity of your lost, wretched soul on the righteousness and love, the all-sufficiency and faithfulness of Christ, thus quickening you to newness of life, and by vital faith uniting you to Him who was dead in your desert of death, and is now alive for evermore – eternal life for you – you now alive in Him, oh! whatever others say in cavilling at the sovereign, anticipating, prevenient grace of God, will not you bear testimony that when God did all this for you, the chief of sinners, the very picture and model of negligence and unconcern, He did what you had never asked for and never thought of, in all this He did exceeding abundantly above all that you had asked or thought!

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### THE BOW IN THE CLOUD

*By Joseph Irons of Camberwell (1785-1852)*

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I have sometimes looked at a rainbow, when the sun was shining beautifully over my head, on the top of a hill; I have looked on the left, and the rain was pouring down, and the same on the right hand, but I have gazed till I have forgotten it rained, and saw only the beauties of the bow. That is happy living, when the soul looks at the bow till it forgets its miseries, and concentrates its gaze upon covenant love, till it feels the warmth of the sun. That is high living. “I will look upon it” (Gen. 9. 16). says Jehovah; do you reply, “So will I”? I have nothing else to look upon, to comfort me. If I look down, I am sure it is very dirty; if I look around, it is very stormy; if I look before me, it is very cloudy; if I look within me, it is very filthy. Where shall I look? Look at the bow. Look at the covenant faithfulness and love of all the Persons of the Deity, engaged infallibly to bring the believing church home to glory.

And when I get beyond this stormy world;  
Have traversed all this dreary desert o’er,  
And entered into that eternal scene,  
Where bliss and joy perfume the holy air  
In which the blest inhabitants abide;  
O’er Jesus’ head and round about His throne,  
Encircling Him and me, Jehovah’s bow,  
Like some protecting arch, of beauteous hues,  
Shall stretch across His own immensity,  
Unfolding attributes divine, cloudless  
And permanent; majestic treasury  
Of covenant love.

## AN ALL-PERFORMING GOD

*Extract from Divine Conduct by John Flavel of Dartmouth(1630-1691)*

“I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me”  
(Psa. 57. 2).

The greatness of God is a glorious and unsearchable mystery. “For the LORD most high is terrible; He is a great King over all the earth” (Psa. 47. 2). The condescension of the most high God to men is also a profound mystery. “Though the LORD be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly” (Psa. 138. 6). But when both these meet together (as they do in this Scripture) they make up a matchless mystery. Here we find the most high God performing all things for a poor, distressed creature.

It is the great support and solace of the saints in all the distresses that befall them here, that there is a wise Spirit sitting in all the wheels of motion, and governing the most excentrical [eccentric] creatures and their most pernicious designs to blessed and happy issues. And, indeed, it were not worthwhile to live in a world devoid of God and providence.

How deeply we are concerned in this matter will appear by that great instance which this Psalm presents us with. It was composed (as the title notes) by David prayer-wise, when he hid himself from Saul in the cave, and is inscribed with a double title: “Al-taschith, Michtam of David.” “Al-taschith” refers to the scope, and “Michtam” to the dignity of the subject matter.

The former signifies “destroy not,” or, “let there be no slaughter,” and may either refer to Saul, concerning whom he gave charge to his servants not to destroy him, or rather, it hath reference to God, to whom in this great exigence [extremity] he poured out his soul in this pathetic ejaculation: “Al-taschith,” “destroy not.”

The latter title, “Michtam,” signifies “a golden ornament,” and so is suited to the choice and excellent matter of the Psalm, which much more deserves such a title than Pythagoras’ Golden Verses did.

Three things are remarkable in the former part of the Psalm, viz:

- I. His extreme danger.
- II. His earnest address to God in that extremity.
- III. The arguments he pleads with God in that address.

I. His extreme danger, expressed both in the title and body of the Psalm. The title tells us this Psalm was composed by him when he hid himself from Saul in the cave. This cave was in the wilderness of Engedi, among the broken rocks where the wild goats inhabited, an obscure and desolate hole; yet even thither the envy of Saul pursued him (1 Sam. 24. 1, 2). And now he that had been so long hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, seems to be enclosed in the net; for the place was begirt

with his enemies, and having in this place no outlet another way, and Saul himself entering into the mouth of this cave, in the sides and creeks whereof he and his men lay hid and saw him; judge to how great an extremity and to what a desperate state things were now brought; well might he say, “My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire” (verse 4). What hope now remained? What but immediate destruction could be expected?

II. Yet this frights him not out of his faith and duty, but betwixt the jaws of death he prays, and earnestly addresses himself to God for mercy: “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me” (verse 1). This excellent Psalm was composed by him when there was enough to discompose the best man in the world. The repetition notes both the extremity of the danger and the ardency of the supplicant. Mercy, mercy! nothing but mercy, and that exerting itself in an extraordinary way, can now save him from ruin.

III. The arguments he pleads for obtaining mercy in this distress are very considerable:

1. He pleads his reliance upon God as an argument to move mercy. “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast ” (verse 1). This his trust and dependence on God, though it be not argumentative in respect of the dignity of the act; yet it is so in respect both of the nature of the object, a compassionate God, who will not expose any that take shelter under His wings, and in respect of the promise whereby protection is assured to them that fly to Him for sanctuary: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” (Isa. 26. 3). Thus he encourages himself from the consideration of that God to whom he betakes himself.

2. He pleads former experiences of His help in past distresses as an argument encouraging hope under the present strait: “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me” (verse 2).

In which words I shall consider two things:

- i. The duty resolved upon.\*
- ii. The encouragement to that resolution.

i. The duty resolved upon: “I will cry unto God.” Crying unto God is an expression that doth not only denote prayer, but intense and fervent prayer. To cry is to pray in an holy passion; and such are usually speeding prayers (Psa. 18. 6; Heb. 5. 7).

- ii. The encouragements to this resolution, and these are twofold:

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\* The sense of the word “duty” is not as a legal performance, but rather as observing those things which God hath graciously enjoined us to in His Word. Ed.

- a. Objective, taken from the sovereignty of God, and
- b. Subjective, taken from the experience he had of His providence,

a. The sovereignty of God: "I will cry unto God most high." Upon this he acts his faith in extremity of danger. Saul is high, but God the most high, and without His permission he is assured Saul cannot touch him. He had none to help, and if he had, he knew God must first help the helpers or they cannot help him. He had no means of defence or escape before him, but the Most High is not limited by means. This is a singular prop to faith (Psa. 59. 9).

b. The experience of His providence hitherto: "Unto God that performeth all things for me."

The word which we translate "performeth" comes from a root that signifies both to perfect, and to desist or cease. For when a business is performed and perfected, the agent then ceases and desists from working: he puts to the last hand when he finishes the work. To such an happy issue the Lord hath brought all His doubtful and difficult matters before; and this gives him encouragement that He will still be gracious, and perfect that which concerneth him now, as he speaks: "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me" (Psa. 138. 8).

Bring we then our thoughts a little closer to this Scripture, and it will give us a fair and lovely prospect of providence in its

- 1. universal,
- 2. effectual,
- 3. beneficial,
- 4. encouraging influence upon the affairs and concerns of the saints.

1. The expression imports the universal interest and influence of providence in and upon all the concerns and interests of the saints. It hath not only its hand in this or that, but in all that concerns them. It hath its eye upon every thing that relates to them throughout their lives, from first to last. Not only great and more important, but the most minute and ordinary affairs of our lives, are transacted and managed by it. It touches all things that touch us, whether more nearly or remotely.

2. It displays the efficacy of providential influences. Providence doth not only undertake but perfects what concerns us. It goes through with its designs, and accomplisheth what it begins. No difficulty so clogs it, no cross accident falls in its way, but it carries its design through it. Its motions are irresistible and uncontrollable; he performs it for us.

3. And (which is sweet to consider) all its products and issues are exceeding beneficial to the saints. It performs all things. 'Tis true we often prejudge its works, and unjustly censure its designs, and under many of our straits and troubles we say, "All these things are against us" (see Gen. 42. 36); but indeed providence neither doth nor can do

anything that is really against the true interest and good of the saints. For what are the works of providence, but the execution of God's decree and the fulfilling of his Word? And there can be no more in providence than is in them. Now there is nothing but good to the saints in God's purposes and promises; and, therefore, whatever providence doth in their concernments, it must be (as the text speaks) "the performance of all things for them."

4. And if so, how cheering, supporting and encouraging must the consideration of these things be in a day of distress and trouble! What life and hope will it inspire our hearts and prayers withal when great pressures lie upon us! It had such a cheering influence upon the psalmist at this time, when the state of his affairs was, to the eye of sense and reason, forlorn and desperate; there was now but an hair's breadth (as we say) betwixt him and ruin.

A potent, enraged and implacable enemy had driven him into the hole of a rock, and was come after him into that hole; yet now, whilst "his soul is among lions," whilst he lies in a cranny of the rock, expecting every moment to be drawn out to death, the reflections he had upon the gracious performances of the Most High for him, from the beginning to that moment, support his soul and inspire hope and life into his prayers: "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."

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### WAITING THE LORD'S TIME

*Part of a letter by Mrs. Elizabeth Parish, Manchester,  
to Mr. Len Parish of Swavesey*

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Withington,  
Manchester  
March 17th, 1951

My dear Len,

The dear Lord will take me home when the time comes. I desire to submit to His will. The children all seem to want me here a little longer, but the psalmist said, if over four score, yet is it labour and sorrow. I have not found it all so, and am amazed at the joy, peace and happiness that come to me yet, as I travel along. The love of children and you dear Len, the longest in the family, and the very many Christian friends.

Often doubts and fears arise, I get indifferent, I forget my God, from whom all these blessings flow. I fret over my sorrows, and yet over and above all I have been brought to say,

"I could from all things parted be,  
But never, never, Lord, from Thee." (H. 1105)

How we neglect His Word and to think about Him. Even to me, things of this life are very attractive. My thoughts and my mind are taken up with any flimsy, worldly thing. Like Nehemiah, I say, "Remember me for good; forgive my sins and iniquities." In heaven, sin, our worst enemy here, will vex our eyes and ears no more.

"There shall we see His face,  
And never, never sin." (H. 770)

What a blessing to be one of His family, of whom He has said, I will never leave nor forsake them, and sometimes I can say I *know*. I can say I am one of His children; *and we should say it too, not just I hope so.* \* How many times Paul said, "**I know**." What would our parents have thought of us if we had doubted and said, "I hope I am your child, but not quite sure about it?" "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psa. 103. 13).

I write this to you, dear Len, more than to any other person, and why? Because our relationship, naturally and spiritually, is very close. May God bless you and constrain you to come out openly and be made willing to follow Him in His ordinances.

Aunt Elizabeth

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## SYMPATHY IN TRIALS

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My dear Friend,

I was pleased to receive your letter; though absent in the body, I am often with you in spirit, knowing you are in a path of trial. Faith must be tried; the path of faith is a narrow path, and often very dark and difficult, but it is a right way for the Lord's honour and our humiliation, that grace alone may reign in and over us. Nature and flesh want a different way, that self might be something, but the humbling lessons the Lord gives us are mingled with mercies. This you have proved under His hand and providence. The sad sinkings of your soul in coming to the Lord's table spring from a felt sense of what we are before His gracious Majesty; and when faith cannot maintain our interest in His love and mercy, down we must sink in fear and doubt.

Assurance is rather a *fruit* of faith, than faith itself. It is by faith we come to the Lord for mercy and help, and by faith we obtain answers to prayer. It is by the power and witness of the Holy Spirit we obtain an assurance of faith in His name. This is to be obtained, and is worth waiting for; and all who truly believe will long to obtain it for a firmer

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\* This lady was favoured with times of blest assurance. Not all are so favoured and faith must be tried. The only ground of blest assurance is the merciful sealing of the Spirit. Ed.

establishment in the Lord Jesus. In Christ there are little children, young men and fathers; each loved with the same eternal love. The Lord takes the lambs in His arms. Real grace humbles us into nothing, while the Lord's mercies and holiness are great in our eyes. How glad I am your heart was strengthened to go to the Lord's table. These times and visits are useful to keep us in our proper place, in reverence and fear.

In years past the Lord wrought a union in our hearts which will never be broken – one in the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of love and power. I am glad T. is well, and the children also. What mercies does the Lord make us prove in the path of trial!

Yours affectionately in the truth,

Eli Ashdown  
1903

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### THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 214)*

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At the ascension of the Lord Jesus, the number of the disciples was about an hundred and twenty (Acts 1. 15). The “greater works” which Christ had said the disciples should do, began to be manifest on the Day of Pentecost, when in fulfilment of Joel 2. 28, 29, and of the promise of Christ (Acts 1. 8), a mighty effusion of the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles. Then was Peter’s preaching effectual in a degree it had not previously been, for three thousand persons were convinced, being pricked in the heart, brought to repentance, and baptized; and the same day were “added unto them,” as members of Christ’s visible church. Thereafter, “they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added **to the church** daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2. 46, 47). Till now there had been no organised gospel church, although a number of humble souls had “compained with the apostles all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that He was taken up” (see Acts 1. 21, 22). These were true disciples, being made so through the preaching of Christ and His disciples (the twelve and the “other seventy also”).

This more extensive dispensation of the Holy Ghost after the ascension does not suggest that there was any defect in the communion of the disciples while their Lord and Master was bodily present with them, but the regular observance of the gospel church order was not



given till now. (The breaking of bread, Luke 24. 30, appears to have been an ordinary meal, not the Lord's supper.) The prophecy concerning this was, "When He ascended up on high, He received gifts for men" – "in the man" – margin – "yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them" (Psa. 68. 18; Eph. 4. 8 compared). As Head of life, grace, wisdom and order, the Lord Jesus communicated those gifts, which were ministerial qualifications "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4. 12). The amazement of the cosmopolitan multitude at being able to hear in their own various tongues the wonderful works of God, was explained by Peter (what he himself was later more fully instructed in, Acts 10), "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even **as many as the Lord our God shall call**" (2. 39). For recognising this universality of the gospel ministry, Stephen was stoned by the Jews, when Saul of Tarsus was chief witness against him (Acts 7). They "gnashed upon him with their teeth" as he charged them with the murder of the "Just One," and declared out of Isaiah 66. 1, 2, the universal kingdom of Christ, and that God's dwelling was not "temples made with hands," but the contrite hearts of poor sinners who should entertain Him, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call"; all others remaining as they, "stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears."

*The scope of the ministry and the planting of gospel churches*

Providence, ever an instrument to further the purpose of grace, overruled the persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, as a means for the spreading of the gospel and the setting up of gospel churches in various places: hitherto the only organised gospel church being that at Jerusalem. "They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.... Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word ... in many villages of the Samaritans" (Acts 8. 1, 4, 25). Saul of Tarsus, maugre [despite] all his "exceeding madness," "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," "beyond measure persecuting the church of God and wasting it" – was a "chosen vessel unto God, to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (see Acts 9. 15). His remarkable call by grace, the revelation in him of God's dear Son whom he had so fiercely persecuted in His members – his affectionate, fervent preaching of the gospel at Damascus ("And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" – Acts 9. 20) – his not conferring with flesh and blood, nor going up to Jerusalem, but into Arabia and again to Damascus – all this was a wondrous display of grace combined with providence for the furtherance of the counsel of Jehovah in the establishment of Christ's kingdom, the erection of gospel churches, and the fulfilment of the prophecy: "In thee

and in thy Seed shall **all nations** be blessed” (see Gal. 3. 8). It is evident that within a few years of Paul’s conversion, there were numerous gospel churches established both in Judea and in many distant regions (see Gal. 1. 17-22).

But while we speak of the ministry as “universal,” we definitely repudiate the boastful claim of some men (usually tinged with Arminianism) to go and preach where (if not what) they will. Rather would we say that each divinely-ordained minister of the gospel has his particular sphere, appointed him by God Himself. The disciples went forth preaching “every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following” (Mark 16. 20). But definitely each minister did not go universally *everywhere*, nor indifferently *anywhere*. When, for example, Peter was to preach the gospel to Cornelius (Acts 10), the Gentile invitation synchronised with a divine direction in the apostle’s heart; thus his natural, national prejudice was forestalled and overcome: the Spirit said, “Arise ... go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them” (verse 20). Not that we would for a moment claim that each minister receives direction so clear for all his movements; a graciously-exercised preacher may frequently be at a loss to know God’s will in certain circumstances; but certainly the promiscuous acceptance of every invitation as being a divine call lacks warrant from Scripture analogy, and betrays want of appreciation of the gravity of the work.

Barnabas and Saul, being “separated unto the work whereunto the Holy Ghost had called them,” after fasting and prayer, and the laying on of hands, were sent away: “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus” (Acts 13. 4). Nor did they modify their message to “win souls for Christ” (and incidentally to avoid the cross), but waxing bold, said, “It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles ... but they shook off the dust of their feet against them” (Acts 13. 46, 51). Again, concerning the disposing of the sphere of labour, “A good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the gospel” (Acts 15. 7). Nor could it be said that in this matter the apostles were in every instance led by or invariably obeyed the Holy Spirit’s dictates. See the contention between Paul and Barnabas concerning Mark: “And so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God” (Acts 15. 39, 40). So that the latter pair went under apparently better auspices than the former at that time, although the Lord overruled all this for His church’s good.

Paul “assuredly gathered” that the Lord had called him to Macedonia, which in the event proved true, for the outcome of his visit and preaching there was the conversion of Lydia and of the jailor and their households, – apparently the genesis of the church planted at Philippi. But when they “assayed to go into Bithynia ... the Spirit suffered them not”; and they were also forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia at that time (see Acts 16. 6, 7). The secret purpose of God according to election would appear largely to determine where His ministers are to preach; and when any such are led of the Holy Spirit to places where error prevails, it cannot be thought to be for the purpose of fraternising with the error-holders, but to convince and warn against the error held. Ordinarily, this was not where erroneous *churches* existed, but where Christ was not named (see Rom. 15. 20).

*The constituents of a gospel church*

The ministry, to which we shall again revert when we come to notice the offices of a gospel church, is so closely connected with God’s cause on earth, that it might not be too much to say that the New Testament visible church and the gospel ministry are correlative. The fact that a gracious and sovereign Lord can, and does when He will, dispense with means He Himself has appointed, is no excuse for insubordination or neglect of proper order in the church.

Come we now to a consideration of the constituents and order of a gospel church. And first, let us distinctly observe the caution of an old divine: “Church order is not a lifeless machine to be moved and disposed by external rules without the Holy Spirit.” Love of one blessed Saviour and Redeemer, submission under one sovereign Lord, acknowledged indebtedness to the God of all grace, gratitude to the blessed Holy Spirit, the only Quickener of dead sinners into eternal life, the only infallible Teacher and Comforter of the ignorant and the miserable – love to the triune Jehovah, begotten of His own love shed abroad in the heart – love, “the bond of perfectness,” uniting true believers to each other and to their Lord, is the vital spring of all communion in the church (see 1 Thess. 3. 6-13; Col 3. 14).

Although the enjoyment of fellowship in a “common salvation” does not depend upon organisation, but upon the spiritual relationship living members of Christ have with each other, yet to assist the exercise of that fellowship and thus increase it, the blessed Head of the church has in gracious authority, wisdom and goodness, given regulations for her public worship and corporate life, witness and communion; attaching many gracious promises to the due observance of this His appointed order. “There am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18. 20) is indeed a wonderful word. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16. 16). “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do

shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. 11. 26). "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 20). "The gates of hell shall not prevail against My church" (see Matt. 16. 18). "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John 14. 15, 16).

What powerful encouragements to loving obedience are these and the many similar rich, divine, gracious promises, directions and declarations! And what assemblies on earth can be compared with those where "Jesus holds His court"? If the Levitical dispensation demanded exact observance of its multiplicity of ritual, shall we who under the gospel are blessed with the graciously-simple, though solemnly-significant, ordinances of Christ, be tardy in taking up His mild, outward yoke? Do we, with some "chief rulers" who believed on Him, love the praise of men more than the praise of God, that we should not confess our faith in Christ's name? (see John 12. 42, 43).

We venture to submit that a gospel church depends for its conformation and order, upon the same authority as for its institution. Did the existence of a visible church state stand upon human authority in whole or in part, its constitution and order might warrantably be in part regulated by human convenience and determined by human wisdom. Such an institution would, however, lack spirituality, permanence, glory and use; it would neither be for the soul-profit of man nor for the glory of God. Erroneous ideas of indiscriminate church organisation have probably been productive of either presumption or neglect in many instances; this also is a fruitful root of superstition. But if a gospel church state rests entirely upon divine authority, the cause of its existence being the direct sanction of the Word of God, then its form of constitution must be founded upon, and can be ascertained from, an authority no less. Who but He who determined to have a visible church in the world, and who alone could produce its constituent material, possesses the prerogative of determining its form and government, with the laws of entering in and going out thereof? (see Ezek. 43. 11, 12).

A recognition of this principle, and a consideration of the gracious, divine purpose, use and end of gospel churches, is requisite to correct the prevailing disregard of church order observable on all hands. True, consideration should be given to those who, tender in the fear of God's great name, tremble lest by observing outward things in religion, the comfort of inward peace and communion might be broken – lest formality should displace secret spiritual worship – lest a life of public profession being embarked upon, some foul fall (as witnessed in others) should reproach that name held so holy and so dear. But a heartfelt persuasion of the fact that the dear Lord Jesus Himself did personally

ordain an outward, visible church state for His own glory on the earth and the benefit of His humble followers, will go far in their hearts who love Him effectually to dispel any misgivings as to the propriety (not to say the necessity) of observing His order, and may be a corrective of neglect by awakening in the hearts of the Lord's living family a serious consideration as to their privilege and duty herein. And whereas a sense of weakness and liability to fall may properly occasion prayer for upholding grace, it is no excuse for disobedience. A better frame of spirit in obedience can hardly be found than, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psa. 17. 5).

Possibly, one reason why comparatively few of the Lord's people are found uniting together in scriptural church order, may be that the ministry has largely failed to appreciate and set out before the people the importance, utility, glory and the divine origin of a gospel church. We probably have insufficiently observed Christ's word, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28. 20). Tremblingly we venture to make this submission, without in any sense preferring it before the painfully-evident fact that the gospel, as to its efficacious power, is today largely withdrawn – the cause of all decays. One solemnly feels to need grace to "search and try" one's own ways, and to turn again to the Lord, so that, if it be His gracious and merciful will, whatever provokes the blessed Spirit to withhold His unctuous power from the ministry, may be purged; and reviving grace bestowed (see Eph. 4. 30).

*(To be continued)*

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## THE MEMORY OF THE JUST

*An account of Philip Hooper of Manchester*

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Philip Hooper, deacon of the Particular Baptist Chapel, Rochdale Road, Manchester, died, January 21st, 1921, aged 84 years. He was born in the year 1836, at Cullompton, Devon. He went to work at a very early age, suffering much hardship during his childhood through poverty, receiving no schooling whatever, except a little education self-acquired, not being able to read or write until nearly twenty years of age. He was one of twelve children, only three of whom lived to maturity.

Before attaining the age of ten years, he was subject to occasional convictions of his state as a sinner in the sight of a holy God, with many fears as to what would become of his soul if taken away suddenly; but as he neared manhood, these feelings appeared to pass away. His life was occupied with farming until he was about twenty-three years of age,

when an incident occurred which changed his course of life. He was going to Exeter with a load of produce from the farm, when he was stopped by a member of the newly-formed County Police (of the existence of which he was not then aware), and instructed to appear at the Exeter Police Court on a charge of driving without reins, apparently a common custom in those days. On the day of hearing the charge, his master refused to lend him a horse to ride to Exeter, a distance of about ten miles, which annoyed him considerably, and after leaving the court, he met a relative who persuaded him to enlist in the Royal Marines. A few months afterwards he was sent out to the West Indies, and later to South Africa, China and Japan, and saw much active service, with many narrow escapes from death. During a voyage from Jakohama to Shanghai, the man-of-war on which he sailed struck some unknown rocks, and was in great danger of sinking, and for a fortnight the crew had to keep the pumps working day and night. In this danger he felt himself face to face with death and eternity, and was assured by his conscience that he would be lost for ever, if the ship went down.

After several years at sea, he bought his discharge, and came to Manchester, where he was married at the cathedral. He now appears to have been under real soul concern, and after attending many places of worship in search of the truth, eventually found the Rochdale Road Chapel, and heard Mr. A.B. Taylor preach. Later he removed to London hoping to improve his position, but try as he would, he could not obtain work; and after losing almost all he possessed, he returned with his wife to Manchester, pawning his watch to obtain shelter for the night. He obtained work the next day, and often looked back upon this circumstance as proving that the Lord intended him to remain at Manchester. He was a deacon for about forty years, and superintendent of the [Sabbath] school for fourteen years, and also conducted a weekly Bible class for about ten years.

Although perhaps not as able as some to speak of special manifestations, he knew the plague of his own heart through indwelling sin, and during his office of superintendent, was very helpful to the weaklings in faith. During the last year or two of his life, he was drawn more sweetly and experimentally into the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and would speak of the precious, atoning sacrifice on his behalf. It was sweet and profitable to visit him, and he loved to speak of the blood and righteousness of a precious Christ as being his only ground of salvation. Tears would roll down his face whilst he spoke of how the Lord had led him, and of the blessed prospect he had in view; and it can be said that the full assurance of faith was reserved for his latter days. For about eighteen months he could not attend the means of grace, but often said he had many tokens that it would be well with him

when “passing through the river of death”; also that he would die peacefully, which was the case. He was only confined to bed for a few days. On January 18th he had a slight stroke, and this was the beginning of the end of the mortal life. He frequently said he had no enemies, and forgave any who might have injured him, as he hoped for forgiveness. He repeated to several members of the family the whole of the hymn: “Weary of earth, myself, and sin” (H. 386).

He passed peacefully away on January 21st, 1921, and was interred by Mr. J. Croft, at Harpurhey, in the presence of a large gathering of friends, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection unto eternal life.

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### BOOK REVIEW

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**Christ Victorious – Selected Writings of Hugh Martin**, edited by Matthew J. Hyde and Catherine E. Hyde; hardback; 425 pages; £16.50; published by the Banner of Truth Trust and obtainable from all good Christian bookshops.

Hugh Martin was a compatriot of many godly men who at the Disruption in 1843 left the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church. He was very gifted with an analytical and logical mind (he was a highly respected mathematician too), yet was favoured with much gracious insight into the doctrines of the Word of God. Today Hugh Martin is known principally for his writings, some of which have been published by the Banner of Truth previously. This book is a new collection of sermons, essays and letters, mainly from his lesser-known works, including some which were originally printed in old magazines.

In reading through the sermons and essays in this book, there were two things which struck the reviewer. The first was the gracious way in which Martin expounds some of the most sublime truths. It was our delight to walk with him as he expatiated on the glories of the covenant of grace, the eternal salvation secured to all the election of grace in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, the certainty and unconditional nature of God’s promises to His own and the glorious inheritance prepared for them. Perhaps not surprisingly given the bent of his mind, Martin often refers to the Book of Hebrews where the apostle reasons out the difference between the old and new covenants, and the difference between the Levitical priesthood and that of the Lord Jesus. It is in this area of gracious exposition, and, we might add, logical analysis of the truth, where he seems at his best.

The second thing which we could not help but notice, was that there were occasions where the author’s gifts were in one way a weakness – every subject seemed to be handled in a logical, often highly-intellectual way, sometimes using words which many would be unfamiliar with, so that the reader could end up bewildered and confused in trying to follow his logic. Many of the Lord’s people, often among the “poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom” are not favoured to look at things logically, but are given faith to believe and trust in the God of all grace. The truth is often more powerful in

authoritative simplicity than when intellectually argued. The Lord Jesus never pandered to the attempts of the scribes and Pharisees to engage Him in reasoned argument, yet “the common people heard Him gladly.” There were not a few times here when we wished the author could have come down to the level of readers, “the common people,” who are not as gifted as he was.

The letters we enjoyed reading, and were touched by the humble way in which Martin gently castigates his correspondent for his expressions when they savour more of unbelief than faith.

In summary, the book is highly commended, but as well as knowing the same gracious teaching of the Spirit of God that he knew, it really needs the reader to be of a similar cast of mind as the author fully to appreciate it. Many may well be over-awed by its intellectual complexity.

John A. Kingham, Luton

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### A FLEEING SINNER’S PRAYER

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From Justice’s consuming flame,  
 Saviour, I fly to Thee;  
 O look not on me as I am,  
 But as I fain would be!

Deserted in the way I lie,  
 No cure for me is found;  
 Thou good *Samaritan* pass by,  
 And bind up every wound.

O may I, in the final day,  
 At Thy right hand appear!  
 Take now my sins out of the way,  
 Who did’st the burden bear.

Why should I thus a rebel be,  
 And lose my dear-bought crown?  
 O may I yield myself to Thee,  
 And lay my weapons down!

What though the fiery serpent’s bite  
 Hath poisoned every vein;  
 I’ll not despair, but keep in sight  
 The wounds of Jesus slain.

My soul Thou wilt from death retrieve,  
 For sorrow grant me joy;  
 Thy power is mightier to save  
 Than Satan’s to destroy.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
SEPTEMBER 2020

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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 FORGIVENESS OF SINS

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We all stand on the brink of a never-ending eternity. What an inestimable mercy it is if the Lord has quickened us by His grace, opened the eyes of our understanding, and brought us under the blessed sound of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

An exceedingly bitter lament in a lost eternity will be the wasting of precious time. When the wicked shall see the happiness and the glory of the redeemed as King Jesus leads them into heavenly glory; when they hear the wondrous song of Paradise as the pearly gates open to receive the innumerable multitude of blood-washed souls; when a celestial ray of glory shines forth from the new heavens upon this happy company; when they have gone through the gates with a tremendous shout of triumph that shall shake and pierce through the desperate prisoners being received into hell's mouth; when the everlasting door of the Saviour's kingdom is finally shut and the glory, light, happiness and bliss of God's blessed habitation will never be seen or heard again, then, O then, will the lost soul rue the day that he neglected salvation! What would he now give, if only he could spend one hour pleading with the Lord for the forgiveness of his sins? Alas! it is too late. Dear reader, except the Lord save us by His grace, this will be our dreadful end! May even this consideration be the means of quickening our souls into a tender exercise of seeking after Christ, the Saviour.

Further, if after a long and prosperous life (attended with sorrows and cares), in our dying hour we have no hope beyond the grave, then the sins of covetousness, pride, ungodliness, uncleanness, wantonness, hardness, deceitfulness, impatience, selfishness and many others beside will rise up before our souls, accusing us on the very threshold of eternity. What then shall be able to prevent us from falling headlong into that burning, bottomless lake of fire? If the intolerable burden of sins committed is so weighty as to sink a sinner into hell itself, how then can we hope to remove that burden except we first put out the flames of hell fire and remove its never-dying anguish?

The apostle was very plain: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2. 3). Yes, the salvation of our souls is no small or light matter. When we were born in this world, we were born under the sentence of death. It would indeed be a woeful sight to see a prisoner

on death row careless or blissfully ignorant as to when the summons should call him to the execution, especially if there was a report of some prisoners being set at liberty.

Consider then, how wonderful the tidings of a full and free salvation are to souls awakened to their true state before Almighty God. The forgiveness of sins is the central truth that constitutes the gospel of the grace of God to dying sinners. Remove this truth and there is no gospel, no heaven, no hope! How wonderful to consider that the glory of God in the gospel consists in the forgiveness of sins! What a blessed report this is to poor, condemned prisoners.

Where we read of forgiveness of sins in the Scriptures, the sense is not the overlooking of the sin, neither is it only the mitigation of the penalty for sin; rather it is the putting away of the guilt of sin by remission, so that the forgiven soul is no longer worthy of condemnation. The forgiveness of sins cannot be separated from the justification of the soul before God. They are the one and same tremendous blessing that flow to the sinner from the sacrifice of the righteous life of Jesus, the Son of God. Forgiveness emphasises the release from condemnation, whereas justification sets forth the ground of that release. It is a just and righteous release. The sinner is no more accounted, in the pure and holy eyes of Almighty God, as a sinner. This is revealed in the everlasting gospel under the blessed truth of Christ's Suretyship. That is, God sent forth His beloved Son as the divinely-appointed Surety of His people, not with respect to man-made laws, but with respect to God's eternal law of truth. Therefore, we read that Christ was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4. 4, 5). He, our near Kinsman, stood in the place and stead of His people, took the charge of their sins upon Himself, and has received the just penalty. Here is a blessed, solemn transfer. Christ, who knew no sin that could be called His own, but rather was perfect, yea, gloriously righteous and spotless in His life under the law, stood forth in our place at the bar of God's eternal justice. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" and, "He hath poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. 53. 5, 12). Thus, His life becomes our life, and our death became His death, and this great truth is what living faith trusts in. O blessed exchange! The opening of the door of heaven! The shutting of the door of hell! Come hither to the blessed Son of God and behold the virtue and efficacy of that precious blood shed! "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17. 11). The righteous life of Jesus was poured out in death as an offering for sin and the precious blood flowed forth from the Saviour's wounded hands and pierced side. Is there any doctrine that should be dearer to the hearts of ransomed sinners than the truth of Christ crucified for them! O humbling, melting, depths of love and grace!

This brings us to a few thoughts.

1. Repentance and forgiveness can never be disjoined. This is especially seen in the great price of redemption that the dear Redeemer paid; His pain, His sufferings, the agony of His soul, His being spat upon and hit in the face, pierced with nails and spear, put to shame and forsaken of God when He hung upon the cross as the Son of man. This is what sin has done, and this is what Christ has suffered to save us from our sins. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him" (Zech. 12. 10).

2. This forgiveness is full and free, and everlasting. It is altogether what God has performed and flows to us freely. It was a perfect and complete atonement and can never be undone. Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19. 30). There is nothing left to do. By His "one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14). Sin has been punished and put away, never to be seen again (see Isa. 44. 22; Jer. 50. 20; Mic. 7. 19). Consider how freely this was done, and how freely this pardon is promised to all that call upon Him in truth. "A fountain opened ... for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13. 1). Jesus cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7. 37).

3. What tenderness and humility should belong to us. There is no such thing as an adamant, hard heart in heaven. Only perpetual melting, tenderness, thankfulness and praise fill the redeemed hearts in glory. Love has this wonderful, tender quality that softens every object it embraces.

4. What an example is set before us in Christ. O, what has Christ, the King of glory, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, condescended to do for us! Though seemingly impossible for us, yet should we not lay down our lives for our brethren?

5. There is a beautiful example set before us in Genesis chapter nine. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, fell into the shameful sin of drunkenness and nakedness. Ham saw it and went and told his brethren; seemingly a small thing to do. But his heart was wrong; he was seeking to report it, rather than lovingly restore. Shem and Japheth were of a God-like spirit and walking backwards into the tent, carrying a garment between them, covered the nakedness of their father. They saw it not, though they had opportunity. What a beautiful illustration of the Lord Jesus and His robe of righteousness that covers the shame and nakedness of fallen sinners. O the love that covers a multitude of sins! "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16). Shem and Japheth received blessing from the God of their salvation. In contrast, Ham's sin was not covered but received its solemn and just reward.

6. Consider the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. O the heights and the depths of the love of Christ! Sinners with aching hearts may come hither to the Saviour's stretched-forth arms and pierced hands! O, if feelingly broken-hearted, may we be graciously led of the blessed Spirit to rest our weary heads upon the loving Saviour's heart, who, rather than lose one member of His little flock, rent heaven and earth with that dolorous cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27. 46).

"Come hither, to the Saviour come,  
Vile as thou art in every view;  
In Jesus' house there still is room  
For needy sinners, such as you." (H.1028)

### THE LOVINGKINDNESS OF GOD

*Sermon preached by John Warburton of Trowbridge at  
Gower Street Chapel, London, on Lord's day evening, April 8th, 1855*

**Text:** "O continue Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee" (Psa. 36. 10).

I. Here we see the lovingkindness of God the Father in the choice of His people, that it originated in His sovereign, discriminating love, and that this love was so strong and enduring that it is from everlasting to everlasting upon those on whom it is fixed. We notice also the lovingkindness of God the Father, in providing and preparing all blessings in His beloved Son, for the supplying, the supporting, the comforting, the refreshing, the delivering, and reviving of His people in their journey in this wilderness below; that there is not one blessing, for body or soul, but comes freely from God as a sovereign gift. We notice, in the third place, that the lovingkindness of God the Father is revealed in the Scriptures; that He has there revealed Himself; and that He has provided and prepared a home for His dear people, when all their tribulations, and griefs, and sorrows are ended; that they shall never have one more than He has appointed, and never one less; that all is fixed, and certain, and sure; and that He will bring them at last through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of God. My friends, this is lovingkindness!

II. We may now take notice of the lovingkindness of the Son of God co-equal with the Father, "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person" (Heb. 1. 3).

1. O what wondrous, glorious lovingkindness shines forth in the Son of God in doing the work for His people – *in finishing and completing the work for His people*. Are there works to be done? Yes; never will any mortal enter heaven that does not enter there by God's

work, as well as by grace. "O," say you, "I thought you folks would never talk about good works entering into heaven." O yes, we do! Heaven receives good works and heaven approves of good works, but not works that are good in the eyes of flesh and blood. The very law of God requires good works; and it is utterly impossible for a just God to smile upon a sinful creature without them. God is a just God; He cannot acquit the guilty. What lovingkindness, then, was it in the Son of God in condescending, out of mere sovereign, free, divine pleasure and love, to enter into covenant, and there to engage to come and be responsible for the sinner; to stand in his stead; to be his Head, his Bondsman; to take all debts upon Himself, and clothe him with His own righteousness! Is not this lovingkindness, my friends? Did anything in our nature move the Son of God to come and manifest such lovingkindness as this? No, no; it is of His own sovereign, divine grace; and therefore it was certified of Him in prophecy, "Offerings and burnt offerings Thou wouldest not; but a body hast Thou prepared Me; and lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (see Heb. 10. 5-7). Here is lovingkindness stepping forward to come and do the work that we had neither the will nor the power to do, but which He, out of sovereign, discriminating grace, engaged to do. And therefore He comes in the form of a man; and the apostle says, that "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin," (see 2 Cor. 5. 21), having all the sins of His chosen imputed to His charge.

Shall you and I ever fathom the depths, or comprehend the height and breadth, or have an adequate idea of the glory and the length of this lovingkindness? It is the love of Christ which is beyond words ever to express and hearts ever to feel. He comes, and is born of a virgin; and here He is, as a Child born and a Son given. He bore the transgressions of His people, bore them all upon the tree, suffered the Just for the unjust. The justice of God had no pity upon His cries and groans; for He had engaged to be the Bondsman and Surety, bound Himself by covenant bonds, and this not with reluctance, but with pleasure and delight, for He said His delight was with the sons of men. The apostle sums it all up when he says, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12. 2). It was His delight to do completely the work for His people, that love, justice and righteousness, and every perfection of Deity might meet together in perfect harmony. O what lovingkindness is this! You are not saved because of your good deeds, nor for any good works that you can do, but because of the lovingkindness of the Son of God, in performing and completing the work. And it is done in such a way, that neither law, nor justice, nor righteousness, nor sin, nor men, nor devils, nor death, nor hell, nor all put together, can break or destroy it! It is out of the reach of

them all; and therefore has He told us that “Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: and shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end” (see Isa. 45. 17). Yea, says Paul, “by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10. 14). Therefore, He was called Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins. The law is honoured in Him, justice is satisfied; and therefore it can be sweetly said, “Deliver them from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom, saith the LORD” (see Job 33. 24).

It is lovingkindness and tender mercy in the Son of God, in doing the work for His people, in going before them, in saving them from hell, from sin, from the law, from divine justice; so that the Father is now well pleased in Him, and can say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matt. 17. 5). The apostle says, “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” (Rom. 8. 33, 34). He ever liveth to make intercession for all who come unto God by Him; and no-one can come to God aright in any other name. God teaches them that there is no other name, and no other way; therefore they are brought into this way by God’s blessed Spirit, and receive all the blessings that are treasured up in Jesus Christ the Lord.

2. The Son of God not only saves His people from law and justice, and from going down to the pit, but He *saves them from all their enemies*. He has conquered them all. There is not a single one that can ever molest the child of God, that He has not met and battled with as their Head. He has gone before them; He has led the way; He has “borne their griefs, and carried their sorrows.” There is not a temptation of the devil that He has not gone through and overcome; He has had all his fiery darts and all his blasphemous suggestions hurled at Him; but Satan could not find a place for them to enter in.

Some child of God here may be tempted with blasphemous suggestions, and is drawing the conclusion that he must be nothing but a reprobate. He is afraid he has sinned against the Holy Ghost – he is so tempted to blaspheme the Spirit of God; God seems to have given him up entirely, and he feels as if he must blaspheme Him. O poor soul! but can you do it? “O,” says the soul, “I am afraid I shall!” But have you done it yet? Does not your soul burn against it and ache over it? Is not your soul crying to God to deliver you from it? It is the devil that is pouring these awful blasphemies against the Spirit, and not your soul; and the devil will have the punishment of it for ever.

Do not look then upon the temptations of Satan as a sign of being given up; the Son of God Himself was tempted in all points like unto His

brethren, that He might succour those that are tempted. You hate the suggestion, and are trying to oppose it; it is not your own will and your own soul that is making it; it is sin and the devil dwelling in your heart. And hear what God says: "No temptation shall happen to thee but what is common to man; and He will with the temptation make a way of escape" (see 1 Cor. 10. 13). Now, the Lord has done His work; He has conquered Satan – trampled upon him – and His brethren shall trample upon him too; but they must have the same trials, in the measure that they can bear them; for He says they must be baptized with the same baptism that He was baptized with, and partake of the same sufferings. Therefore there is a time when they shall be delivered, as there was a time when the Son of God was delivered. He was forty days and forty nights under the conflict; but He conquered at last, and was brought forth into Judea with tidings of joy and peace.

3. The Son of God has *grappled with death*. He has gone with all the sins of the church to face death; the sting of death entered into His heart, and He drew it out again; and now death is a friend to the child of God, for the Saviour has conquered death, and "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2. 14). All this was done in lovingkindness! And He has ascended up on high, having finished the work, conquered every foe, satisfied every particle of the demands of justice; He has gone there, and is now surrounded with glorious majesty. He went up as a Conqueror, with the sound of the trumpet; as it is said, "God went up with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet." "Open ye the gates, and let the King of glory come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD, mighty in battle" (see Psa. 47 and 24), that has conquered all His foes, redeemed His church, satisfied every perfection of Deity. Child of God, He is thy Head; and thou, virtually united with Him, went up with Him virtually into glory. You ascend up on high, and are there virtually seated with Him, until He brings you home at last, one glorious man, perfect in Christ Jesus the Lord. What lovingkindness! O, would to God this sweet blessing were fully revealed in every contrite heart, and that the Comforter would bring the light, and power, and glory of it into our souls!

III. The lovingkindness of the Holy Ghost is equal with the lovingkindness of the Father and the Son; for He, the Father and the Son, are one God. Some people wonder, my dear friends, how this can be; but we have nothing at all to do with the *hows*; it is what God reveals that we have to do with. The children of God prove by the testimony of their consciences, that what God reveals is true: "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 John 5. 7).

1. What lovingkindness then in God the Holy Ghost, *in revealing Christ to us*, in taking of the things of God, and bringing them home to

our souls. It is as much the work of God to do this as the creation of the animal and vegetable world was the work of God. It is as much the work of God to reveal in the heart of His chosen these grand truths in all their power as ever it was for God to speak us into being; for His chosen in a state of nature are dead, like the rest of the world. They have no more feeling or desire for spiritual blessings than the four-footed beasts. They are “dead in trespasses and sins,” and nothing short of the lovingkindness of God the Holy Ghost can quicken them or bring them to life.

The apostle gives this testimony concerning the elect, in the declaration he makes to the church at Ephesus: “You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world ... the children of disobedience ... and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)” (Eph. 2. 1-5). Now, can any mortal ever overthrow this? What ground is there for argument and disputing? It is the work of the Holy Ghost, and that from His lovingkindness and sovereign pleasure. While the Father set His love upon His chosen, and the Son of God accomplished and completed the work of redemption for them, and honoured every perfection of Deity, the Holy Ghost, one with the Father and the Son, engaged to bring them to Him “in the day of His power” (see Psa. 110. 3), and all through sovereign, discriminating mercy and lovingkindness.

Now, are there not a good many of us here this evening that are living witnesses of this? Tell me, you that know anything about it, was there anything in you that merited God’s kindness towards you, in stopping you in your mad career of sin, and saving you from going to hell? “No,” says the soul; “of all wretches I think I was the worst; and had it not been for God’s sovereign, discriminating grace, I had now been in the very state I was in, or else in hell, lifting up my eyes.” It is all of His sovereign, discriminating grace, and every child of God that has this quickening life in his heart acknowledges this, and gives testimony to it that it was God that opened his eyes and stopped him in his mad career.

2. The lovingkindness of the Spirit of God has also been manifested *in stripping the believer of his own righteousness*. None can strip themselves of their own righteousness. Even the poor child of God, in all his trouble, let him have lived years and years, and proved his righteousness to have been nothing but filthy rags, yet he has got the working of it in his nature, and thinks that he ought to do this and that and the other, and that it would be better for him, and that God would be more pleased and favoured by it. A just God is never pleased but in His beloved Son, who has done the work for His dear people, and completed



it, and perfected it. He can only delight in them in His Son; and if they are in Him, they are one with the Father and the Son, and made perfect in one. But when the Holy Spirit comes and reveals to the child of God what God's righteous law demands, brings it home to his soul, reveals it to his heart, and gives him to understand that the law looks at the very thoughts and intents of the heart, and that the very "thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24. 9), and merits damnation for ever and ever – that law, he sees, is good and righteous; and he is brought to see that it demands nothing but what is right. Here then he is condemned, his mouth shut, and he is brought to feel that God is just in the sentence of damnation upon his soul, so that he can acquit Him of any unrighteousness, and can testify that "the law is just, holy, and good" (see Rom. 7. 12).

Now the Spirit of God breaks into his heart a real confession, and a real sighing and groaning unto the Lord Jesus Christ for deliverance, and gives him to see that there is no-one but the Son of God that can relieve him. This is the work of the Spirit of God in the heart, in showing him that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts. 4. 12), but the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost, in His blessed lovingkindness, sometimes gives the soul a little encouragement; a little light breaks into the heart; he learns that Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save that which is lost; and he is lost, and so was Saul of Tarsus, and Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh, and thousands besides, and He saved them. There is such a plea put into his heart, that he cries, "O Lord, have mercy upon me! O bless me with a sense of pardoning love, do but speak to me, and tell me that Thou hast died for me, and hast finished salvation for me." The Holy Spirit then brings the soul to feel that His lovingkindness is teaching it to leave all the world, all professors, all the opinions of men, and all the books of men, and to come with wrestling, cries, tears and prayers, unto Christ for salvation; and that there is no power upon earth that has anything to do with it but God and the soul itself.

Do you know anything of such teaching as this? This is what David was taught; this is what Paul was taught; this is what God's people of old were taught; and this is what God teaches His people now. For there never was a soul that came to Christ yet that was not drawn by the Father – never one that learned His glory and beauty that had not been to the school of the law to learn what his misery was and to bring him to see his lost condition; for who can ever bless a physician, but the man that seemed at the point of death? Who can ever be thankful for water, but the man that is dried up and nearly killed with thirst? Who can ever prize bread and food, but the man that is hungry, and given it all up for lost for want of provisions? The lovingkindness of the blessed Spirit of God is seen then in stripping them.

3. But, there is the lovingkindness of the Holy Spirit manifested in the heart *by the work of the law on the conscience* of a child of God. It is a fitting him for the lovingkindness; it will be made known manifestly when he is brought to feel that there is nothing but damnation for him, and to fall down and cry to the Son of God to save him as an act of grace. If He condemn him, he feels that it is an act of justice and down he falls; he throws himself on the Son of God, sink or swim, damned or saved; and there is no condemnation at the feet of the Son of God; for this is the work of the Holy Spirit – His lovingkindness. No human teaching can ever teach this. O no; it is the Spirit's teaching, and none can come and admire the blessed Redeemer but he to whom the Spirit reveals Him. "No man can call him Lord," his Lord, "my Lord, and my God," but by the Holy Ghost (see 1 Cor. 12. 3).

The testimony of the Spirit is necessary to give testimony to the heart of the blood, the righteousness, the beauty and the glory of the Son of God, and to reveal Him in the soul. The apostle says, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6). Ah! what lovingkindness comes into the heart of a condemned sinner! When the Lord brought it first into my heart, I got out of the town as soon as ever I could into the fields, through a long wood; and the singing of the birds and the rustling of the leaves of the trees, the hills and the valleys, all seemed to be speaking of His glory; and I said, "Is this my God, my King, my Lord, that hath blotted out my transgressions like a cloud?" I thought He was going to send me to hell; and instead of this He has brought me up out of the depths of the pit, and raised me up from a beggar on a dunghill to sit amongst the princes of His people, to inherit everlasting glory. Ah! what lovingkindness! Blessings, blessings be upon Him!

4. There is the lovingkindness of the Spirit, in *reviving – in teaching, in correcting, in reproof, in blessing* the believer's soul with fresh light, fresh strength, fresh support, to guide and direct him through the wilderness over Jordan, and take him safe home to glory. His lovingkindness is in it; His delight is in it; His glory is in it. Therefore their souls are His temple, His house, His dwelling-place, His rest, and here He dwells; for He says where He has begun a good work He will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Nobody who knows these things can help worshipping the Holy Ghost as God. There is the Father who is God, the Son who is God, and the Holy Ghost who is God; yet there are not three Gods, but one God. And here is the mystery – the mystery that wisdom can never find out; but faith believes it, and love embraces it; and we have proved it in our hearts, and are daily proving it, for every revival is of the Spirit of God.

IV. Notice by way of conclusion David's prayer. "O continue Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee." I do not think David means that there is any danger of the lovingkindness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost not continuing. I do not think that David had a single idea of this in his prayer; but humanly speaking, it might appear as if he meant that the continuance of the lovingkindness might depend upon certain conditions, such as the creature performing his duty, and doing what he ought to do. But it was nothing of the kind. David's petition appears to me to mean simply this, or something comprehended in this: continue Thy lovingkindness in its visits to my soul, that I may have the visiting of Thy lovingkindness unto my heart, to renew my soul again and again. For David, as well as every child of God, knew that the experience of God's people is not all sunshine and not all prosperity, and not all health, but that there is darkness, and night, and adversity, and wounds, and tribulations.

No, it is not all sunshine; the blessed Sun of Righteousness is sometimes hid behind the clouds, and darkness seizes the child of God; confusion of heart sometimes lays hold of him, and he begins to question what his religion is, how it began, what were the testimonies he had, and to fear that what seemed to be the work of the Spirit of God might be nothing but the work of the flesh; and his soul sinks, and his heart is sometimes so distracted that he falls down before God. But he is honest; his is an honest and upright heart, which is the work of grace; and when he seems stripped of every comfort, he falls down before his God, and says, "Lord, search me; search me and try me; I do not know what I am, I am so confused; I cannot tell whether my religion is the work of God, or whether I am only one of the stony-ground hearers. Here I am." And that soul cannot stir a hair's breadth till God moves him; neither can he look back to raise an Ebenezer unless the light of the Spirit of God brings it to his remembrance; but he cries to the Lord, and says, "Ah! grant me another token for good, another revival of Thy lovingkindness in my heart! Oh! continue the visits of Thy lovingkindness! I have no hope in myself, nor hope in man; give me another testimony of Thy lovingkindness; renew my soul, and bring me up again out of the depths, that I may have another testimony that Thy lovingkindness is still resting upon me."

It is now going on for sixty years since I first felt the lovingkindness of God, in delivering my soul from the curse of the law, and I have been muddling on ever since, and scores and hundreds of times have had the sweet testimony of lovingkindness in my heart, reviving me again and again. Yet I am as poor a creature as anyone, and am as much shaken as ever when God withdraws His lovingkindness, and leaves poor old John and the devil by themselves. I tremble in my soul then, and I can but

come again and again with my old tale; and God never wants anything else but old tales. And what are they? “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18. 13). “Lord, teach me; Lord, instruct me; Lord, strengthen me! O give me just another testimony; give me just one more!”

I have often thought of Jonah, whether he carried it on to the day of his death; but when he sinks down into the belly of hell, he cries out, “Yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple” (Jonah 2. 4). The children of God in all their sinkings, will be looking for the lovingkindness of the Lord again – the same lovingkindness that set them at liberty before, and brought peace and joy to them before. Some professors of religion, when they come to hear such things as these preached, say, “O dear me! What! will folks run to hear that fellow? He has no variety about him.” What sort of variety does a hungry man want? Why, some good food that he has tasted before, and proved and relished. What sort of variety does a thirsty man want? Why, the same water from the same spring that he has tried before. What sort of variety does the poor, tired and fatigued man want? Why, his bed to rest upon that he has proved again and again. What sort of variety does a man want that is bowed down with a burden upon his back, and is faint and sinking? Why, he wants his burden removed again. These are the varieties that God’s people that know God want. All the professors of religion, with all their judgment, and all their wisdom, and all their talk, and all their memory of Scripture, if they have nothing of this, depend upon it, there is no proof of the powerful teachings of the Spirit of God in their hearts. David says, “They that have no changes, fear not God” (see Psa. 55. 19).

God bless the few hints that have been delivered, for His name’s sake.

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### **“NOT WITHOUT BLOOD” – “HIS OWN BLOOD”**

*By Mr. Gerald D. Buss, pastor of Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham*

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As soon as our first parents had sinned in the Garden of Eden, at its very gates, the Lord God showed the way of reconciliation was not to be in the fig leaves of men’s sin-stained efforts, but in the shedding of blood. This was set forth when a beast, almost certainly a lamb, was taken and slain before the guilty eyes of Adam and Eve, that they might be properly clothed to hide their shame. So, we read of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (not from before the foundation as is often misquoted) (Rev. 13. 8). He was “**foreordained** before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1. 20).

The mercy of God is seen, in that as soon as sin showed its ugly face on the earth, the remedy was set forth, eloquently pointing to “the Lamb of God which was to take away the sin of the world.” “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6. 23). The lamb taken and slain belonged to our Creator and was a free gift from Him who was offended, to the offenders, foreshadowing the giving of the dear Son of God as a ransom for many. It is instructive to notice that it would appear from the language, “from the foundation of the world,” that sin entered this earth very soon after our first parents had been created.

From that solemn moment it was revealed that:

“Sin to pardon without blood  
Never in God’s nature stood.” (See H. 789)

This was soon solemnly verified when Cain rebelliously sought to bring a bloodless offering as a sacrifice and was rejected, whereas Abel was received, coming in the God-appointed way to His holy Majesty, “not without blood.”

This principle was emphasised again and again in the Old Testament. Isaac was well taught, we trust of God, when he asked where the lamb was for the burnt offering. The worship in the tabernacle and later in the temple all gave the same message.

On the annual Day of Atonement, Aaron was permitted to enter the holiest of all, but had he dared to do so without blood, he would have been smitten down.

Why was it that God made this oft-repeated command?

When Aaron or the succession of high priests took blood of a blemish-free beast into the holiest of all, it signified that a life had been lived, and then taken. So ceremonially the virtue of the life lived and the blood shed (i.e. the death endured), was taken into God’s glorious presence, in the Shekinah glory, overshadowing the mercy-seat.

But each succeeding high priest had first to make an offering for his own sins, before confessing the sins of the people on whose behalf he was entering the holiest of all. Our Lord Jesus Christ, that great High Priest, had no need to offer for Himself when He entered the holiest of all in glory above as He is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7. 26). The offering He made was for that innumerable company of sinners, for whom He came to live, to suffer, and to die, rising again and ascending on high, taking His own blood into the holiest of all. Thus, before His heavenly Father is presented a pure, holy life lived, and a complete atonement made.

“There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth” (Rev. 21. 27) is said of heaven itself, God’s immediate dwelling place where the Triune God dwells in infinite majesty. So, when Christ was made sin

for His church, and bore the curse due to their multiplied sins, He could not enter that sacred place as their Mediator until all their imputed guilt was completely and everlastingly removed. But when He cried, "It is finished," the last spot and blemish on His church was removed, and the way into the holiest was made manifest. He entered "not without blood," and "by His own blood," which neither Aaron nor any of his successors could possibly do. This is the "blood of the covenant," or "the blood of the new testament," of which the communion cup speaks so eloquently.

How great was and is the love of Christ for His church! The holy and mysterious agony in the Garden of Gethsemane gives us just a glimpse of what it cost Him to make the full atonement for His people's sins.

"Deep in His breast engraved He bore  
Our names, with every penal score,  
When pressed to earth He prostrate lay;  
Shocked at the sum, yet prompt to pay." (H. 794)

It was impossible for Christ and His church to be together in glory unless their sins had been utterly and forever put away. This was the measure of His love, that He, "Rather than lose us would shed His heart's blood."

The great point to us each should be, have we an interest in this shed blood of Christ? In Psalm 130. 3 the godly psalmist asks a question: "If Thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" He then answers the question himself in verse 4: "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." How is this forgiveness obtained? It is through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, being marked for the sins of His people. He has taken those marks, in hands, and feet, and side into the holiest of all, and as He spreads His once-wounded hands before His heavenly Father, so those precious marks answer for the crimes of coming sinners who plead the "blood that did once for sin atone." A sacred and precious proof of interest in those sacred marks, is to know by sacred experience that the Lord Jesus intercedes for us in heaven above. He intercedes for those for whom He died. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me" (John 17. 9).

It is all summed up most precious by Paul in Hebrews 7. 24-27: "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. For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself."

Thus, He entered “not without blood,” but unlike the high priests of Old Testament days, He entered into heaven itself with “His own blood” (Heb. 9. 7, 12).

“What voice is that which speaks for me  
In heaven’s high court for good,  
And from the curse has set me free?  
’Tis Jesus’ precious blood.” (H. 1156)

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## JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE, NOT WORKS

*Extract from The Doctrine of Justification  
by James Buchanan (1804-1870)*

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The testimony of Scripture on this point has been abundantly confirmed by the experience of all believers in every age of the church. They have ever been “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,” and they have “shown forth” by their lives, as well as by their lips, “the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light” (see 1 Pet. 2. 9), and yet one of their most striking and peculiar characteristics has ever been an abiding sense of sin, and “a broken and a contrite spirit” on account of it. Read the biographies, or examine the diaries, of the most eminent saints, and you will discern no more marked feature of a family likeness between them all, in every country and in every age, than their frequent confessions of unworthiness, and their ceaseless conflicts with the evil which was in their own hearts. Day by day continually they have prayed for mercy to pardon, as well as for grace to help them, and day by day continually they have had recourse anew to the fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness. Some of them may have lived outwardly in the regular discharge of all religious and relative duties, without being chargeable with any signal act of overt transgression, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, who were, in this sense, “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1. 6). Others may have fallen – like Noah, David and Peter – into gross and scandalous offences, which, when “they were renewed again to repentance,” they could never remember without “weeping bitterly” as Peter did, and confessing their sin, as David did in that Psalm (Psalm 51) which every penitent believer has made his own in all ages and in all lands.

So far from regarding their sins as mere “infirmities” or “imperfections” because they were committed by the children of God, they would have felt them to be, in some respects, more highly aggravated than those of the children of this world, and to deserve what,

but for God's pardoning mercy, they would infallibly incur, "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1. 9). If such has been the uniform experience of all true believers, how can the presence and power of indwelling sin be denied, while the continued authority of a spiritual and perfect law is still affirmed? or how can either their inherent holiness, or their good works form any part of the ground of their pardon and acceptance with God? How scriptural, and how true to Christian experience, is the saying of Bernard: "So far from answering for my sins, I cannot be answerable even for my own righteousnesses"; and that of Augustine: "Your sins belong to yourselves; leave your righteousness to God!"

The most inconsistent and contradictory charges have been brought against the Reformers and their successors, in regard to their teaching upon the subject of "good works." Sometimes they have been assailed, especially by popish writers, as denying either the reality of good works in the believer altogether, or at least their necessity to his salvation; at other times they have been assailed, especially by Antinomians, as subverting or impairing the doctrine of justification as a gift of free grace, by insisting on good works as the fruits of faith and the evidences of a justified state. It would seem as if, at the present day, not less than in primitive times, the teachers of the whole counsel of God must lay their account with the most contradictory objections. "Whereunto," said our Lord, "shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a Man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a Friend of publicans and sinners. But Wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt. 11. 16-19).

The charge against those who maintain the doctrine of a free justification by grace through faith only, that they deny either the reality of good works, or their necessity to salvation, is a mere calumny; for while the Reformers rejected many works which were considered "good" in the Romish church – such as works of supererogation [works supposedly giving a surplus of merit before God] – works done in fulfilment of counsels of perfection or monastic vows – works of penance and self-mortification for the pardon of sin; and while, moreover, they denied the merit of all works, whether performed in obedience to the commandments of men, or even to the law of God itself, they never denied the intrinsic excellence either of those inherent graces which are the fruits of the Spirit, or of those external actions which flowed from them in conformity with the requirements of God's law; and so far from teaching that they were not necessary to salvation, in the case



of all who are capable, and have opportunity, of manifesting their faith by its proper fruits, they represented the sanctification of the believer as an indispensable, a constituent element of his salvation, since Christ came to deliver His people, not only from the punishment, but also from the power of sin, and to present them to "Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5. 27). It may be safely affirmed that those who have most strenuously defended the doctrine of a free justification by grace through faith only, have also been the most earnest, and the most successful teachers of the doctrine which affirms that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3. 3); and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (see Heb. 12. 14).

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### HOMeward LONGINGS

*Extract from the Gospel Standard 1953*

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I have a desire to be with Christ. There the spirits of the just are perfected. There the spirits of the righteous are as full as they can hold. A sight of Jesus in the Word, some know how it will change them from glory to glory. But how then shall we be changed and filled when we shall see Him as He is! "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Moses and Elias appeared to Peter and James and John at the transfiguration of Christ in glory. How so? Why, they had been in the heavens, and came thence with some of the glories of heaven upon them. Gild a piece of wood; yea, gild it seven times over, and it must compare in difference with wood not gilt. So the soul that but a little while has been dipped in glory. Glory is a strange thing to men that are on this side the heavens. It is that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive (see 1 Cor. 2. 9); only the Christian has a Word and a Spirit that at times doth give a little of the glimmering thereof unto him. But oh! when he is in the Spirit and sees in the Spirit, do you think his tongue can tell? But I say, if the sight of heaven at so vast a distance is so excellent a prospect, what will it look like when one is in it? No marvel, then, if the desires of the righteous are to be with Christ.

Mr. J.H. Gosden wrote: "The above extract was copied out by our late dear friend and deacon. At the foot he wrote: 'The above is just my desire this night, October 17th, 1928. J. Forward.' How we miss these humble, gracious souls! Subjoined is one of his many affectionate letters manifesting the tender fear of God in which he walked. A brief obituary appeared in 1951 *Gospel Standard*, page 388."

Weaving Street,  
Bearsted,  
Maidstone

*Mr. J.H. Gosden*

Beloved Pastor,

What a favour it is to live in the heart and affection of the Lord's people. I do hope they are to me the very excellent of the earth. I wish there were more love and union amongst the people of God in these days; there would then be more sweet communion together. I can say you have been much on my mind; especially all day Tuesday I was much led out in prayer for you, that you might be helped to lift up the banner of the cross of Calvary. You will never lift Christ the Saviour up too high, for He is worthy of the highest praise, is He not? Indeed, eternity will not be too long to praise Him for His great love and mercy vouchsafed towards us. When we get a view of our base origin, and think of His forbearance who remembered us in our low estate with that mercy which endureth for ever, what can we say?

It is a marvel to me that the dear Lord takes any notice of me. I do feel so unworthy of any favour even in a temporal way; and yet He shows me favours both temporal and spiritual. When I look back [on] all the way He has led me, and borne with all my ill manners in this wilderness, it makes me look two ways at once – my badness, and the Lord's goodness. Often I feel: Why me? I do not say it with feigned lips: Why pass by millions of the human race and look on me! vile me, hell-deserving me, and bid me live! ... I have as much need of mercy now as when I hope a change was wrought in my soul many years ago. I need a Saviour even more so in my feelings than then, because I am a sinner still.

Yes, dear Pastor, it is indeed a great mercy to have our trials so sanctified as to drive us to the throne of grace and to realise King Jesus sitting there; that is the blessedness of it. I find the need increasingly to pray for strength even to do my daily work; but as you say, there will come an end. Then what a mercy it will be not to have to look about for our credentials for eternity when we come to die. It is a daily concern with me more or less, as to how I stand for a never-ending eternity. If I get safely garnered home above, then,

"Loudest of the crowd I'll sing,  
While heaven's resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of sovereign grace." (H. 938)

With Christian love,  
I remain yours affectionately,

Joseph Forward

## LIFE SECURED IN THE WORST OF TIMES

*An address by James Kidwell Popham in 1915*

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“And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest” (Jer. 45. 5).

This gracious word sent particularly, immediately, by the Lord to an afflicted man is very sweet, and should it meet any of us, what a blessing it would be! Baruch was the scribe, the amanuensis [manuscript writer] of Jeremiah; and at his mouth he wrote against Israel certain prophecies which were destroyed by the king Jehoiachim. Then Baruch was commissioned by Jeremiah from the Lord to write again the same words, adding besides “many like words” (36. 23-32). Baruch was a man exercised in the fear of God, and thus he complained: “Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest” (verse 3). He was looking, likely enough, at the desolations which were pronounced against Israel, at the great and sore judgments which were to befall God’s people – that the whole land was to be plucked up. The sanctuary of God in which He dwelt, the place where He had put His name, where His honour dwelt, where the sacrifices were, that very place God now turned away from and said: “Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land” (verse 4). And could a God-fearing man hear such judgments pronounced, and write them a second time, and not faint in his sighing, and be at unrest? Ezekiel saw the Lord removing from the temple, saw Him going step by step, and it grieved him; he saw Him moving to the threshold, and then to a mountain on the east side of the city (10. 4; 11. 23).

Rutherford saw the evil coming on the land in his day, and said no man cried after the Lord to retain Him. Do we see evil coming on us, on this whole nation? do we see judgments now upon us, and evil coming on the church of God, or even now really come – the best taken or about to be taken home, the ministry all but dead, little power, little fruit, very small effects, no king, no head, every man doing what is right in his own eyes: children in grace ruling, and the ancient men, the wise counsellor, the eloquent orator, all being taken away? Do we see these things? I do, and the sight is an adding of grief to my sorrow. One sighs and faints in sighing, and finds no rest. It is a dreadful thing to be deceived, to be crying: “Peace and safety,” when really there is none. Are there any that are panting after God’s presence in their own souls first, and, after that, sighing, seeking, begging, praying that He would not depart from Zion? I have thought of the prayer of Moses: “Let me not see my wretchedness” (Numb. 11. 15); and surely that wretchedness was the Lord’s threatened

departure from the people; and what sorrow can be greater? Those who have felt God's presence know there is no sorrow to be compared with that. I believe no child of God can ever find anything for bitterness to be compared with an absent God. We shall find our sorrow enlarging when we see the church of Christ getting lower, the ways of Zion mourning, few coming to her solemn feasts. There are already some evidences of God's absence, that He is not so near as formerly, but gradually departing; and as surely as He goes from a person, the flesh prevails. Just in that measure that He departs does the flesh work and prevail.

The Lord looked on this gracious man in this sad condition. Not his master Jeremiah, but the Lord sent the word by Jeremiah: "Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch." If God speaks to us personally, as individuals, what a wonder! Do we sigh about the abominations done in the land? Do we cry because of what we see in the land and in the church of God? Well, we shall have a mark set upon us. Said God: "Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (Ezek. 9. 4). Most people think that all religion is comprised in what they are pleased to call a cheerful one. God looks at things in a different way, and makes known His approbation of men who sigh and cry, to whom sin in themselves is an affliction, and in others also.

Now this is the word the Lord sent to Baruch: "The Lord saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land." As if He said: "The thing you are mourning over shall take place; that which you deprecate shall come to pass." Does it make us shudder to think of coming days? We may be hid, but dark days are coming, days of judgment on this apostate nation; as He says: "That which I have built will I break down – My sanctuary, My dwelling-place which I have loved more than all the tents of Jacob, where My glory has been, where emanations of My glory have made My people glad. But since they have lightly esteemed Me, the Rock of their salvation, so I will break it down and pluck it up." This sight of evil before us is a most heart-breaking one. We may fear it coming to pass in our own case, fear lest our end may not be as good as the beginning, lest our light should go out in darkness. We may be crying: "Lord, do not put me out in darkness; shine on my soul." A hope of heaven is wonderful. I remember its sweetness and power in my soul when I had been thinking, because of my fearful backslidings I should never have another smile – O the pain of thinking that! But I did get one, and have had many since.

But after all Baruch's sighing and complaining, the Lord was not turned away from His terrible word of punishments: which shows us this, and would show it more were we more under divine teaching, that even

where the Lord has been in His glory, *He may go from that very place*. "I will go," He says by Hosea, "and return to My place" – what a solemn going! He may come back when we acknowledge our offence; for He says: "**Till** they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me early" (Hos. 5. 15). May it be given us to seek Him, to confess the sins that made Him mourn and drove Him from our breasts; to mourn over those evils that are in our hearts, and which we fear will ooze from us as from our pores. We are full of evil; but it is not merely evil in general that we are brought to mourn over, but we mourn from a *particular sense of particular things*: things which are brought to light by the Holy Ghost; and then the question is answered which we may have been asking: "Shew me wherefore Thou contendest with me" (Job 10. 2). The Lord says: "For **these** things." Perhaps that has been the solemn enquiry with many who fear His judgments – "Show me wherefore Thou contendest with me." If the Lord is absent, may He give us grace to be seeking the causes for His absence, and repentance for those causes.

What then? Shall this God-fearing man, this painful scribe of the Lord's threatened judgments, shall he be swallowed up in those coming judgments? No, the Lord will hide him. But what is the Lord's direction to him? "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." How this may touch some of us! What ambitions we may have had, what designs, designs for ourselves, for our children, our houses! What ease we may have sought! How the world that is set in our hearts as in the hearts of all, has risen in our esteem, and what seeking of great things of wealth, of name, of pleasure, or an enlarged boundary, there has been! Says the Lord: "I will pluck up, even this whole land"; and what then are we to seek in it? Is the forest to be sold for fire? Are you looking, Baruch, after the world? Is part of your sighing from this, that you will miss the things you have sought, that they shall be burned up, plucked away, scattered as chaff? Seek them not, relinquish the search, give them up; seek not what is dung, dross and loss; things which, being material, cannot feed the soul; seek them not." Can a name, wealth, pleasure, satisfy the soul? Can the gratification of these ambitions, if attained, satisfy the soul? Seek them not; they are not worth it. And not only can we say that negative thing, being taught of God, but that they are *harmful*. He who is full of the world and himself has no room for God. It is an empty place, a trembling soul, that He desires. He says: "I will look to that man, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word" (see Isa. 66. 2). It is true that the things a man seeks are not worth the trouble; and he would find if he got them they were just like fruit, that while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up (see Isa. 28. 4). Look at a blossom or a fruit; pluck it, and where is it? So if a

man attains to what he seeks on earth, he will find he has emptiness, nothing but wind. A broken cistern holds no water, and *a broken creation can hold no good for an immortal soul*. Each one proves it as he is led of God. It is a broken creation, drossy gold, and pleasures which have so much evil, so much death in them that they yield no satisfaction.

Then what does the Lord say? “For, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh.” What a solemn outlook for his family, his connections! Look at the whole nation of Israel, and the judgments brought upon them for rejecting and crucifying Christ. On that guilty nation He said He would bring all evil – loss of His service, loss of the knowledge of the true God, of everything good to them as a chosen nation; loss of all the good laws that had been given them, as of the Sabbath; and loss of the Spirit.

“I will bring evil on all flesh.” And judgment is coming on our land, on the professing church, and on the true church of Christ. Therefore let us not seek great things in that flesh upon which God will bring all evil.

But – though this be so, and the outlook is so painfully gloomy that it seems intolerable even to think of it – it was so to Baruch; if he looked at his house, there was to be evil there, evil everywhere, absolutely, “but,” says God, **“thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.”** He should be driven about, have no settled dwelling-place; hither and thither he must move; but one thing was precious in God’s sight, and *that* he should have preserved to him: “Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey.” He should lose all else he was seeking after, but have his life – be preserved in this world, and in the world to come have life everlasting. To a child of God that means he shall lay hold on eternal life, that is, CHRIST. When bare and bereft of all other things, there is that left to him. Paul, speaking of this life, calls it eternal: “Lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. 6. 12). And if we get a glimpse of that beautiful, glorious, eternal life which Jesus Christ possesses, and is Himself to His people, shall we then be casting longing, furtive glances at the things which are to perish? No. “Take what Thou wilt.” One has said,

“My treasure is immense in Thee –  
My treasure is Thy precious blood.” (H. 740)

My life is hid with Christ in God; my hope is fixed there.

Here is *all good* set over against *all evil* – good even in time, and good through eternity. Should we be saying: “But I cannot think the Lord can have any favour to such a creature,” let us remember His judgment is not according to man’s. “The LORD seeth not as man seeth” (1 Sam. 16. 7). Ananias looked upon Saul of Tarsus as an enemy come

to Damascus to hale men and women to prison, but the Lord looked on him differently, and said to Ananias: "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me" (Acts 9. 15). Grace is grace; grace is of God, and it is free, glorious and beautiful. It is for the worst of sinners. Pardon is for the most deeply-dyed sinners.

"Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest" – dark places, places of judgment, places of drawing water, places where devils may shoot at you, where providences seem against you, where trouble is, fainting is, and where sighing is of no use to turn away the judgment, and where you shall find no rest – there you shall find one thing, but it is of everlasting wealth; poor to nature, but durable, spiritual riches. It is painful, but good, to find no rest out of God. It will lead us to the sweetest of all things, to the greatest of happiness; for the Lord will then be our rest and refreshing in the day of affliction. He will cause us to believe, and let us see, that every good is ours, and that our days of mourning shall be ended. "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35. 10).

Thus the Lord shows us in this word to Baruch how two things can meet in one person; namely, *sorrow*, added to which there may be grief; we may sigh till we faint and find no rest where we thought to find it – not in our possessions, our families, nor in men, nor in the church. What then? *Happiness*. Says the Lord: "*I am your rest.*" "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him. Trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psa. 37. 7 and 5). Then we shall find ourselves happy – happy in God, and find rest to our souls. May the Holy Ghost direct us to this gracious promise: "Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."

In 1946, Mr. J.H. Gosden wrote: "In lighting upon the typescript of the above address, we felt it so particularly suitable for present times of unprecedented evil and ominous threatening, that it seemed that our late beloved friend was still speaking to us. We trust that our readers may find some wholesome admonition and sacred encouragement in reading it."

[What a mercy if we are found looking for that city, which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Ed]

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If once we are sure God hath done a thing, there is no room left to dispute its equity.

*Thomas Halyburton*

**CHRIST, ALTOGETHER LOVELY***Letter to Lady Kilconquhar from Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)*

Aberdeen  
August 8th, 1637

Mistress,

Grace, mercy and peace be to you. I am glad to hear that you have your face homeward towards your Father's house, now when so many are for a home nearer hand. But your Lord calleth you to another life and glory than is to be found here-away; and therefore I would counsel you to make sure the charters and rights which you have to salvation.

You came to this life about a necessary and weighty business to tryst [meet by appointment] with Christ concerning your precious soul, the eternal salvation of it. This is the most necessary business you have in this life; and your other concerns beside this are but toys and feathers, and dreams and fancies. This is in the greatest haste, and should be done first. Means are used in the gospel to draw on a meeting betwixt Christ and you. If you neglect your part of it, it is as if you would tear the contract before Christ's eyes, and give up the match, that there may be no more communing about that business. I know that other lovers beside Christ are in suit of you, and your soul hath many wooers. But I pray you make a chaste virgin of your soul, and let it love but one. Most worthy is Christ alone of all your soul's love, even if your love were higher than the heaven, and deeper than the lowest of this earth, and broader than this world. Many, alas, too many, estrange their souls from Christ. Marriage with Christ would put your love and your heart out of the way, and out of the eye of all other unlawful suitors; and then you have a ready answer for all others: "I am already promised away to Christ, the match is concluded, my soul hath a Husband already, and it cannot have two husbands."

O that the world did but know what a smell the ointments of Christ cast, and how great His beauty, even the beauty of the fairest of the sons of men, is, and how sweet and powerful His voice is, the voice of that one Well-beloved! Certainly where Christ cometh, He runneth away with the soul's love, so that it cannot be commanded. I would far rather look but through the hole of Christ's door, to see but the one half of His fairest and most comely face (for He looketh like heaven), suppose I should never get in to see His excellency and glory to the full, than to enjoy the flower, the bloom and chief excellency of the glory and riches of ten worlds. Lord send me, for my part, but the meanest share of Christ that can be given to any of the indwellers of the New Jerusalem. But I know my Lord is no niggard. He can, and it becometh Him well to give more than my narrow soul can receive. If there were ten thousand



thousand millions of worlds, and as many heavens full of men and angels, Christ would not be pinched to supply all our wants, and to fill us all. Christ is a well of life, but who knoweth how deep it is to the bottom?

This soul of ours hath love, and cannot but love some fair one; and O what a fair One, what an only One, what an excellent, lovely One is Jesus! Put the beauty of ten thousand thousand worlds of paradises like the Garden of Eden in one, put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colours, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness in one. O what a fair and excellent thing would that be! And yet it would be less, to that fair and dearest Well-beloved, Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes and fountains of ten thousand earths. O, but Christ is heaven's wonder, and earth's wonder! What marvel that His bride saith, "He is altogether lovely!" (Song 5. 16). Alas that black\* souls will not come, and fetch all their love to this fair One!

O if I could invite and persuade thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand of Adam's sons, to flock about my Lord Jesus, and to come and take their fill of love! O pity for evermore that there should be such an one as Christ Jesus, so boundless, so bottomless, and so incomparable in infinite excellency and sweetness, and so few to take Him! Oh! oh! you poor, dry and dead souls, why will you not come hither with your empty souls to this huge, and fair, and deep, and sweet well of life; and fill all your empty vessels. O that Christ should be so large in sweetness and worth, and we so narrow, so pinched, so ebb, and so void of all happiness! and yet men will not take Him! They lose their love miserably who will not bestow it upon this lovely One.

Alas! these five thousand years Adam's fools have been wasting and lavishing out their love and their affections upon black\* lovers, upon bits of dead creatures, and broken idols, upon this and that feckless [worthless] creature; and have not brought their love and their heart to Jesus. O pity, that Fairness hath so few lovers! O, woe, woe to the fools of this world, who run by Christ to other lovers! O misery, misery, misery, that Comeliness can scarce get three or four hearts in a town or country! O, that there is so much spoken, and so much written, and so much thought of creature-vanity, and so little spoken, so little written, and so little thought of my great and incomprehensible, and never-enough wondered at Lord Jesus! Why should I not curse this forlorn and wretched world, that suffereth my Lord Jesus to lie alone? O damned souls! O mistaken world! O blind, O beggarly and poor souls! O bewitched fools! what aileth you that you run so from Christ? I dare not challenge Providence, that there are so few buyers and so little sale for such an excellent One as Christ. O the depth, and O the height of my

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\* Black – in a moral sense *only*, i.e. sinful. Ed.

Lord's ways, that pass finding out! But O that men would once be wise, and not fall so in love with their own hell as to pass by Christ, and misken [overlook, misunderstand] Him!

But let us come near and fill ourselves with Christ, and let His friends drink and satisfy our hollow and deep desires with Jesus. O come all and drink at this living well; come, drink and live for evermore, come, drink and welcome. "Welcome," saith our fairest Bridegroom. No man getteth Christ with ill-will; no man cometh and is not welcome; no man cometh and rueth his voyage; all men speak well of Christ who have been with Him. Men and angels who know Him will say more than I can do, and think more of Him than they can say. O that I were misted and bewildered in my Lord's love! [That is, lost in His love.] O that I were fettered and chained to it! O sweet pain, to be pained for a sight of Him! O living death! O good death! O lovely death, to die for love of Jesus! O that I should have a sore heart and a pained soul for the want of this and that idol! Woe, woe to the mistakings of my miscarrying heart, that gapeth and crieth for creatures, and is not pained, and tortured, and in sorrow for the want of a soul's-fill of the love of Christ!

O that thou wouldst come near, my Beloved! O my fairer One, why standest thou afar? Come hither, that I may be satiated with Thy excellent love. O for a union! O for a fellowship with Jesus! O that I could buy with a price that lovely One, even suppose that hell's torments for a while were the price! I cannot believe but that Christ will take pity upon His pained lovers, and come and ease sick hearts, who sigh and swoon for want of Christ.

What heaven can there be liker to hell than to desire and dwine [pine away for] and fall a-swoon for Christ's love, and to want it? is not this hell and heaven woven through each other? Is not this pain and joy, sweetness and sadness in one web, the one the weft, the other the warp! [Weft and warp, interwoven threads of fabric at right-angles, weft transverse and warp longitudinal.] Therefore I would that Christ would let us meet, and join together, the soul and Christ in others' arms. O what meeting is like this, to see blackness and beauty, contemptibleness and glory, highness and baseness, even a soul and Christ, kiss each other! Nay, but when all is done, I may be wearied in speaking and writing; but O how far am I from the right expression of Christ or His love! I can neither speak, nor write feeling, nor tasting, nor smelling; come feel, and smell, and taste Christ and His love, and you shall call it more than can be spoken; to write how sweet the honeycomb is, is not so lovely as to eat and suck the honeycomb. Rest, with Christ, will say more than heart can think or tongue can utter.

Neither need we fear crosses, or sigh or be sad for anything that is on this side of heaven, if we have Christ. Our crosses will never draw

blood of the joy of the Holy Ghost and peace of conscience. Our joy is laid up in such a high place that temptations cannot climb up to take it down. This world may boast against Christ, but they dare not strike; or if they strike, they break their arm in fetching a stroke upon a Rock.

O that we could put our treasure in Christ's hand, and give Him our gold to keep, and our crown. Strive, mistress, to thring [press or push] through the thorns of this life to be with Christ; tine [lose] not sight of Him in this cloudy and dark day; sleep with Him in your heart in the night. Learn not from the world to serve Christ, but speer at [seek after] Himself the way; the world is a false copy, and a lying guide to follow.

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### CHRIST PRECIOUS

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Southill,  
Bedfordshire  
November 10th, 1907

Dear J. and E.,

What shall I say? The Lord is "a Stronghold in the day of trouble." I hope you are both as well as can be expected. I am not strong myself, though greatly helped by my God. I must call Him mine, though so unworthy to be honoured by such amazing faith. But such a free gift as Jesus for faith to rely upon is truly an anchorage. When I was under the law and feared the frown of the Almighty, they were sad days and nights for me. More or less for years I was troubled about my soul's welfare. But when the Lord showed me His mercy and favour were for mourners and for lost souls, and great debtors, like Mary, and weepers, like Peter, it did gladden my heart. And now I call Him my Saviour and my Shepherd, Prophet, Priest and King; for He is in my heart to love Him as my All in all. I have found a Friend indeed for many years now. But though sin-pardoning mercy came, I had much sorrow and many fears about my interest and union with Christ Jesus, whether I was as a plant His heavenly Father had planted. I have feared to call Him mine. Many, many times have I cried for more light, more manifestations of His favour.

Now I know I could not walk without His light, and so poor and lame and blind am I, still if He does not shine, my sorrow begins. But I know He is my soul's bright Morning-Star, and He my rising Sun. O how pleasant it is to find Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life! O how pleasant to faith to view the Father in His goings forth in His ancient settlements! to hear Christ say, "My delights were with the sons of men."

And how precious to view Him delivering them! And in waiting for the presence of Jesus, to hear Him say, "I will send the Comforter unto you, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." How pleasant have these things been made to me as opened up to faith, which dear Mr. Popham has spoken so clearly about! I do love him for his work's sake, and all the Lord's servants. Mr. Oldfield has spoken very effectually today to us. The Lord bless all His servants. O what an honour I esteem it to be to have the gospel preached here!

Charles Breed

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### THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 253)*

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The distinction, albeit the connection, between the whole Body of Christ, His complete, invisible church, the complement of the elect, the "whole family in heaven and earth," and the manifested church on earth, must be observed. It is obvious that the latter can never embrace the completeness of the former, nor partake of its perfection; since many who belong to Christ's body never become members of visible churches, while some who join themselves to a local church have (alas!) no place in the true church of Christ, are not among the "living in Jerusalem." Those who are foolish enough to be looking for perfection in Christ's disciples (where it can never be found), may find in this imperfection and limitation of the gospel church state, an excuse for neglect, in some cases for antagonism – an excuse which is at best very lame, and which it is feared often conceals a proud heart alienated from God's right ways and truth.

Foremost in the inseparable connection between the perfect church of Christ mystical and visible churches, thus distinguished, is the living headship of Christ. In all things He is destined to have the preeminence (Col. 1. 18). Christ is not more truly the living, eternal Head of the whole mystical church, than He is the Head of the gospel church-state and of every individual gospel church on earth. For a church, as to its spiritual existence, ceases *to be*, when the Lord of life and glory departs from it, as its Head of influence and order. All activity within a professing church, not in strict accord with Christ's Word and not influenced by His Spirit, being not of faith, is a fruitful source of superstition, formality, innovation and disorder; and death will mark the whole. The connection and the distinction named are illustrated in that

wonderful Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, where we read of the church which is Christ's body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Of this body Christ is "given to be the Head." So the whole church, comprising Jew and Gentile believers, with no distinction of nature or time, is said to be reconciled "unto God in one body by the cross." Again, we read of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Also, "Even as the Lord nourished the church, for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (see Eph. 1. 22, 23; 2. 13, 16; 3. 15; 5. 29, 30). In these passages, one indivisible, complete church appears to be indicated. But in chapter 2, Paul seems to distinguish the individual church of Ephesus: "In whom **ye also are builded together** for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The Epistle to the Colossians, while pointing out the headship of Christ over the universal church (Col. 1. 18), specifies the *order* and steadfast faith of that particular church (Col. 2. 5). The cohesion and the distinction between the various churches of apostolic days is shown in Colossians 4. 16, where the apostle directs an interchange of their Epistle with that of Laodicea. The headship of Christ with regard to public church order is again denoted in Ephesians 4. 4-6: "One Lord" – or Head – "one faith, one baptism"; not "baptismal regeneration," which does not exist in Scripture; nor the baptism of the Spirit – so essential – already named in verse 4; nor infant baptism, which cannot be an act of faith, and has no scriptural warrant; but one baptism to be observed as the sign of discipleship and the path of entrance into a gospel church – the baptism of believers on a profession of their faith.

A gospel church is, therefore, not *any* gathering of professors, nor even of believers, but the uniting together by mutual agreement, under the direction of the Spirit, of a number of penitent sinners, believers, similarly blessed, making an open profession of faith in and loving subjection to one Lord and Master, holding the same doctrines, and regularly assembling together for public worship and the observance of the ordinances of Christ's institution – the ministry of the Word, baptism by immersion of every person admitted to membership, and the Lord's supper. The object is:

1. Mutual edification on the most holy faith of the gospel, through communion in the Spirit of truth and love;
2. A witness bearing before the world to the truth, by
  - i. Union in love with one another;
  - ii. Separation from the world and its evils and errors: "blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the Word of Life"; "Let your light so shine before men, that they

may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Phil. 2. 15, 16; Matt. 5. 16). See also John. 17. 16, 21-23; 1 John 2. 15; 4. 5, 6; 2 John 10, 11; 1 Peter 4. 4, 5; John 15. 19; 13. 35, etc.

The “seven golden candlesticks” of Revelation 1 which “are the seven churches,” and Christ’s presence in the midst of them as “One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength,” and before whom John fell as dead, is a solemn representation of the sanctity of the gospel church state on earth.

Necessary for organic completeness, and definitely prescribed by the Lord, is the call and appointment from among themselves of officers for the ministry of the Word, the administration of the ordinances, the ordering of church discipline and regulating of the church polity according to such rules as may be mutually agreed on, according to the Scriptures. The question of the minimum number of members competent to form a church is (alas!) a very practical one today; it being rare to find in any one locality more than a very few persons who give evidence of saving grace, and who being blessed with some gracious assurance of salvation are constrained by redeeming love, to “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13. 14), being humbly desirous of “walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1. 6).

It appears that the church at Ephesus had a very small beginning – twelve persons; at least, twelve *men* (see Acts 19. 7). And if Lydia and her household, with the jailor and his household formed the nucleus of the Philippian church, as seems a fair inference (Acts 16) – and both grew into flourishing churches, remaining for more than a century – the Scripture caution may be applicable in this connection, “Who hath despised the day of small things?” (Zech. 4. 10).

Before leaving the consideration of the constitution of a gospel church (the question of officers and ordinances we propose to notice later), we might say that not only should persons admitted be such as bear an exemplary character and give clear evidence of being the subjects of saving grace, but also it is most needful that they should have attained at least in some degree to the knowledge of Christ and His great salvation, be possessed of a well-founded hope (assurance is very desirable) in the mercy of God, so as to be able humbly to say, “Come and hear, all ye that

fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul” (Psa. 66. 16). The sacred refreshing experienced, and the union formed at such times by the relation of the Lord’s inward work in the soul, are cherished as among the very choicest ingredients of church life on earth. The good Lord in infinite mercy revive His work, and renew our days as of old!

*(To be continued)*

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## BROUGHT INTO THE FOLD

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*To Mr. G. Alexander*

My dear Brother,

Have you lost your pen, or your heart? or are you sick, or fainting? Try to overcome it all. I have kept looking till my eyes have failed; now I am enquiring.

But I want to tell you a little story, viz: For a long time there have been lambs bleating about the fold, and running round the fence. The old sheep have been anxious to have them in the fold along with them, but they could not let them in of themselves, but they have kept telling the Shepherd about their bleating and wailing cry and anxious look, till at last He must have taken special notice of them, and pitied their case when He heard their cry. For the Shepherd came suddenly and surprisingly, opened the door, and let three of them into the fold last night at 7 p.m., and one of the under-shepherds, William Schofield by name, washed [baptized] them well, and blessed them in the name of the Lord, and they sang some of the songs of Zion, and Ruach (Christ) played the music; and to my thinking, it was a grand entertainment. Some of the elder sheep seemed affected in the heart and eyes, and some of the younger ones too. But, bless you, after the meal of pure Bread (Christ), from the finest of the wheat, and the rich wine of the grape (Christ again), everything was beautiful and glorious; so that we had a high day, and the joy of the Lord was our strength.

Now I shall conclude by wishing you peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and much of His felt presence and power, especially when you go to that honoured place, the Grove, and more especially when you come to our little hill of Zion at Haydock; there you will see the newly-gathered ones; and I hope we may have the presence and blessing of the Triune Jehovah. God bless you, Brother, and your dear wife.

J. Turton, “Lone Sparrow”

**“CHRIST, OUR SACRIFICE”**

*Isaiah 53. 4, 5, 12*

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Surely Christ thy griefs hath borne;  
Weeping soul, no longer mourn;  
View Him bleeding on the tree,  
Pouring out His life for thee;  
There thy every sin He bore;  
Weeping souls, lament no more.

All thy crimes on Him were laid;  
See upon His blameless head  
Wrath its utmost vengeance pours,  
Due to my offence and yours;  
Wounded in our stead, He is;  
Bruised for our iniquities.

Weary sinner, keep thine eyes  
On the atoning sacrifice;  
There the Incarnate Deity  
Numbered with transgressors see;  
There His Father's absence mourns;  
Nailed, and bruised, and crowned with thorns.

See thy God His head bow down;  
Hear the Man of sorrows groan;  
For thy ransom, there condemned;  
Stripped, derided and blasphemed,  
Bleeds the guiltless for the unclean,  
Made an offering for thy sin.

Cast thy guilty soul on Him;  
Find Him mighty to redeem;  
At His feet thy burden lay;  
Look thy doubts and cares away;  
Now, by faith, the Son embrace;  
Plead His promise; trust His grace

Lord, Thy arm must be revealed,  
Ere I can by faith be healed;  
Since I scarce can look to Thee,  
Cast a gracious eye on me!  
At Thy feet myself I lay;  
Shine, O shine my fears away!

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778)

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

*Thomas Brooks*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
OCTOBER 2020

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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 HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

The Holy Spirit is the blessed and eternal Spirit of Almighty God. He is worthy, with the eternal Father and the eternal Son, to receive blessing, praise and glory for ever and ever. And although He is One with the Father and the Son, such is the peculiar grace and love of the Holy Spirit that He speaks not of Himself, but rather fills the heart with the love and worthy praises of the Father and the Son. O by the gracious love of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the very hearts of rebellious mankind the unexampled, immeasurable love of God! Without the Holy Ghost, there is no life, no power, no religion, no hope, no love, no light, no liberty, no knowledge of God and no heaven.

And, although eternity will not be too long (yes, it has no length!) to “Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost,” yet we desire briefly to set before our readers three things concerning the precious truth of the Holy Spirit, namely,

1. The promise of the Holy Ghost.
2. The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit.
3. That He is the Spirit of Grace and Truth.

**The Promise of the Holy Ghost\***

“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). Truly, we are not worthy of such a promise, which is a promise above all promises; an abundant promise, a free promise! Do we feel our great need, do we feel our lack of spiritual knowledge, do we feel our emptiness or darkness, do we want a manifestation of Christ, of His love, of His grace? “The promise is unto you, and to your children ... even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2. 39). “**How much more**” speaks of an abundant willingness to impart, pour forth and give the Holy Spirit to all needy sinners who humbly enquire and ask.

Must we pay for, or can we merit the gift of the Holy Ghost? No, the life and joy that the Spirit imparts (compared to living water) is

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\* The terms Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit are from exactly the same Greek words, transliterated *Pneuma Agion* [literal translation, Holy Wind]. We will use the terms interchangeably as they are in the KJV. The *Translators to the Reader* which prefaces the KJV points out the reason why the phrasing was sometimes varied.

imparted freely to all who have a heart's desire to drink from this fountain: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye..." (Isa. 55. 1). Yes, it is the Spirit's delight to come and impart life, joy and peace to the soul, and that freely and graciously. The secret of this freeness is that Christ has already paid *all*. It is through the merits and intercession of Jesus that the Spirit comes to dwell in a sinner's heart. Christ has purchased the vessel of mercy, and the Spirit comes to take possession of His purchase. For it is God's purchase. He purchased the vessel (though it be a broken vessel) because He loved the vessel with an unchanging, infinitely-pure, everlasting love, and shall He not then come to the vessel and make it a vessel of honour!

This is the meaning of that sacred promise in John 7. Jesus cried, "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. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" This reveals the truth that the Holy Ghost is given to sinners through the presence and intercession of Jesus at the right hand of the Father. Christ is as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and therefore the Holy Ghost came graciously to the Old Testament church, but the plentiful effusion and gift was reserved for the blessed gospel dispensation when the King would sit upon the divine throne as a Priest for ever (see Zech. 6 and Psa. 110). Thus, we read of that "pure river of water of life" proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb (see Rev. 22. 1).

What this teaches us is, that, though so undeserving as sinners, yet, feeling our need, we may humbly ask in the name of Jesus, for the precious gift of the Holy Spirit's gracious power and presence. "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14. 14). True, we are not worthy of this all-gracious Gift, but God is "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exod. 34). He has provided Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering. There is a mountain called, *Jehovah Jireh*, where there are unsearchable riches treasured up for sinners. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4.19).

### **The Sovereignty of the Holy Ghost**

We have written of the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost (which is the beginning of heaven on earth and is glorifying to God). However, even the smallest desire after Christ (if it be from a real, felt need of Jesus) is the sacred, gracious work of the Holy Spirit. We are impotent as fallen sinners. The Holy Spirit is sovereign. He cometh to whom He will when He will. He is faithful and cannot deny His own gracious work which is the breathing of eternal life into a fallen and lost sinner's

heart (the new birth); thus we read “these all wait upon Him.” They are all dependent upon Him to come and reveal a precious Jesus and to shed abroad the love of God. There is a “set time” to favour Zion, and “the vision is yet for an appointed time ... though it tarry, wait for it” (Hab. 2. 3). Yes, “He is faithful that promised,” but ours (and what a trial of faith it is) is to wait upon God in humble dependence and earnest prayer for the fulfilment of His gracious promise of blessing. And, if we hope He has according to His sovereign good will (as One with the Father and the Son) begun that good work in our hearts, shall He not at length “bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it” (Zech. 4. 7)? Prayer for God’s blessing is a scriptural evidence of being a chosen vessel (see Acts 9. 11 and Luke 18. 7). Therefore, faint not in the day of adversity, despise not the day of small things, but be of good cheer, for He “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8. 26).

### **The Spirit of Grace and Truth**

This is a subject that exceeds our ability rightly to divide. *First, He is the Spirit of Grace:*

1. O the exceeding grace in the *kindness* of the Holy Spirit in coming to quicken sinners into life – sinners who before He came, had nothing good in their hearts but only hatred and enmity to God; which enmity, although it may be wrapped up in religion, will be given full vent in hell, if ever left to come there. He cometh not to destroy, not to punish, not to condemn (we are condemned already), but to impart life, set at liberty and reveal the beauties and preciousness of Christ and shed the unspeakably wondrous love of God abroad in that poor sinner’s heart.

2. O the exceeding grace in the *longsuffering patience* of the Holy Spirit in dealing so tenderly and lovingly with these sinners to whom He comes. Yes, their perverse stubborn wills, their old man of sin (unbelief, lust and pride), their double-mindedness, along with their foolishness, ignorance and forgetfulness, would have shut them out of the King’s favour long ago, if the kingdom, to which they have now come by the Spirit, was an earthly one. But what a mercy, He will never leave them, but carry on to perfection that good work which He hath begun in them. “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever” (John 14. 16).

3. O the exceeding grace and *mercy* of the Holy Spirit, that though He be so powerful, and so holy (yes, He is likened to a mighty gale and a burning fire), yet His power in those He graciously comes to is to break the hardest stones on earth (such as those found in the human heart) and His fire is to burn the most corrupt rubbish that is to be found on the earth (such as that found within the human heart) so that by His power

and holiness, He sanctifies and purifies the soul to make it meet for the kingdom of heaven.

4. O the exceeding grace in the *faithfulness and love* of the Holy Spirit in how He dwells in the soul. i. He is said to abide with us *for ever*. ii. He is said to abide for ever with us *as a Comforter* [literal translation: paraclete – one who comes to our side to help us]. Yes, and there is the beautiful flame of ardent, holy love that is kindled in the soul and often burns within the breast of His longing disciples. Many waters cannot quench this love.

5. O the exceeding grace in the *gentleness* of the Holy Spirit. This was manifest so beautifully in the Person of Jesus, when, as the Son of Man, He was anointed with the Holy Ghost; yea, it descended from heaven in the shape of a dove. David acknowledged, “Thy gentleness hath made me great” (Psa. 18. 35). What is heaven described as, but a rest (a Sabbath) that remains for the people of God. And what are the principal constituents of rest, but peace, refreshment and happiness, all of which are communicated by the Spirit and rest upon the ground of Christ’s prevailing intercession.

6. O the exceeding grace in the *meekness and lowliness* of the Holy Spirit, seen, i. in the low condition of those to whom He graciously comes and ii. in the un-announcement of His own blessed operations. For “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation” (Luke 17. 20). Dear readers, those who manifest not a meek and lowly spirit, are not under the influence of the blessed Holy Spirit. May the Lord help us each to remember this truth; it is clearly revealed to us by the Saviour in the beatitudes and in Matthew 11. 29.

7. Lastly, “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him” (Zech. 12. 10). Yes, He shall reveal Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. There, as penitents before the cross, we shall behold the open gates of Paradise and see and know the love of God who, in the new Jerusalem, shall wipe away tears from off all faces.

*Second, He is the Spirit of Truth:* I will not divide this into points. Truth is that which abides. It shall never pass away. It is real. Yes, God is true; perfectly so. Everything that stands opposed to God is a lie and shall not prevail but shall be eternally destroyed. Yes, Jesus is the Truth. We cannot know God except we know Him. How glorious is the truth as it shines to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ. “When He” – the Spirit of Truth – “is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16. 8-11).

O how gracious of the Holy Spirit to teach us the truth about our great need of the Saviour of sinners! O how gracious of the Holy Spirit to teach us that Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us and intercedes at the right hand of the Father! O how gracious of the Holy Spirit to reveal by His sacred power that Christ has gotten the victory! We are thereby released from the thralldom of sin and Satan and set at liberty by the Prince of Peace. Yes, the Spirit's testimony is faithful and true, it shall never fail, it shall never pass away. For He, the Spirit of Truth, "shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" and "He will shew you things to come" (John 16. 15 and 13).

Finally, let us take heed that we grieve not or quench not the Holy Spirit of God by our carelessness, hardness, haste and indifference. How we quickly turn away from the tenderness that belongs to His almighty, yet gracious operations in revealing a precious Jesus in His healing power to save unworthy sinners.

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### THE GREATNESS OF GOD

*Sermon preached by James Kidwell Popham at Galeed Chapel,  
Brighton, on Lord's day morning, December 6th, 1925*

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**Text:** "Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite" (Psa. 147. 5).

If God has put us into a state of mind to hear His Word; if we are poor enough, bad enough, weak enough; if we have a sufficiently severe scriptural knowledge of self; if we are led to examine self, and see that there is not a creature to be compared with us for badness, in our own judgment; and if some inkling of the want and worth of Jesus Christ be given to us, the great Object of the text may be acceptable to our hearts. A great God for a great sinner; a great salvation for great sins; great power for great weakness; an infinite understanding, an understanding, as the text is in the margin, without number. Of His understanding there is no number. No cases, however many, however constantly recurring, of ignorance felt, of perplexity in opposition, can ever meet and exhaust this understanding. He draws it out; He makes it known. Are you, am I, in a frame of mind to need this great God? Will my voice, as it reaches you, be reaching stones, or cases that are indifferent? If so, very sad for you, and very sad for me. But I believe that there are some of us who do need what this text declares.

He is a great God. Everybody not declaring atheism would of course acquiesce in this statement, but not everybody would find it

welcome to his heart. Not everybody would say, “Bless God for His greatness.” Now let us ask ourselves one question at the outset, namely this, were we ever thankful that God is what He is? Did we ever feel that we would not have Him other than He is, different from what He is, though we might? Where conscience says, I am glad He is what He is, and would not have Him other than He is, be thankful. Men have always been making to themselves gods, and it was not for nothing that the Lord said to Israel, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”; not for nothing that He frequently said in the Scriptures, “Beside Me, there is no God, I know not any.”

Is it beyond a possibility that our wicked hearts may, at this moment, be framing other gods to ourselves? A touch of God’s power, a sense of His greatness, will kill the atheism of our hearts for the moment, and cause us to desire to worship Him. God is incomprehensible to us, but if He is pleased to teach us, we have some apprehension of Him. An apprehension of God will kill the flippancy of our nature, and prevent us from easily taking religion into our hands and our mouths. Great is the Lord.

A little God would not suit a big sinner. A God you can comprehend is no bigger than yourself and might be no better. But Jehovah, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, incapable of increase or decrease; God, who borrows not leave to be; God who created heaven and earth out of nothing and angels and men; God, who is in His Trinity of Persons sufficient for Himself, needing no world, and no creatures to make Him happy, or to add to His happiness, this God I declare to you. And it will be your happiness and mine to believe in Him, and to know Him, as He reveals Himself. When a person believes in God really, he may be often astonished that he is so foolish as to lift his puny arm up, and think himself something or somebody, when he is nobody and nothing. What arm have we to be proud of? What reason have we to think highly of ourselves?

Here I say, it was not for nothing that God said to Israel, “When you come into the land I have given to you and your fathers; when you inhabit houses that you have not built; when you eat of vineyards which you have not planted” (see Deut. 6. 10-12). What then? “Do not say that the might of your hand did this and that. I have given you everything. All has come from Me that you possess.” If we felt this when we sat down to our meals; if we felt this when we put on raiment suitable to the weather; when we sit down in our comfortable rooms; when we enjoy the friendship of gracious people, it would do us good. It would make us thankful. And when, in affliction, to feel this, feel that the times we pass through are ordered; the pains we feel, ordered; the difficulties that surround us, ordered; everything ordered; ordered by a wise God, a great

God, that will work in us at least a desire to submit to Him. And when we have mighty sins struggling for the mastery, and an indisposition to serve this God, then to believe in Him, and that there is no sin can cope with His power, and no devil can resist His might, this, this believed, would do us good.

Why is religion so great where it is real? Because a great God gives it. Why is faith so celebrated in the Scripture? Why is it spoken of as a great thing? Because it is exercised on a great Object; wrought by the great God Himself. And why is hope so wonderfully celebrated as to be called a good hope through grace? Because God bestows it, and has made Himself the Object of it. And why is love, true love, so spoken of and celebrated? Because it has that great Object, the God of love, whose nature is love.

It is a wonderful thing to have something of God in your conscience. Conscience is marvellous in man; given by God and intended to be a friend to the man, as well as a friend to God. Now when God is present to the conscience, and deals with it, it is a great thing. Never trample under foot your consciences. When they tell you that you are wrong, do not trample them under foot. Do not turn away from their reproofs.

Great is the Lord. This "great" is relative, as the context shows. It relates to Zion, to the broken-hearted, to the poor. It relates to sick people. Greatness in God heals the sick, binds up the broken-hearted, lifts the downcast up. This greatness is relative. O thanks be to God that we have not to do with an absolute, abstract God. If He were only abstract, we should not reach Him. But He is not; He is relative, and He reveals this in His holy Word, thus:

First of all in His great gift, for He has to do with sinners, and it rests with Him what He will do with them. Mark that. If the Lord will not save us, if He will have no mercy on us, we shall have no reason to blame Him. And if He give a gift to one and withhold it from us, there is no blame attached to Him. "Can I not do what I will with Mine own?" O sinner, God owes you nothing but punishment. What He owes to Himself in the threatening of the law means punishment to you as a sinner. If then, this great God will have mercy on us – and He will have mercy, He has mercy on myriads of sinners – He manifests it in the first place by electing His eternal Son to be the Saviour of such. And therefore that great word has a significance never to be understood fully: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16). If you live to prove that He gave His only begotten Son for you, you will need eternity and heaven sufficiently to enjoy and praise Him for the gift. This is the manifestation of the greatness of God.

There is a certain greatness or dignity in a man who will pass by an offence done to him by a fellow man, but think of this, that the infinite God, who could not, by His very nature, pass by the sins of sinners, yet would save sinners by giving out of His own bosom His eternal Son to be their Saviour. O how great is this love, infinite. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15. 13). But God, who is our Friend, gave His Son, and commanded Him to lay down His life. Now if you are after this, if it is to be an enquiry with you, with me, whether the Lord gave His Son and commanded Him, as incarnate, to give His life for us, to lay it down, then the answer, when it comes, will be heaven on earth in us. That it will. O what an amazing thing it is for any sinner to know that God loved him. What an amazing thing for any sinner to be persuaded in his heart that God loved him, loved him eternally, loved him greatly, loved him freely, loved him so that He would not withhold from him His only begotten Son. "Great is our Lord." I wish I could preach this as it ought to be preached, this greatness of God in His great gift. "Herein is the love of God manifested toward us, in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world" (see 1 John 4. 9); sent Him to be the propitiation for our sins.

O sinner, do you want to know if there is any way to the holy God for you? Do you enquire whether such a person may pray; whether such a sinner may hope; whether such a sinner may escape the wrath to come; whether such a sinner may get honourably through this life with all its perplexities, and through the mazes of his own corruptions. If so, I say, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1. 29). The vilest sinner out of hell, who lives to feel his need, will find this new way to be the way, and it will be acceptable to his heart. I am glad of this for myself; what should I do but for this love of God manifested in the gift of His dearly-beloved, only-begotten Son? Raise your downcast eyes and head, O bowed-down sinner. "The LORD raiseth them that are bowed down" (Psa. 146. 8). This love is relative; it is for sinners in its nature. It flows in this particular channel, and it reaches the vilest sinner.

He is great in His love. And when this love flows and shows itself in the incarnation of the Son of God, in the miraculous virgin birth of the Saviour, and when this Saviour is manifested by the Holy Spirit to a sinner as suitable, suitable because He is a Man, suitable therefore because He is capable of having sin imputed to Him, hope rises. This is one of the grand points of the gospel that the Lord Jesus is next of kin and is therefore capable of redeeming, capable of having the work of redemption laid on Him; capable of paying the debt of man and doing the duties of man, and discharging the liabilities of man and meeting the cases of a man; all men who have in their hearts a real sense of sin and



of debt and of distance. The ramifications of the gospel are infinite. Take your case as you may know it; a case of rebellion, of lust, of pride, of vanity, of weakness, of yielding to sin, of turning from God, of unfaithfulness, take the case as you may find it in your own heart, and as the Spirit opens Jesus Christ to you in His redeeming character, in His work of salvation, you will find that there is not a case that you can come into, there is not a sin you can feel, there is not a sorrow you may bear, that this Lord Jesus Christ will not meet. How suitable He is. Ah, if we were but as suitable for Him as He is suitable for us, it would be a mercy.

Mark what I say. O what a question. Are we suitable for Christ? Plenty of men may be saying today, what a suitable Saviour Jesus Christ is, but then mark the scripture – the poor, the blind, the lame, the maimed, the halt, the leper, the debtor, the dead, the repenting, the weeping, the hard sinner who would repent if he could, the distant soul that would come near if he could, such sinners, such sinners (they do not think it always) are welcome to, and suitable for, such a Saviour. And these two are to come together as when the physician heals the sick, when his remedies touch the disease. As when a broken bone is set and healed, there is contact between the physician, the surgeon and the patient, so when the Lord Jesus comes to a sinner, there is a contact between Him and the sinner. A distant Saviour you may think of coldly, but you will melt before a present Saviour, and thank Him for His healing touch.

Great in His love; and we must bring the Trinity in. O may we never by a syllable or a thought disintegrate the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is a blessed thing; a wonderful mercy to hold it in your conscience. The integral whole of the Trinity means this simply that the three Persons, as they are one in nature, so they are in salvation. Each has a different office and work, but the whole is one glorious whole. The complement of the Father's love, of the Son's incarnation, is the merciful revealing work of the Spirit, the great work of the Spirit.

Great is the Spirit. Yes, great is the Spirit. Great in His love is the Spirit. He comes, He comes, full of grace. He comes with the washing of regeneration; He comes with the healing message; He comes in the sweet invitations; He comes in the gracious revelations of the Lord Jesus and makes Him known. O this holy gospel deserves to be preached well. This holy gospel meets sinners. I would not part with the little I know of the Trinity in unity in salvation for all the world. It is not much I know, but the love of God, I have known in my heart. And the greatness of the Saviour's merit, I have known. And the touches and teaching of the Spirit, I have known in my heart. Bless God for a little saving knowledge. Mourning soul, dry up your tears. You may say one day with Hart:

“Though temptations seldom cease;  
Though frequent griefs I feel,  
Yet His Spirit whispers peace,  
And He is with me still.” (H. 801)

You will find all your fresh springs of hope and love and faith are in Christ. You will find sometimes you can say:

“O my Jesus, Thou art Mine,  
With all Thy grace and power.” (H. 801)

When He comes, you are increasingly amazed that He should come, that He does come to such a person, and then you will find a sweetness in the grief. Ah you will say perhaps, you will say with me, Lord I am frequently grieved that I am a sinner. I am grieved that I am a sinner, and that I do commit sin. I am grieved that I turn away from Thee. But O He will not let you turn away from Him always. His Spirit will hold you; His Spirit will not let you go.

So we have to do with a great God in Trinity. I would ever keep the Trinity before you because there is no salvation outside the Trinity and salvation is not confined to one Person in the Trinity. Each Person is a Saviour, and the Three are the Saviour. One God is the Saviour of sinners. The Father saves by electing sinners; the Son saves by redeeming sinners, and the Spirit saves by quickening sinners, and these Three unite in one gracious experience. Bless God for a true experience of the Trinity. Thus the Trinity is knowable, and enjoyable, and enjoyed sometimes. “Ah,” one says, “but I am beyond all you say; I am an uncommon sinner.” I know one thing, the more you are taught of God, the deeper will your convictions of sin be, and the more likely you will be to conclude that there never was another person like you for wickedness. But then that will not alter this, this great truth, that your sins do not reach and outstretch and go beyond the infinite love of God, the infinite merit of Christ, and the infinite grace of the Holy Ghost. When you can get beyond infinite in love, in merit, in power, then you may despair. But until you can get beyond the Trinity, then there is no ground of despair.

As Christ is at all opened and manifested to you, you will never run beyond the boundary for there is no boundary here. The illimitable ocean of God’s mercy in Christ, the illimitable merit of Christ, and the illimitable goodness of the Holy Ghost, these, these will hold and keep a sinner, and take him to heaven. Great is our Lord, and this salvation in and by the Trinity will explain many things to us.

It will explain afflictions which are sent by the Lord. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3. 19). What a mercy it is that God deals so kindly with us, so tenderly with us. That is a beautiful passage

in the Psalms: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psa. 103. 13). See a poor child who does not realise any danger, yet walking right into danger and the parent is near. What does the parent do? Stand still and see the child destroy itself? He interposes, stretches out his arm, and snatches the child from danger. God sees you going into evil, He sees me going into evil, and what does He do? Take no notice? He has winked for generations at the wickedness of the world, and He is still winking at it in some sense. But when a child of His runs in a wrong way, what does He do? This great God says, "I will hedge up his way with thorns," and if thorns are not enough (and the thorns of the east are great) He says, "I will build a wall of hewn stone around him" (see Hos. 2. 6). And what is it for? He shall not find his paths. Think of it. The paths that he wanted, the lovers he went after; he shall not find his paths and then, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness." And then what? There she shall say, I have come to an end. There she shall say, I am ruined, without hope. No; He says, "and there she shall sing as in the day when I brought her up out of the land of Egypt. I will give her her vineyards from thence" (see Hos. 2. 14, 15). The very way of trouble, the affliction you have, the difficulties that are about you, these, these shall lead you to find not a wilderness only, but a vineyard.

"Come unto Me" (Matt. 11. 28) is His kind word. What a favour it is for God to deal with us patiently. The God of all patience and comfort, He says patience is in Him and comfort is in Him, and both of them His poor people are brought in some measure to have an experience of.

"Great is our Lord." Some of us have tried His patience; we have dearly tried Him; said wrong things to Him, and foolishly protested against His ways; thought Him neither kind nor wise; wished ourselves away from His control. Through the petulance and the wickedness of our nature have wished ourselves away from His control. If you have not gone as far as that, do be thankful and ask that you never may. Ask Him to keep the wickedness of your heart down. But I have gone as far as that, and what a God He has proved Himself to be.

Great in patience. And when we should have cut everyone off dealing with us as we deal with God, if that were possible even, He comes and says, "Return unto Me, return unto Me for I have redeemed thee. What reason have you to deal as you are doing? Why do you say you are lords – 'We will come no more unto Thee'? What have I done unto thee? Wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against Me, O My people. What have I done to thee?" I tell you this, sinner, if God makes an appeal of that nature to you, it will break you all to pieces and into

sorrow and shame and contrition, and give you a good hope that He will forgive you and take you to heaven at last. O what a God He is.

How often He has to teach us the same lesson over and over and over again, so forgetful are we. Good reason has the Lord to say, "Remember and hold fast; remember what I said to you; remember how I drew near to you; remember how I blessed you and remember the promise I spoke to you." We have forgotten all, we have forgotten all from time to time. It is very solemn to be a forgetter of God.

All that He had taught His disciples, and some particular things He had said to them, they had forgotten. But when He arose from the dead and they saw Him, "Then they remembered His holy words" (see Luke 24. 8). I have been glad of that word and it will do you good, great good.

"Great is our Lord, and of great power." There is nothing too hard for Him. His understanding knows no number; there is no end to it, an infinite succession; streams, beams, glories. Jesus Christ in His fulness possessing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Father in His eternal destination of sinners to life and glory and the Spirit in His infinite kindness in coming to dunghills and raking into them and bringing the Redeemer's blood to cleanse them; this is the God, this is the God I declare to you, though I do it feebly! "This God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our Guide even unto death" (Psa. 48. 14).

"This God is the God we adore;  
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend;  
Whose love is as large as His power,  
And neither knows measure nor end." (H. 220)

This God may we know. Amen.

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## THE SPIRIT'S WORK

*By Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843)*

### **Conviction of Sin: The Spirit's First Work**

*Who convinces of sin.* "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in Me" (see John 16. 8, 9). It is curious to remark that wherever the Holy Ghost is spoken of in the Bible, He is spoken of in terms of gentleness and love. We often read of the wrath of God the Father, as in Romans 1: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (verse 18). And we often read of the wrath of God the Son: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way" (Psa. 2. 12); or, "Revealed from heaven taking vengeance" (see 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8). But we nowhere read of the wrath of God the Holy Ghost. He is compared to a dove, the gentlest of all creatures. He is warm and gentle as the breath: "Jesus breathed on

them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (see John 20. 22). He is gentle as the falling dew: "I will be as the dew unto Israel" (Hos. 14. 5). He is soft and gentle as oil, for He is called "the oil of gladness." The fine oil wherewith the high priest was anointed was a type of the Spirit. He is gentle and refreshing as the springing well: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4. 14). He is called "the Spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zech. 12. 10). He is nowhere called the Spirit of wrath. He is called the "Holy Ghost, which is the Comforter" (see John 14. 26). Nowhere is He called the Avenger.

We are told that He groans within the heart of a believer, "helping his infirmities" (see Rom. 8. 26), so that He greatly helps the believer in prayer. We are told also of the love of the Spirit – nowhere of the wrath of the Spirit. We are told of His being grieved: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 4. 30), and of His being resisted: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7. 51). We hear of His being quenched: "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5. 19). But these are all marks of gentleness and love. Nowhere will you find one mark of anger or of vengeance attributed to Him; and yet, brethren, when this blessed Spirit begins His work of love, mark how He begins – He convinces of sin. Even He, all-wise, almighty, all-gentle, and loving though He be, cannot persuade a poor, sinful heart to embrace the Saviour without first opening up his wounds and convincing him that he is lost.

Now, brethren, I ask of you, should not the faithful minister of Christ just do the very same? If the Spirit, whose very breath is all gentleness and love, whom Jesus has sent into the world to bring men to eternal life – if He begins His work in every soul that is to be saved by convincing of sin, why should you blame the minister of Christ if he begins in the very same way? Why should you say that we are harsh, cruel, and severe, when we begin to deal with your souls by convincing you of sin? "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4. 16). When the surgeon comes to cure a corrupted wound – when he tears off the vile bandages which unskilful hands had wrapped around it, when he lays open the deepest recesses of your wound, and shows you all its venom and its virulence – do you call him cruel? May not his hands be all the time the hands of gentleness and love? Or, when a house is all on fire, when the flames are bursting out from every window, when some courageous man ventures to alarm the sleeping inmates, bursts through the barred door, tears aside the close-drawn curtains, and shakes the sleeper, bids him awake and flee – a moment longer, and you may be lost – do you call him cruel? Or do you say this messenger of mercy spoke too loud, too plain? No. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job 2. 4). Why, then,

brethren, will you blame the minister of Christ when he begins by convincing you of sin? Think you that the wound of sin is less venomous or deadly than a wound in the flesh? Think you the flames of hell are less hard to bear than the flames of earth? The very Spirit of love begins by convincing you of sin; and are we less the messengers of love because we begin by doing the same thing? Oh, then, do not say that we are become your enemy because we tell you the truth!

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## HOPE IN TROUBLE

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Bayswater  
January 29th, 1840

*To M. and J. G.*

My dear Friends,

I cannot help sending you a few lines that perhaps would have been written before this, had I not been painfully ill for a fortnight. I entered this valley of humiliation with some feeling sense of my high privileges – “This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy Word hath quickened me.” In this I found eternal life, and had some sweet token and renewals of it as I proceeded. On Sunday morning, while looking and longing for a further renewal of this quickening power, as I read Malachi 4, the first verse filled me with awe, and I saw and felt much that, like stubble, must be burnt up; yet the Lord makes a reservation, which seemed to look straight at me, saying with inexpressible kindness and mercy, “But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” This I found a spiritual healing, and the sweet rays of this Sun burnt to ashes all my unbelief, and left my spirit softened and comforted with a sweet hope.

I have been two days with my relations, Mr. and Mrs. T. I found a sweet gale from the Lord on my entering their house; a very soft and secret contrition, a deep feeling of humiliation, with a most sweet and honest power of confessing my sins, not with wrath and fear, but with an inexpressible feeling as of a child at the feet of a kind and tender Father.

This is the Friend I want to recommend to you in your present dilemma. He never fails. Listen to what He says: “Be still, and know that I am God.” What seest thou in this dispensation? “A seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north” – a cutting, trying dispensation, with many secret, dark rebukes and reproofs; for the Lord will utter His judgments in a broken law. Here I think the Lord has for some time held you; everything seems to make against you, and every testimony (however false it may be) seems to sink into your hearts; the Lord suffers

it to enter your spirits as if it were true, and you find no shelter. This is God's design, that all refuge may fail you without and within. All shall fight against thee, "**But** they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee" (see Jer. 1. 13-19).

Though it may be a doleful, dark and long night of affliction, yet I believe that this necessary law-work is to bring you down to know something more than you have done of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And remember, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings," and you shall "go forth and grow up" in the midst of these terrible things. The effect will be a purer language, and a brighter view of Christ's precious salvation; and in the end all shall acknowledge that you are "the seed which the LORD hath blessed."

Read very diligently Deuteronomy 4. "Ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day." In that chapter is set before us the great necessity of spiritual attention and diligence; and it shows us we cannot have a better token of God's favour than a secret watchfulness of the Lord's movements within and without, attended with prayer.

Yours &c.

James Bourne

### **"THESE THAT HAVE TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN!"**

*By Mr. Gerald D. Buss*

What an unwitting testimony did the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica give to the power of the gospel, when they complained thus! "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither" (Acts 17. 6). There were those at Thessalonica of whom it could be truly said that their lives had been turned upside down. Paul writes to them in 1 Thessalonians 1: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.... And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (verses 4-5, 9). Their lives had indeed been turned upside down for all to see! Paul himself was a living witness to this saving change the gospel brings. His life as Saul of Tarsus was diametrically opposite to what it was as Paul the apostle! He was changed from a ravening wolf to one manifestly beloved of the Lord who sat at Christ's feet.

We notice then that the effect of the gospel is to turn men's way of thinking and behaving so that it is a reversal of a former way of life. It

is a change which the unbelieving world cannot understand, although there may be a secret acknowledgment, even admiration. But such is the enmity of fallen man, the natural man, he will not recognise the hand of God in it. Indeed, the very fact of a "world being turned upside down" will bring reproach and even persecution as it did for Paul at Thessalonica, from those whose world has not been thus changed.

There are many examples of this irreversible change of which Scripture has furnished a cloud of witnesses.

Take for example the case of Zacchaeus. His way of life, before the miracle wrought at Jericho, was alien to the gospel. His main aim in life was to get rich, and to this end he abused his occupation as a tax gatherer to oppress the poor. Added to this, being a servant of the Roman occupation of Israel, he was despised by his fellow citizens. All this did not concern him so long as he could pursue and hold on to his idol which was wealth.

However, the adorable Saviour had purposes of love towards this hated figure. The impulse for Zacchaeus to run before the Lord Jesus Christ and climb the famous sycamore tree, may on his part have been mere curiosity, or perhaps there were some pricks such as those which Saul of Tarsus experienced. What we do know is that it was the appointed hour and place for sovereign grace to turn his world upside down! The surprising, personal command of Christ, and His purpose to abide at Zacchaeus' house, was foreknown and foreordained, and in that auspicious moment his life was changed for ever.

The marks of grace were, first, that he obeyed the command to come down from the tree he was hiding in. Grace brings humility. Proud nature must be subdued. Second, that he was made immediately willing to have the Lord Jesus Christ in his house with his friends. God's children are made willing in the day of His power. Their will is taken in hand by the Holy Spirit. Third, on hearing that the name of Jesus Christ was being murmured against for his sake, true repentance took its course. This was to remove any stumbling block to others that his newly-made profession of faith might bring to the name of our Lord. Restoring fourfold to those whom he had defrauded and giving the half of his goods to the poor all told the same story. His world had been turned upside down! "O what wonders love has done!" (H. 766).

Perhaps an even more startling example of this great change was in the case of the mad Gadarene. We are told that before our Lord met him on the shores of the lake, he was untameable. Neither warnings, threats, nor chains could subdue him. He was dwelling in the tombs, and no doubt his life was a misery to himself and others. All this changed when our Lord stepped ashore and came face to face with one whom the devil had held in his clutches so long. After the legion of devils had been cast



out, we find him with a threefold change. He was clothed, sitting at the feet of Jesus and in his right mind – wonderfully typical of every true conversion by the Holy Ghost. Brought to trust in Christ’s obedience as our garment, at the feet of Jesus made teachable and meek as our Lord, and seeing light in God’s light, discerning truth with the mind of an awakened soul.

One might have thought that the residents of Gadara would have been thankful to the Lord Jesus for removing the cause of this public nuisance. Seemingly more concerned about the loss of their swine and not wanting their way of life disturbed by Jesus of Nazareth, they besought Him to depart out of their coasts. We marvel at the humility of God’s dear Son in our nature. He meekly re-enters the ship that had brought Him to Gadara, but first anoints the no-longer mad Gadarene as a gospel minister to his friends. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee” (Mark 5. 19). It might have been easier for the Gadarene to have started a new life where he had not been known in his mad state. But the visible truth that his world had been turned upside down, preached a sermon before their very eyes, which he attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. One wonders who his friends were? Who would have wanted to be a friend when he was still the mad Gadarene? Who would want his friendship now that his world had been turned upside down? The Lord however evidently had a work for him to do. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them....”

The late Ebenezer Clark, pastor of Hope Chapel, Barton for many years, was a soldier who had fought in the First World War. He related the following confession in Southill pulpit. Before he was called up for national service, he admitted that he was one of the ringleaders of mischief in his locality. However, while he was a gunner in France, the Lord met with him and “turned his world upside down.” When he returned to civilian life, some of his former friends thought that he would accompany them again in worldly pursuits. He cycled down to the village green where some of these acquaintances still gathered and repeated the following words from John Newton:

“Let worldly minds the world pursue;  
It has no charms for me;  
Once I admired its trifles too,  
But grace has set me free.

“Its pleasures now no longer please,  
No more content afford;  
Far from my heart be joys like these,  
Now I have seen the Lord.”

(H. 1100)

The new-born child of God, unlike Ephraim in Hosea, *has* had his taste changed. His new nature teaches him no longer to savour the things which once he thought were pleasurable and to savour those things which once he despised.

It behoves us to ask, “Has our world been turned upside down?” It may have been profane, it may have been religious, but whatever it was, it must be turned upside down, that we be emptied of self and that Christ may become All in all. Then those with whom we dwell and work will say: “These which have turned the world upside down have come hither.”

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### THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST’S RICHES

*Extract from Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

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The excellency of the riches of Christ is above all other riches in the world.

First, The riches of Christ are *incomparable riches*: “Happy is the man that findeth Wisdom” – that is, the Lord Jesus Christ – “and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her” (Prov. 3. 13-15). One grain of grace is far beyond all the gold of Ophir and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the guts and garbage of the earth. We may say of the riches of this world, compared with the riches of Christ, as Gideon sometime said of the vintage of Abiezer, “The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer” (see Judg. 8. 2). So the gleanings, the smallest gatherings of the riches of Christ, are far better, more excellent, more satisfying, more contenting, more ravishing than all the riches of this world.

“The whole Turkish empire,” saith Luther, “is but a crust that God throws to a dog.” The wise merchant parts with all to gain this pearl of price (see Matt. 13. 45, 46); the truth is, other riches are but a burden. “Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold” (Gen. 13. 2). The Hebrew word *chabbedh* is, “He was very heavy in cattle, in silver, and in gold”; to signify, that riches are but heavy burdens. A little will serve nature, less will serve grace, but nothing will serve men’s lusts.

Secondly, the riches of Christ are *inexhaustible riches*. Christ can never be drawn dry.

Certainly Christ’s treasures have no bottom, all His bags are bottomless; but Scripture, history and experience, do abundantly testify that men’s bags, purses, coffers and mines, may be exhausted or drawn

dry, but Christ's can never. Millions of thousands live upon Christ, and He feels it not; His purse is always full, though He be always giving.

Thirdly, the riches of Christ are *soul-satisfying riches*. O those riches of grace and goodness that be in Christ, how do they satisfy the souls of sinners! A pardon doth not more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread the hungry man, nor drink the thirsty man, nor clothes the naked man, nor health the sick man, than the riches of Christ do satisfy the gracious man. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4. 13, 14). Grace is a perpetual, flowing fountain. Grace is compared to water. Water serves to cool men when they are in a burning heat, so grace cools the soul when it hath been scorched and burned up under the sense of divine wrath and displeasure. Water is cleansing, so is grace; water is fructifying, so is grace; and water is satisfying, it satisfies the thirsty, and so doth grace. "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14. 8). But now earthly riches can never satisfy the soul; but as they said once of Alexander, "that had he a body suitable to his mind, he would set one foot upon sea, and the other upon land"; he would reach the east with one hand, and the west with the other. And doubtless the same frame of spirit is to be found in all the sons of Adam. In Ecclesiastes 5. 10, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity." If a man be hungry, silver cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him, much less then is it able to satisfy him. O but the riches of Christ are soul-satisfying riches! A soul rich in spirituals, rich in eternals, says, I have enough, though I have not this and that temporal good.

Fourthly, the riches of Christ are *harmless riches*. They are riches that will not hurt the soul, that will not harm the soul. Where is there a soul to be found in all the world that was ever made worse by spiritual riches? O but earthly riches have cast down many, they have slain many. If poverty, with Saul, hath killed her thousands, riches, with David, hath killed her ten thousands. "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt" (Eccles. 5. 13). Earthly riches are called thorns, and well they may; for as thorns, they pierce both head and heart; the head with cares in getting them, and the heart with grief in parting with them. O the souls that riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows! O the minds that riches have blinded! O the hearts that riches have hardened! O the consciences that riches have benumbed! Oh the wills that riches have perverted! Oh the affections that riches have disordered and destroyed! Earthly riches

are very vexing, very defiling, very dividing, and to multitudes prove very ruining. It was a wise and Christian speech of Charles V to the Duke of Venice, who, when he had showed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, only returned him this grave and serious memento: "These are the things which make us unwilling to die."

Fifthly, the riches of Christ are *unsearchable riches*. This is plain in the text, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3. 8). There are riches of justification, riches of sanctification, riches of consolation, and riches of glorification in Christ. All the riches of Christ are unsearchable riches. A saint with all the light that he hath from the Spirit of Christ, is not able to search to the bottom of these riches. Nay, suppose that all the perfections of angels and saints in a glorified estate should meet in one noble breast, yet all those perfections could not enable that glorious, glorified creature to search to the bottom of Christ's unsearchable riches. Doubtless when believers come to heaven, when they shall see God face to face, when they shall know as they are known, when they shall be filled with the fulness of God, even then they will sweetly sing this song: "O the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of the unsearchable riches of Christ!" (see Rom. 11. 33). As there is no Christ to this Christ, so there are no riches to His riches. O but such are not the riches of this world, they may be reckoned, they may be fathomed.

Sixthly, the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ are *permanent and abiding riches; they are lasting, they are durable riches*. That is a choice scripture: "Riches and honour are with Me; yea, durable riches and righteousness" (Prov. 8. 18). The Hebrew word that is rendered "*durable riches*" signifies, old riches. All other riches are but new, they are but of yesterday as it were. O! but with Me are old riches, durable riches. All other riches, in respect of their fickleness, are as a shadow, a bird, a ship, an arrow, a dream, a post. Earthly riches are very uncertain. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6. 17). They are ever upon the wing; they are like tennis balls, which are banded [tossed] up and down from one to another. As the bird hops from twig to twig, so do riches from man to man. This age can furnish us with multitudes of instances of this nature.

Seventhly and lastly, they are *the most useful riches, to sweeten all other riches, mercies, and changes, &c.*, which speaks out the excellency of these riches above all other riches. The more useful anything is, the more excellent it is. Now the riches of Christ are of all things the most

useful to poor souls. When the soul is under the guilt of sin, nothing relieves it like the riches of Christ. When the soul is surrounded with temptations, nothing strengthens it like the riches of Christ. When the soul is mourning under afflictions, nothing comforts it like the riches of Christ. When state, friends, and trading fail, nothing makes a Christian sing care away like the riches of Christ. The riches of Christ sweeten all other riches that men enjoy. If a man be rich in parts, or rich in grace, rich in faith, rich in knowledge, rich in wisdom, rich in joy, rich in peace; or if a man be rich in temporals, rich in money, rich in wares, rich in jewels, rich in lands, the glorious and unsearchable riches of Christ sweeten all his riches, and the want of these riches embitters all the riches that men enjoy. When men's consciences are enlightened and awakened, then they cry out, what are all these worldly riches to us, except we had an interest in the riches of Christ? As Absalom once said, "What are all these to me, except I see the king's face?"

I have read of one that, upon his dying bed, called for his bags, and laid a bag of gold to his heart, and then cried out, "Take it away, it will not do, it will not do." There are things that earthly riches can never do.

They can never satisfy divine justice;

They can never pacify divine wrath;

Nor they can ever quiet a guilty conscience.

And till these things are done, man is undone. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, the honourable garter cannot cure the gout, nor the chain of pearls about the neck take away the pain of the teeth. O but the unsearchable riches of Christ give ease under all pains and torments.

Nugas, the Scythian king, despising the rich presents and ornaments that were sent unto him by the emperor of Constantinople (Michael Paleologus), asked him that brought them, "Whether those things could drive away calamities, diseases, or deaths?" looking upon all those presents as no presents, that could not keep off calamities from him. Verily, all the riches and glories of this world cannot keep off the least calamity, neither can they make up the want of the least mercy. But the riches of Christ do both keep off calamities, and make up the want of all mercies that the soul craves or needs. All which speak out the excellency of the riches of Christ above all other riches.

Nor is regeneration an addition to nature. Christ was not an addition to Adam, but a new Head by Himself.... Grace grows not upon the old stock. It is not a piece of cloth sewn to an old garment, but the one is cast aside, the other wholly taken on.... It is not a new varnish, nor do old things remain under a new paint, nor new plaster laid upon old; a new creature, not a mended creature.

*Stephen Charnock*

## COMING TO CHRIST

*Extract from the Journal of David Brainerd (1718-1747)*

*Lord's day, January 19th:* One weary, heavy-laden soul, I have abundant reason to hope, was brought to true rest and solid comfort in Christ, who afterwards gave me such an account of God's dealing with his soul as was abundantly satisfying, as well as refreshing, to me.

He told me he had often heard me say that persons must see and feel themselves utterly helpless and undone; that they must be emptied of a dependence upon themselves and of all hope of saving themselves by their own doings, in order to their coming to Christ for salvation. He had long been striving after this view of things, supposing this would be an excellent frame of mind to be thus emptied of a dependence upon his own goodness; that God would have respect to this frame, would then be well pleased with him and bestow eternal life upon him. But when he came to feel himself in this helpless, undone condition, he found it quite contrary to all his thoughts and expectations, so that it was not the same frame, nor indeed anything like the frame he had been seeking after.

Instead of its being a good frame of mind, he now found nothing but badness in himself, and saw it was forever impossible for him to make himself any better. He wondered, he said, that he had ever hoped to mend his own heart. He was amazed he had never before seen that it was utterly impossible for him, by all his contrivances and endeavours, to do anything that way, since the matter now appeared to him in so clear a light. Instead of imagining now, that God would be pleased with him for the sake of this frame of mind and this view of his undone estate, he saw clearly and felt it would be just with God to send him to eternal misery; and that there was no goodness in what he then felt; for he could not help seeing that he was naked, sinful and miserable, and there was nothing in such a sight to deserve God's love or pity.

He saw these things in a manner so clear and convincing that it seemed to him, he said, he could convince everybody of their utter inability ever to help themselves and their unworthiness of any help from God. In this frame of mind he came to public worship this evening; and while I was inviting sinners to come to Christ naked and empty, without any goodness of their own to recommend them to His acceptance, then he thought with himself that he had often tried to come and give up his heart to Christ, and he used to hope that some time or other he should be able to do so. But now he was convinced he could not, and it seemed utterly vain for him ever to try any more, and he could not, he said, find a heart to make any further attempt, because he saw it would signify nothing at all. Nor did he now hope for a better opportunity or more

ability hereafter, as he had formerly done, because he saw and was fully convinced his own strength would forever fail.

While he was musing in this manner, he saw, he said, with his heart (which is a common phrase among them) something that was unspeakably good and lovely, and what he had never seen before; and this stole away his heart whether he would or no. He did not, he said, know what it was he saw. He did not say, "This is Jesus Christ"; but it was such glory and beauty as he never saw before. He did not now give away his heart so as he had formerly intended, and attempted to do, but it went away of itself after that glory he then discovered. He used to try to make a bargain with Christ, to give up his heart to Him that he might have eternal life for it. But now he thought nothing about himself or what would become of him hereafter; but was pleased and his mind wholly taken up with the unspeakable excellency of what he then beheld.

After some time he was wonderfully pleased with the way of salvation by Christ; so that it seemed unspeakably better to be saved altogether by the mere free grace of God in Christ, than to have any hand in saving himself. The consequence of this exercise is that he appears to retain a sense and relish of divine things, and to maintain a life of seriousness and true religion.

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### THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Herve Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 287) (edited)*

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#### *The ordinances of a gospel church*

The ordinances prescribed by Christ to be observed in the churches are:

1. Baptism, and
2. The communion of the body and the blood of the Lord, called the Lord's supper.

One of the greatest mysteries in practical religious life, is the fact that many of the Lord's own people have never believed in nor obeyed the ordinance which we as Strict Baptists consider essential to church membership – believers' baptism. Perplexed as we may be over this mystery, and glad as we are to own and receive into spiritual fellowship several non-baptist believers, yet our rule of practice *in the churches* must be maintained inviolate, seeing it is derived from holy Scripture. The example of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (O wondrous condescension in God's own Son!), the practice of the apostles, and the commission they received from their Lord and Master, are proofs

sufficient that baptism as a divinely-given sign of discipleship, is incumbent upon all who would be admitted to church membership and have thereby access to the solemn communion of the Lord's supper. The manner of its administration among us (by immersion) is undoubtedly the manner of the apostles and of the ministers of the early churches; a profession of faith and a humble relation before the church of gracious experience, as mentioned above, preceding baptism.

In Acts 2, the three thousand who gladly received the apostle's word (presumably making known that they had been so favoured) were thereupon baptized; after which it is said, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in **breaking of bread**, and in prayers." It is not evident that in the days of the apostles any persons were admitted to the church or received the Lord's supper unbaptized. The order of their commission:

1. "Teach all nations."

2. "Baptizing them."

3. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you";

and the divine promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 19, 20) must ever be sufficient guidance and encouragement for the humble, loyal minister of Christ in this important matter.

Nor does there appear to be any well-grounded or scriptural warrant to omit (what has been called an "ordeal") the relating by the candidate before the assembled brethren the Lord's gracious work in their soul. Solemn indeed it is thus to speak of the sacred dealings of the great God with an unworthy person, but when the inward fire of redeeming love burns, the language of the happy, humbled sinner is, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Psa. 66. 16). When the spouse found her Beloved, she "held Him, and would not let Him go, until she had brought Him into her mother's house" – the church; which spiritually interpreted in New Testament times would be no other way than by a public profession of His name, accompanied by a renunciation of the flesh: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (see Song 3. 4; Rom. 13. 14).

There is no question but that the Son of God Himself was baptized by immersion in the Jordan. Some have been favoured with a spiritual apprehension of that scene, when the glorious and blessed Trinity in Unity, as if to seal with signal approval that sacred ordinance, demonstrated Their distinct, personal participation. The Father in His voice, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Son,



thus declared, in His therein becomingly fulfilling all righteousness, as His people's Surety and His Father's righteous Servant. The Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, in His descent upon Jesus "like a dove and lighting upon Him" (Matt. 3. 13-17; John 1. 32-34).

We will not argue the meaning of the word *baptize*; it has often been done, and is quite needless: it is well known that it plainly means "dip" or "overwhelm." But not merely the literal term (though to a humble disciple the authority of Christ's word is quite sufficient), *the thing signified* must be seriously considered, according to Scripture. Baptism sets forth, and is a solemn, ceremonial, public profession of faith in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of union with Him therein. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6. 4). Here doctrine, experience and obedience harmoniously meet in the rightly-exercised believer's loving, grateful heart, as he is enabled to walk in the footsteps of his Lord and Master in this despised ordinance. And he finds it a "way of pleasantness."

The case of the Ethiopian eunuch, though not one of immediately joining a church communion, is clear both as to the doctrine and mode of baptism. Requesting this privilege of Philip, he said, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" What had induced that desire? Philip's preaching of Jesus, by the express direction of the Holy Ghost, out of Isaiah 53 – eminently a chapter concerning the suretyship sufferings and atoning death of Jehovah's righteous Servant. "I believe that Jesus Christ" – that suffering, atoning, dying Lamb of God – "is the Son of God." "And they went down both into the water ... and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water" (Acts 8. 29-39). Immersion is evident. The Holy Spirit attending Peter's preaching in the house of Cornelius, the apostle would not forbid water but commanded the hearers (who had received the Holy Ghost as well as he) to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10. 47-48). The Corinthian church, too, was composed of baptized believers, the apostle disclaiming having personally baptized more than a few of them, "lest any should say that he had baptized in his own name" – so jealous was he of the honour of his Lord and Master, yet so loyal to his commission. To his preaching the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, baptizing was subordinate; the actual rite being more frequently administered by deputy, lest he should be construed as usurping authority (see 1 Cor. 1. 12-17).

While admitting that an ordinance may be elevated above its proper place in the professing church, and some intrinsic virtue in its observation be wrongly implied, yet on the other hand disregard for a scriptural order cannot be other than highly improper in those professing

to own the Lord Jesus Christ for Saviour and King. When it is considered:

1. That Christ submitted to baptism;
2. That the early disciples and the apostles practised baptism in accord with Christ's commission;
3. That the churches of Rome (6. 3, 4); Corinth (Acts 18. 8; 1 Cor. 1. 12-17); Caesarea (Acts 10. 47, 48); Galatia (3. 27); Ephesus (Acts 19. 5; Eph. 4. 5); Philippi (Acts 16. 15-33); Colosse (2. 12); Samaria (Acts 8. 12), and all the gospel churches of the first two or three centuries A.D. were composed of baptized believers;
4. That the Son of God Himself commanded baptism to be observed in the name of the Trinity;
5. That there is no scriptural example of the baptism of infants, nor of adults other than by immersion;
6. That the first known instance of infant baptism in the third century was disapproved by certain of the godly fathers;
7. That sprinkling instead of baptism did not occur until about the fifth century;
8. That the Lord Jesus Christ has promised His gracious presence with His ministers and people (as penitent believers) observing this ordinance unto the end of the world –

In consideration of these facts, we humbly submit that our form of admitting members to church privileges has the highest authority; always bearing in mind the pre-requisites of repentance and faith.

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## OBITUARY

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**Philip Benjamin Pont**, pastor at Zoar Chapel, Norwich, for twenty-six years, passed away to his eternal rest on Monday, March 4th, 2019, aged 86 years.

*Taken from his own writings, written in 2011, entitled, "Thou shalt remember."*

"I feel the exercise, and I believe it to be right, to leave on record some of the way in which I may trace the Lord's dealings with my pathway and soul during my lifetime. I shall not mention my base sins and backslidings, but would only draw your attention to the mercy of God to such a vile sinner. Despite my many transgressions, the Lord has had, and still does have, mercy towards me.

"I was born in sin on July 11th, 1932 and 'went forth from the womb speaking lies.' My upbringing was amongst chapel people. I believe that I was influenced by a gracious father and mother, although

I have very little spiritual knowledge of my mother, but I hope it is well with her.

"I lost my mother when I was twelve years old, and after that home life was quite difficult. At the age of eighteen I went into National Service, and at that time my religion was only in the things of providence. I can say that I had to pray for the Lord's appearance in many ways – in fact, in almost everything. My driving test was one such matter, finding work was another, but I have proved that the many answers to prayer in these things were all steps that were ordered. I trust that I could see this as I went along and I can now see it in looking back.

"The Lord also answered prayer in giving me a wife – one out of the world. When we first went out together, she agreed to go with me to chapel. The blessings of a wife were not only providential and we were baptized at the same time in 1978. She was made willing by the love of Christ and the love to Christ.

"What follows is not a catalogue of my sins or any works that I have done; nothing else but to show the faithfulness and goodness and mercy of God.

"While the years passed, during the many ways in which trials and troubles came, I trust there was much teaching. For instance, at one time the Lord permitted our home to be burgled. We possessed little of this world's goods but there was a lesson to be learned, which was to begin a family altar. It came about like this: my father having heard of our burglary, asked a question: 'Do you read and pray together?' On hearing the answer was 'no,' he replied, 'You will now.' And that was how our reading and prayer began in our home.

"Soon after this, the Lord brought us into a very heavy trial with our eldest son. When he was five years old, he developed meningitis and became completely deaf. His life hung in the balance for about three days as he did not respond to drugs, but the Lord had mercy and spared him. He will be profoundly deaf for the rest of his life. I mentioned being often at the throne of grace, and in time I was brought to realise I had no ground to stand on for mercy and sin became very heavy (and still is). I remember sighing and groaning on one occasion, being in deep conviction. There seemed no hope, but on the way home from work the words in 1 John 1 verse 9 dropped in: 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Immediately joy and rejoicing entered and I felt my sins were pardoned. I was delivered.

"During this time, the Lord began in my spirit the exercise of the ministry, which I think lasted for twenty years. It started like this. We went to the village church to sing carols, and as I entered into the church I noticed crucifixes on the wall, and an overwhelming desire came over

me to stand in that pulpit and speak the truth. This, of course, I could not do, but it began the long exercise which did not come to pass until 1984 at Zoar Chapel, Norwich.

“The exercise of the ministry ebbed and flowed. Sometimes I wished it to come to pass, other times I was glad it did not. My father was also involved in the exercise as I will now explain. Many years previously he was led to believe that one of his two sons should preach. His mind was directed by the word, ‘I will raise up thy son after thee; he shall build Me an house’ – a reference to David and the promise that Solomon his son should build the temple. He was sure it referred to my brother, but one day, rehearsing to him a conversation I had had with one of the Lord’s servants, I quoted the word from Psalm 71, ‘I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD,’ etc. He then asked me if I was exercised about preaching. I said, ‘Yes,’ and he bowed his head and wept, and said, ‘So you are the son.’ This opened his mouth to me of his exercise, and from then until his death we walked together with this burden. The word regarding Solomon which had rested with my father has these words in it: ‘After thee,’ and he realised it would not come to pass until after his death and that he would not live to see it. And so it proved.

“I should mention that my wife and I were members at Hanover Chapel, Tunbridge Wells, until we transferred to Zoar, Norwich in 1982. Our move from Kent to Norfolk was made very easy. I worked for a large company who having closed my branch office in Maidstone, offered me a position at a similar branch in Norwich. I saw the Lord’s hand in the move. After about a year, I was asked to be the deacon at Zoar, with this word of advice from the pastor: ‘Ask the Lord for direction.’ The word was given, ‘Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind’ (1 Pet. 5. 2). As I said to the pastor, no word about a deacon but about a pastor. His reply was, ‘Well you have an exercise.’ I did not think he knew about my many thoughts on this subject.

Father died in August 1984, and it was at this time I felt that I should mention my exercise to my pastor, Mr. Davidson. He called a church meeting, and invited Mr. C.A. Wood and Mr. R. Field to advise him and the church regarding this solemn matter. The church at Zoar unanimously agreed to send me out to preach. I preached my first sermon at Lakenheath on the first Sunday of November 1984.

“On one occasion I had a dream on a Saturday night before going to preach on the Sunday at Braintree. The words of Isaiah 54 verse 10 were spoken and in my dream I wept tears of joy. I preached from those words on the Sunday and they were confirmed by the hymns given out

by the deacon there. All the hymns were chosen on the Saturday and were all on the covenant.

“In 1991, I became very exercised regarding a pastorate and was given assurance that my exercise was from the Lord by that word in Isaiah 55 verse 11: ‘So shall My word be.’ In that year I received two letters asking me to go on call, but the Lord being silent in the matter, I had to refuse.

“In that same year (1991) on Christmas Eve my pastor died, and following his funeral, the church gave me the call to be the pastor at Zoar. This was confirmed as right in the eyes of the Lord by this word in Exodus 14 verse 15: ‘That they go forward.’ So in 1993 I commenced the pastorate, and having obtained help of God I continue. Being a pastor, it gives a great burden and many errands to the mercy seat. Although some of the congregation left and I was despised, to balance the cloud I was given sincere and loving members, three of whom I have been privileged to baptize, and though we are a small company, there is peace in Zoar and I can humbly say that the Word does profit at times.

And now the future. That is the burden I continually carry, that in my place another minister will be raised up to care for the flock. A remarkable blessing I have is a loyal deacon whom the Lord brought into the denomination from the world and who in providence moved to Zoar with his wife.

“There have been many words and leadings over the eighteen years of my pastorate to the present time, but I must leave them for now. Sufficient to say, I have written briefly, but one word describes this exercise, which is in Job 16 verse 19: ‘Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.’ Psalm 115 has these words: ‘Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake.’ The Lord pardon what has been wrong in His eyes.

“I wrote previously about the way the Lord leads in providence and in grace. This time I want with the Lord’s help to explain how I came to Norfolk and Zoar Chapel. What went before I, like most, have many doubts about and need tokens or evidences regarding the Lord’s will, but I can truly say that those steps that led me here I do not doubt.

“As I mentioned before, I worked for a large company who had a branch office in Maidstone. About 1979 they began a closure programme and my branch was to close in 1981.

“The idea offered to me was that I should transfer, after closing down, to work at Chessington in Surrey where there was a large branch which would require much wisdom and ability.

“Although I had not said ‘yes’ to this proposal, as time went on the Lord intervened. Getting ready for work one morning, the Lord spoke

into my heart these words from Philippians 3: 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ,' and immediately I knew I had that proposal removed. What followed was the love of Christ flowing into my heart. How I blessed Him for this intervention and sang and praised Him all the way to work. How I drove I did not know as tears of love flowed.

"When I had started work that day, I had a phone call to say that my company had given this position to somebody else. I was asked what my thoughts were. I said I already knew about this and that I did not mind. How did I know, they asked, as I had been on holiday for two weeks previously? I said I could not tell them.

"Soon afterwards I was offered a place at the branch at Norwich. I waited on the Lord for a word of direction. My company did not push me for an answer. After some time I asked the Lord to give an answer – I asked if He would change the text on the Sunday and so He did. During the evening service it was said, 'If you have to choose the way, choose the hard way.' That was the answer I wanted because the move to Norwich meant leaving the chapel where we were members and leaving behind my family.

"On visiting Norfolk, we agreed to buy a house that had no onward chain. In selling our house in Kent, the people who bought it had no home to sell, so the Lord made moving very simple.

"The first Sunday I attended Zoar in July 1981 the text was, 'We know that all things work together for good,' etc., and seemed to be so suitable to us each.

"There could be many instances given to prove it was right in God's eyes, and thus according to His will. That was made clear by this instance. After settling at Zoar I asked the Lord why was I here. One Wednesday not long afterwards, being weekly prayer meeting time, in the afternoon I had a phone call to say that Mr. Davidson, the pastor, was poorly and would I take the prayer meeting. I read sermons Sunday and week night for several weeks. His affliction was the answer to my prayer. I have written regarding other things before, but having obtained help of God I continue to this day.

"To Him be the glory and the praise."

*His widow writes:*

"My husband passed away on March 4th, 2019. After he had written out some of his life experience in 2011, he continued preaching, often three or four nights each week, sometimes with long journeys down to Wiltshire, Kent and Sussex, which seemed quite remarkable considering he was now well over eighty years old. In his early days, the Lord so blessed him on one occasion that he told the Lord he would go to the top of Mount Everest for Him if that was what He required. From

that time onwards, he had always felt that where the Lord opened a door for him, he would be willing to go.

“Gradually, he had to stop the long journey engagements and stay nearer home, serving the chapels in Essex, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. By 2017 his strength was beginning to decline, and from then on he only preached to his own flock at Zoar, Norwich. In January 2018 he had a fall whilst out which left him quite weak. After a few weeks, he regained sufficient strength to get to chapel again, and the deacon would read a sermon and my husband took the prayer. Some of the friends felt how sweet his prayers were at this time.

“In May of the same year, he fell again at home and broke his hip, and from then on he could not walk any more. He would be got up by carers and put in his armchair, where he would sit until he was put back to bed. He never complained but was content to sit and wait. Sometimes when friends visited, his face would light up whilst he listened to a little spiritual conversation and spoke of some of the things the Lord had done for him in former days.

“He continued in this way, gradually becoming weaker, until the beginning of March the following year. The day before he died he was not so well, and we sent for an ambulance. On the way to hospital he had a brainstem stroke which caused him to lose consciousness and he was given life support until such time as his family could be with him at the hospital. His grandson read a few verses to him from John 14 and immediately he heard it, his face started moving. It was quite clear he knew what was being read.

The doctor told the family that when the oxygen tube was removed my husband would soon be gone. Instead, much to the medical staff’s amazement, he came round and spoke of heaven and was able to say goodbye to all the family. Gradually he slipped into unconsciousness again and passed away the next morning to be forever with the Lord.

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## NOTICES OF DEATH

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**Frederick G. Peplow** passed away peacefully on Monday, July 6th, 2020, aged 93 years. He was a faithful minister of the gospel for over fifty years. Amongst his last words were, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1. 7).

**John F. Burrows** passed away peacefully in the Studley Bethesda Home on Thursday, August 20th, 2020, aged 89 years. He was a faithful minister of the gospel amongst the Gospel Standard churches for forty years, and latterly a member at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham. “In My Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14. 2).

# THE ROSE OF SHARON AND THE LILY OF THE VALLEYS

*"I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys" (Song 2. 1)*

Jesus, Thou art the Rose  
That blushest on the thorn!  
Thy blood the semblance shows,  
When on Mount Calvary torn;  
A rugged tree Thou hadst indeed!  
But roses from a thorn proceed.

This Rose has fragrance sweet,  
And cheers a conscience well;  
Yet pluck it, as it's meet,  
Or nothing wilt thou smell;  
Its application does impart  
The consolation to thy heart.

So lilies low and fair,  
Which in the valley grow,  
With Jesus may compare,  
Since it has pleased Him so;  
Like these an humble form He wears,  
And on His robe no spot appears.

A robe so clean and white  
No fuller's art can show;  
Surpassing even light,  
And purer far than snow;  
Not David's son, on high-days dressed,  
Could ever match this lily-vest.

Coupled in song we see  
The rose and lily are,  
And fancy out to me  
My Surety's office clear;  
One shows His blood to wash me whole,  
And one His robe to clothe my soul.

Lord, bring the sweetening rose  
To make my conscience clean;  
And give me lily-clothes  
To hide my rags within;  
So shall Thy blood and righteousness  
Bring gospel peace and heavenly dress.

Completely thus arrayed  
And sweetly cheered on,  
No danger shall I dread,  
No duty shall I shun:  
The rose and lily when combined,  
Afford a peaceful, loving mind.

John Berridge (1716-1793)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
NOVEMBER 2020

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

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INTER-CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

*The Gospel Standard Committee commend the following statement to the churches.*

It has been the practice, for very wise scriptural reasons, for the transferring of members from one church communion to another to be conducted in an orderly and brotherly way (see Rule 22). The church wishing to receive such a member, hears their testimony and if satisfied with the testimony and the reasons for wishing to join, they then communicate with the sister church and request that they dismiss the said member from their fellowship to the receiving church. This ensures that the privilege of sitting down at the Lord's table is confirmed, and, in the case of ministers of the gospel, maintains the sanction to preach and to administer the ordinance of the Lord's supper. Only when the church receives a satisfactory letter of dismissal should the transferring member be received.

Sadly, over the history of our churches, where this order has been disregarded strife and bitterness has ensued, sometimes lasting for years. Such disorder if continually repeated among the churches would lead to total confusion and the inevitable break-up of the loving union that ought to exist between sister churches. We believe that God is not the author of confusion in the churches and we lovingly exhort both churches and their members to follow those paths which unite rather than divide the people of God. The visible church is a type of Christ's mystical body, and thus its unity and order should be zealously defended in faithfulness but also in love.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. 2. 3).

G.D. Buss, A.J. Collins, J.H. Cottingham, G.W. Hyde, B.E. Izzard, D.W. Kerley, B.P. Mercer, T.J. Parish, P.J. Pocock, T.H.W. Scott.

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## REMEMBERING CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

*Sermon preached by James Kidwell Popham at Galeed Chapel,  
Brighton, on August 28th, 1903*

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“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Tim. 2. 8).

A gracious remembrance of fundamentals must, whenever it is given, be a very particular thing, a special help, an establishing instruction. Nor is it as needless as it may sometimes strike some people. No child of God, I think, will ever be so established in the truth and in his own soul's interest in the truth, as not to need a word like this: “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead.” “Remember” one of the fundamental truths of the Scriptures. The Holy Ghost is the One who gives a proper, gracious remembrance of things that are to be remembered. Oh, some of us painfully know what it is to let things slip, and therefore particularly need the exhortation which speaks to us as children, that we are 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).

The connection of this text is very striking. It may seem to be without any particular connection at first sight, why the apostle, through the Holy Ghost, should as it were abruptly turn away from what he had been treating, namely the sufferings of the Lord's people, from the exhortation which he had just delivered to Timothy to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” – for if he suffers with Christ he shall also reign with Him – why, I say, he should seemingly abruptly turn away from that instruction to this fundamental truth, which he exhorts him to remember: “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead.” But I believe there is a divinely-intended connection and instruction in such a word as this, as it were just dropped into the midst of affliction, like a light suddenly coming into a dark night. And if God will assist me, I will show what that connection is.

1. First of all, let us look a little at the doctrine of the resurrection of “Jesus Christ of the seed of David” from the dead. Why did He die? Because He was made sin; because He was “made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law”; because it was His – given to Him, to make an end of sins, “to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,” and “bring in everlasting righteousness” (see 2 Cor. 5. 21; Gal. 4. 4, 5; Heb. 9. 26; Dan. 9. 24). And it is made by the Spirit the absorbing business of every new-born soul, to make out whether he himself is interested in the death of Christ. If you have the life of God in your soul, any of you, it will be from time to time *the one question* which, till answered by the Holy Ghost, you will be pressing on the

Lord's attention, namely whether the Son of God loved you and gave Himself *for you*.

When He instituted His supper, the Lord Jesus Christ gave the bread to His disciples, and told them to eat it because it was [an emblem of] His body which was broken for them. He gave them also the wine, and said: "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (see Matt. 26. 26-28). O there is no way from hell but this! There is no means of sanctification but through this. There is no way of standing well with God but this. There is no righteousness to justify but the righteousness of Christ. And therefore the great business of a living faith wrought by the Spirit in the soul is to have this matter settled, whether the Son of God loved him and gave Himself for him. And mind you, if you take the thing up on trust, and are a child of God in eternal election, and are interested really in the death of Christ, what you have taken up on trust you will let go in trouble; and then you will find that you are in such a plight that nothing save the inward testimony, the powerful witness, of the Holy Ghost can meet; and out of which you cannot be delivered but by an application to you of the atonement of Christ. Oh, I think it is of all things one of the most dreadful, to take up any divine truth on trust, without the Spirit of God giving it into the hand of your faith! "Ah," you may say, "but it is true." Yes, it is true, but you may not hold it truly.

How did Christ die? He died a voluntary death: "No man taketh My life from Me ... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." The voluntary nature of the death of Christ is a necessity to its efficacy. If He died involuntarily, He died of a natural necessity, and therefore there could be no virtue in His death. This is one part of the mystery of Christ, which men can never enter into by the mere history of Christ. You may, as you think, firmly hold the history of Christ's crucifixion, and yet know nothing of its vital mystery. But if you are led by the Spirit into the mystery of Christ's crucifixion, you will see and hold fast, that He died a voluntary death; and in doing that He paid every mite of the mighty debt which His people owed. He "offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9. 14), and was acceptable to God in that offering. It was a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God (see Eph. 5. 2). It will be the same to you in measure, if it is made known to you. O there is not a field that the Lord blesses in providence, that smells like the savour of Christ's sacrifice to a guilty sinner, as made known to him by the Holy Ghost! There is no temporary goodness, there is no beneficial providence that a man can enjoy, that can ever be to a sin-burdened soul what the death of Christ is made by the blessed Spirit. A dead creature – dead in his feelings, lives while he beholds the Saviour die. This is the way, the

door of access. This is the ground and plea for mercy. This is the channel of mercy, the window of God's grace. This is the voice with which He speaks to His people, speaks into their consciences, promises into their souls; sets heaven as a prospect before their face.

But if this dying Christ, if this dead Saviour, taken down from the cross, making "His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death" (Isa. 53. 9), had remained in the grave, all hope built on His death would be a delusion. Hence the Spirit says by Paul to the Romans, that Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"; and that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 4. 25; 1. 4). It is a very important word – "declared," not *made*; *declared* by the resurrection to be what He had ever declared Himself to be; what Moses in the law and the prophets did say He was. His resurrection declared and established and fixed Him for ever to be before the eyes of angels, of good men and bad men, and of devils, the Son of God, the eternal Word, in a spotless humanity prepared for Him by His Father.

The resurrection, then, of the Lord Jesus is a fundamental truth. It is the keystone, without which the rest is as nothing. He could not be holden by death, for He had satisfied the law and all the claims which it had and God the Father had in it, on behalf of His people. He was raised from the dead – Jesus, the very Jesus that the disciples saw on the cross, whose side the soldiers pierced; the very Jesus who was taken down from the cross, whose sacred body Joseph of Arimathea begged that he might lay it in his tomb, that very same body was raised from the dead by the power of the Father, and there were twelve witnesses of it. The Lord had twelve disciples who were witnesses of His life and of His death. But one of the twelve was Judas, who was with Him through His life and betrayed Him, and so after the resurrection of Christ it was needful that the twelve should be made up. Therefore one more, who had been with the Lord and accompanied the disciples all the while, was chosen to make the number twelve; and these were all witnesses (see Acts 1. 15-26). These are therefore credible witnesses, and are as good as a thousand. Says the Apostle Peter: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." They did not depend on cunningly devised fables when they said, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." And when these men were in the upper room, and Jesus came to them; when He said to Thomas: "Thomas, reach hither thy hand, behold My hands and My feet," that was no apparition; it was a real Man. It was very God. It was the blessed Messiah. It was that same blessed Jesus who, when He appeared to John

in the Isle called Patmos, said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." That same Jesus who, ere He left the world, said to His disciples: "Whatsoever ye ask in My name, that will I do."

2. This, then, we are told here to remember: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David" – David's Son and David's Lord both – remember that He "was raised from the dead according to my gospel." That is, that it was a fundamental, an integral part of the gospel which Paul preached, being sent to preach it; that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, who was crucified without Jerusalem's gate and was buried in the rich man's grave, was raised from the dead. The apostle constantly declared it; and he asked this question on one occasion: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" When faith sees a risen Christ, it sees that which is the most wonderful, the most solemn, the most blessed ground for a poor, guilty sinner to stand on and beg for mercy. Well now, the apostle says to Timothy, to whom he had been speaking of trouble, "Remember this; remember this."

3. Look then, in the third place at the connection; the influence and bearing of Christ's resurrection on the people of God who are exhorted here to remember it. Consider what the apostle said to Timothy: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"; and later in the chapter he says to him, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." All God's people are afflicted; it is decreed that they shall come through tribulation. Tribulation brings death: "In deaths oft," says the apostle in declaring one of his own experiences, "we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life"; but God "delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2 Cor. 1. 8, 10). So it must come to pass in some form or other, that every child of God in his soul's experience must go into deaths – "deaths oft." And when in those deaths, if there is no gracious recollection given to him of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, what reason has he – a poor thing dead in some particulars – to hope that he shall be raised up again? But if the Spirit of the living God, who is given to glorify Christ, does bring to remembrance the truth of Christ's resurrection into the heart of one who is in some sad and painful death, that holds him, that remembrance says to him, "My soul shall rise again." It enables him to say to his soul, "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Now this is a general truth; let us come to a little particular application of it, if we may. Here is a poor child of God who has been delivered. He has been brought from Moses to Christ, from Sinai to Zion, from death to life. He has enjoyed a purged conscience and the

sweet peace of God in it. He has felt a very blessed hope, had a strong, lively hope in God by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and he had said in his soul, "My mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved." He has gone on very sweetly for a time in the rich, comfortable experience thus wrought in his soul by the Holy Ghost. But after a time, all his natural building on this spiritual foundation tumbles down, because God hides His face, hides it for a gracious purpose, and then the man comes into a death. O it is a painful experience!

"God of my life, Thy gracious power,  
Through varied deaths my soul has led." (H. 1016)

Now this is a death, when a man's confidence is tried and much shaken, when his soul comes into great darkness, when he cries and sighs, and God seems to shut out his prayer, when what he expected is not realised, and what he did not expect overtakes him. Whereas he expected to grow in goodness, in comfort, and perhaps in an almost constant victory, he finds himself sadly, shamefully, frequently defeated by his enemy, sin. And on this affliction comes another, even the presence, and roaring voice, and hellish power of the tempter, who ever tells him he was deceived; or that he has sinned the sin of presumption in calling God his Father, in claiming an interest in Christ; or roars at him and says, "Hell is a myth, there is no hereafter, there is no God"; or comes in a storm and raises the most terrible thoughts in the mind and utters what the child of God thinks is his own voice – utters the most dreadful blasphemies, till the creature dies. How to endure this he knows not. His confidence dies as to its standing, his knowledge dies as to its influence, his peace dies and is no longer felt; the purity of his conscience is dead, for it is again flooded with guilt and pollution; the hopes that he had are gone, he has not one of them left to his comfort. The very remembrance of what he thought God had given him, of the hopes he cherished, and the comforts he walked in, is a sort of torture to him. O if he had never entertained those thoughts, it would be better with him than it is now! This is a death. How is he to endure it? He is tempted to give up all, having lost all courage; his mountain is almost gone; his sweet comforts are a torture. What is he to do? John the Baptist entered into this death while he was in prison, for he said to Christ by his two disciples, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" – Was I deceived? O that sweet time when I saw a Man amongst men, of whom I said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" When I saw the Spirit of God descending and remaining on Him, and then I said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" O was it the Man, or was I awfully deceived? "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?"

Now here is a broken soul, here is a broken experience, here is a broken religion, here is a poor, lost sinner, what is to become of him?

What remedy can be found for him? He looks all over the Bible and finds nothing for a time; he runs to every experience and finds nothing to help him; he tries to pray and he is a poor, dead thing in prayer; he tries to get back things he has lost, and he cannot lay hold of them; the more he ponders on them, the more he fears that he was a deceived creature. Here is a soldier ready to quit the field; here is a poor thing like a deceitful bow "turned back in the day of battle," armed, as he thought himself to be. How bad, how sad, how heavy is this case!

Now says the apostle to Timothy: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead." Remember again what those two disciples thought about this, who walked so sadly to Emmaus after Christ's death. They said, "We verily thought it had been He who should have redeemed Israel. We regarded Him as the Messiah, and fixed our hopes there. As such, we sat at His feet and learned of Him, and took, as He bade us, His yoke upon us. O what a deception it now seems to be!" But when He appeared to them and talked with them, although He allowed them not to recognise Him for the time, yet His very teaching and opening of the Scriptures made their hearts burn within them. And when His gracious voice blessed the bread, O it was just that voice that they heard when He gave them the broken bread and the outpoured wine at the supper! "O," they said, "it is the Lord!"

Well now, poor soul, in your death that I have just mentioned, wherein you are like a man buried, what is needed is this – such a laying hold by faith, as the Spirit gives it, of the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as shall constrain your faith to address your soul and say, "Hope thou in God." But now look at this. What was it that put Christ in the grave? I may say, two things: imputed sin and infinite justice. Ah then, what prospect was there that He should come out of that grave? Naturally, what prospect was there? He was crucified through weakness; He was held now by the king of terrors; He was locked in the arms of death; a great stone was rolled at the grave's mouth. What hand could loose Him? What power could bring Him out of that death? Just consider it!

Now what has buried you? What has buried your experience? "Ah," say you, "sin that I have done, that I have nourished, that I have loved; sin that has led me captive, that has made me say – that today makes me say in sighs and tears, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'" That is what has buried you. And that is what brought Christ from heaven; that is what put Him in the grave. And to deliver thy soul from all this sin, He was raised by the power of the Father. So the apostle, as it seems to me, by the blessed Spirit instructing him to write it, points the soul to that which, as applied

and made known, can alone bring up out of this death. “Remember” – however dead you may feel, however afflicted you may be, however much buried your experience is, however withered your religion may be, however you may be like one cut off from the living stock, with no union to Christ and therefore no hope of life – “remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead.”

And I have thought that the Holy Ghost in this has before Him *more than a mere recollection of the fact*. Remember what He is now, that though He was crucified through weakness and buried, now He lives by the power of God, after the power of an endless life; and that therefore the only thing needful is for some of that blessed life, that powerful, that endless life which He lives, to be let out into thy soul, seemingly dead, to revive it; and into thy experience now given up by thyself, to revive it and make it new again in sweet and sacred feeling. “Remember” that He is the ever-living God. It was this that He set before John: “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen” (Rev. 1. 18). Hence that word by Ezekiel: “O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves”! And this is what the apostle prays that the Ephesians might know: “the power of Christ’s resurrection” (see Eph. 1. 19).

Now take a few particulars in this death I have mentioned. Come to this – *prayer* seems dead. Whereas you once felt such delight in it, what a drag it is now! Hardly can you get down before the Lord; hardly can you speak. At the most, you ask the Lord to attend to your “breathings,” and your cry at the best seems confusion: “Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter.” O but, poor creature, there is the Christ of God in heaven, who, living after the power of an endless life, sees all! Christ is able to make prayer afresh in your soul. And this is a thing that we are taught, that He must give us prayer. Necessity does not make prayer. Affliction does not make prayer. You may feel your need, but that will not create prayer. The influence of Christ’s resurrection must come into this soul afresh, to cause prayer afresh to go out. It is sometimes as if every movement of the soul in prayer is like the rising of one from the dead. As if every breath comes out of the grave; as if every time you sigh to the God of heaven, you sigh out of the depths of a dark and gloomy grave, where you are often afraid you will rise no more. “Remember that Jesus Christ ... was raised from the dead,” *that you may rise in prayer*.

And again – that you may rise and hold fast to God. Here I cannot but believe one thing is intended by the Lord, when we lose our experience, and it is this – that we shall not *build our hopes of heaven on our experience*. Whenever you begin to build your hopes of getting through, of entering heaven, on any sweet and sacred feelings that you



have had in your souls, most likely it will not be long before you say, "Those sweet and sacred feelings are dead." Why? Because God has intended, has decreed, that His people should set their hope in God by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." It does not take one long to say this, but it is a *life-long lesson* to learn it. I know I have learned it slowly; I confess I forget it quickly. But I am sure of this, God will have us at it. You hug your feelings as if they were a ground, a reason of hope, and you will lose them. They are an evidence of the ground. They are a sweet and solemn testimony in your conscience at times, that God has been gracious to you; but they are no reason for hope. The only reason a man can hope for God's kindness to him through time and eternity, is the Person, the doing, the dying, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When people come into temporal troubles – I mean good people – they get a death within. Temporal troubles are like a blow that knocks a man down, like a sword that pierces his very soul and lets out a great deal of his life; and when the Lord is pleased to permit it, temporal troubles seem to have a voice of this sort: "You have procured this for yourself; you cannot expect the Lord to deliver you. You have provoked Him." And conscience says, "O that it true!" The devil says, "Therefore there is no reason for you to expect deliverance." A legal heart concludes the same: "There is no reason to look for a deliverance." Ah, but Christ died, and Christ was raised again by the power of the Father, and is set down at the right hand of God! And my friends, the influence of that death and that resurrection in the church of Christ is this, in this point, that it *took the curse out of all temporal affliction*, and it turns every affliction of a temporal kind into a blessing. And I cannot but believe this is one branch of the gospel that God makes peculiarly acceptable and sweet to gracious people who are in trouble from time to time.

"Not in anger,  
But from His dear covenant love." (H. 758)

"Not in anger?" say you; "it looks like it." Ah, but then "judge not by appearances; judge righteous judgment." Judge by appearances, and you will come to no end of miscalculations and wrong conclusions. But if the Lord, when you get into temporal trouble, drops the gospel of a risen Saviour upon your spirit, and you can "remember" by faith that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, it will show you that there is no curse in that bitter cup; that there is no piercing sword, but a correcting rod; that the hand of a Judge does not use that, but the hand of a Father; that it turns temporal troubles into spiritual good; that it turns chastening into

an evidence of sonship (see Heb. 12. 7; Rev. 3. 19). “Remember,” therefore, afflicted saint, “remember that Jesus Christ ... was raised from the dead.”

One word more. This Lord Jesus who was raised from the dead according to the gospel, is in heaven and is reigning there. Ah well then, His poor people are left behind! They suffer. The devil brings trouble to them; sin is troublesome; providence is troublesome. And those afflictions that are common to mankind generally, what do they say? Why they say, “We are just like other people.” No; there is a difference. “If we suffer.” What, if we suffer ordinarily? Yes, but the people of God do not suffer ordinarily. They suffer ordinary providences, but even in these ordinary providences they suffer particularly, as only Christians can suffer – “If we suffer *with Him*.” Does the devil afflict an Arian, a Socinian, a Unitarian? Does the devil afflict a man who says that “vicarious punishment is an impossibility”? Does the devil trouble a man who tramples the Bible underfoot? Does the devil afflict a man who does not pray, but only uses a form of words? He does not roar at the divinity of Christ in the minds of such people. He does not roar at the resurrection of Christ in such hearts. He does not tell them that there is no such Person as an Intercessor, and no such place as heaven. He lets them alone. And when they are in their temporal afflictions, he does not tell them there is no help in God for them. He lets them alone. Or if God permit it, he stirs them up to “curse God and die.”

But against the people of God he roars: “There is no help for you. There is no such Person as the Christ you profess, no such blessing as you have talked about,” and so on. “If we suffer with Him.” If we suffer because of union with Him; if we suffer because He has been gracious to us to impart His life to our souls that were dead; if we suffer because we have had a revelation of Christ, which offends Satan; if we suffer because we have been redeemed from the kingdom of Satan and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son; if we suffer as Christians, we suffer somewhat of death. But says the apostle, “We shall reign with Him.” “Remember” *He* is not dead, if you are dying in your experience. “Remember” that He was raised from the dead, and now lives after the power of an endless life. If you are far off “remember” what He had said: “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Remember this!

Now a believing remembrance of this will always have, while it continues, a very gracious influence on the spirit. It will go into a man’s afflictions and say, “There is a blessing to come out of them”; into his conscience and say, “The blood of Christ thy soul can cure”; into his depressed state and say, “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low”; and go into all his cares and say,

“God will bring you up out of them because He raised Christ from the dead.” Now you know I do not mean a mere effort of the memory. The apostle did not mean that. But the gracious reflection or going of faith to the resurrection of Christ; what it involves, to what He is now risen, to where He has ascended, to what He is doing as being at the right hand of the Father. And all these things are intended to exercise an influence, to shed light and to breathe comfort into the souls of God’s people, when they come into their various troubles and feelings of death, through and out of which, as seeing Him risen, they can and do at such moments comfortably believe He will shortly bring them. “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.’ You who are now dying creatures, you whose courage is gone, you who have lost your way often and do still lose it, you who are suffering because I have blessed you, persecuted and hunted because you belong to Me, and who therefore suffer with Me – you shall one day rise and be with Me where I am, and that for ever.” May this comfortable truth be spoken upon our hearts for our good, and instruction, and comfort. Amen.

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## THE PRIVILEGES OF WAITING ON THE LORD

*By Mr. Gerald D. Buss*

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“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.” (Psa. 62. 5)

In this short but expressive verse, God’s servant David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, speaks of three personal possessions which he highly valued and prized. All who by grace, and grace alone, are led and taught of the Holy Spirit will be blessed and favoured likewise.

David speaks of “my soul,” “my God,” and “my expectation.”

### **My soul**

What a mysterious yet important part of our being is our soul! It, unlike the body in which it dwells, is immortal. Every son or daughter of Adam has a never-dying soul. As one good man put it: “Earth to earth, and dust to dust, was not spoken of the soul.” The Westminster Confession speaking of man before his fall states:

“After God had made all other creatures, He created man male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the

woman of the rib of the man, endued them with living, reasonable and immortal souls; made them after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall.”

The soul of Adam came from the breath of God and was given that he might hold fellowship with his Creator, in a way which no other part of God’s creation can.

Sadly, since the Fall, man lost all spiritual ability, the Word of God describing his spiritual state as “dead in trespasses and sins.” So, though man still possesses an immortal soul, in his natural state he neither regards its importance nor its ultimate destiny. Such it seems is the sad case of millions on the face of this earth, “having no hope, and without God in the world.”

However, although David like every son of Adam was “born in sin and shapen in iniquity,” he was not left to live and die in that solemn and perilous state. There came a time when the Holy Spirit began to work in his heart, and he realised the solemn importance of the immortal possession that he owned, and his desire, as that of all God’s children becomes, was that his soul might be saved from its just punishment of eternal death (not annihilation). So, in Psalm 35 we read his urgent prayer: “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” Also, as in this Psalm, in Psalms 42 and 43 he speaks to his soul, which one dead in trespasses and sins would never do.

David’s soul was more precious to him than the sheep he led in the fields beyond Bethlehem; more precious than the throne, and the land over which God gave to him to rule; more precious than his family, body and earthly possessions. Over sixty times in the Psalms does David mention his soul. In deep providential trials, again and again, it is David’s soul that was more to him than the natural deliverance he also so often needed.

How often in his deepest trials the Lord “restored his soul” by the still waters of the precious doctrines and promises of His Word and enabled him to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” These are truths the world knows nothing of, neither desires to do so. Such were all God’s people before they were called by the same grace that separated David from the mass of fallen humanity. Reader, has it done the same for you? Remember, an unquickened soul cannot enjoy God, as David did, nor can an unquickened soul enter the bliss of the redeemed above, where “the spirits” – souls – “of just men made perfect” are being gathered one by one. It is the age-old truth of John 3: “Ye must be born again.”

### **My God**

David had a peculiarly-special relationship with God, which enabled him to say, "My God" in a way in which his predecessor, Saul, could never say. David was, by grace, "a man after God's own heart." The Holy Spirit dwelt within him, from the new birth, creating an indissoluble union between himself and his God. The relationship between God and man as Creator and creature, though wonderful in providence, will never take a soul to heaven. David owed not only his natural life to his Creator, but also the life in his soul, created there by the Holy Ghost. Thus, though not always in the comfortable realisation of it, of each of the three Persons in the undivided Godhead, he could say: "My God."

Of God the Father he said: "Like as a father pitieth His children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103. 13, 14).

Of God the Son he said: "The LORD liveth; and blessed be my Rock; and exalted be the God of the Rock of my salvation" (2 Sam. 22. 47).

Of God the Holy Spirit he said: "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23. 2).

To this God as his Rock, Shepherd and Father, David had continual recourse. This God never failed David. He was his shield through many differing trials, and even after his fall, still this loving God stood with His servant.

Blessed are they who by covenant mercy can say as was said elsewhere, "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death" (Psa. 48. 14).

### **My expectation**

David's expectation (hope) came from God Himself. Indeed, God was His expectation. What wondrous things may we expect from God if we are recipients of the same grace as David was! The gift of His Holy Spirit, the imputed righteousness of His only begotten Son, pardon for sin on the grounds of everlasting mercy in Christ.

Not only so, David had received from God a clear expectation concerning the throne of Israel, but even more precious, an expectation of the coming Saviour from his own descended family, great David's greater Son.

Last, but not least, David had a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. How often he proved his own testimony. "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psa. 34. 6).

How true it is! "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God" (Psa. 146. 5).

## THE STANDARD OF THE BELIEVER'S WALK

By Charles Bridges (1794-1869)

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD”  
(Psa. 119. 1).

This most interesting and instructive Psalm, like the Psalter itself, “opens with a beatitude for our comfort and encouragement, directing us immediately to that happiness, which all mankind in different ways are seeking and inquiring after. All would secure themselves from the incursions of misery; but all do not consider that misery is the offspring of sin, from which therefore it is necessary to be delivered and preserved, in order to become happy or blessed” (Bishop Horne).

The *undefiled* character described in this verse marks, in an evangelical sense, “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” [deceit], not one who is without sin, but one who in the sincerity of his heart can say, “That which I do I allow not.”

As his *way* is, so is his “*walk*” – “in the law of the Lord.” He is “strengthened in the Lord, and he walks up and down in His name”; his “ears hearing a word behind him, saying, This is the way – walk in it” – when he is “turning to the right hand or to the left.” And if the pardon of sin, imputation of righteousness, the communion of saints, and a sense of acceptance with God; if protection in providence and grace; and – finally and forever, the beatific vision, are the sealed privileges of His upright people, then there can be no doubt, that “blessed are the undefiled in the way.” And if temporal prosperity, spiritual renovation and fruitfulness, increasing illumination, fellowship with the Saviour, peace within, and – throughout eternity – a right to the tree of life, are privileges of incalculable value; then surely the “walk in the law of the LORD” is “the path of pleasantness and peace.” “Truly” – indeed may we say, “God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.”

But let each of us ask, What is the “*way*” of my heart with God? Is it always an “*undefiled way*”? Is “iniquity” never “regarded in the heart”? Is all that God hates habitually lamented, abhorred, forsaken? “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.”

Again – What is my “*walk*”? Is it from the living principle of union with Christ? This is the direct – the only source of spiritual life. We are first quickened in Him. Then we walk in Him and after Him. O that this my walk may be steady, consistent, advancing! O that I may be ever listening to my Father’s voice, “I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect”!

Is there not enough of defilement in the most “*undefiled way*,” and enough of inconsistency in the most consistent “*walk*” to endear to us the gracious declaration of the gospel, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous”?

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### A LITTLE THAT A RIGHTEOUS MAN HATH

*Extract from a sermon by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom*

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“Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” Now this is rather striking language, isn’t it? It almost startles us. Five words spoken with the understanding or five words received in the heart with the understanding better than ten thousand words that are not understood and that are in an unknown tongue. Five words graciously understood better than ten thousand words that are not understood. Now what a comparison and what a contrast! And one point is made transparently clear here: it is not how much religion we have; it is whether it is real. Better to have five words sealed in our conscience by the Holy Ghost than to be able to recite the whole Bible through from Genesis to Revelation. One of the old English preachers used to ask this question: he used to say, “How big is your Bible?” Now I think you know what he meant. All of us have the same Bible in our hands and in our homes. He meant how much of the Bible was there that we possess by a gracious understanding in our hearts. How big is our Bible?

And you see, it fits in with the wise man: “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” Oh, to have a little that is real, a little that God has given us, a little of the Holy Ghost’s work in our hearts, a little desire, a little prayer, a little of the tender fear of God, a little humility, a little hope, a little repentance, a little love. Someone said, “This big ‘little.’” To possess something, however little, that is real, rather than to have an abundance and to find at last it is completely worthless. For beloved friends, the one thing that really matters is this: to have a religion that will take us to heaven at last. Oh, to have that “little that the righteous man hath.” Oh, to have those five words spoken with the understanding because the Holy Ghost has sealed them home in our hearts! For that solemn day hastens on when the Lord will “sift the house of Israel ... like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.” Satan has his sieve. God has His sieve. The difference is that Satan tries to get rid of the good grain in his sieve; God seeks to get rid of the chaff. When the Lord has done His

sifting work in our heart, in our conscience, in our experience, oh to have that little left, those five words left, that one grain of vital godliness that can never fall to the ground.

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## CHRIST THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT

*By Thomas Watson (1620-1686)*

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“Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. 12. 24).

Jesus Christ is the sum and quintessence of the gospel, the wonder of angels, the joy and triumph of saints. The name of Christ is sweet; it is as music in the ear, honey in the mouth, and a cordial at the heart. I shall waive the context, and only speak of that which concerns our present purpose. Having discoursed of the covenant of grace, I shall speak now of the Mediator of the covenant, and the Restorer of lapsed sinners, “Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.”

There are several names and titles in Scripture given to Christ, as the great Restorer of mankind:

I. Sometimes He is called a Saviour. “Thou shalt call His name Jesus” (Matt. 1. 21). The Hebrew word for Jesus signifies a Saviour, and whom He saves from hell He saves from sin; where Christ is a Saviour He is a Sanctifier. “He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1. 21). There is no other Saviour. “Neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4. 12). As there was but one ark to save the world from drowning, so there is but one Jesus to save sinners from damning. As Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, “Are there yet any more sons in my womb?” (Ruth 1. 11), so has God any other sons in the womb of His eternal decree, to be saviours to us, besides Christ? “Where shall wisdom be found? The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me” (Job 28. 12, 14). Where shall salvation be found? The angel says, It is not in me; mortality says, It is not in me; the ordinance says, It is not in me. Christ alone is the well-spring of life. “Neither is there salvation in any other.”

II. Sometimes Christ is called a Redeemer. “The Redeemer shall come to Zion” (Isa. 59. 20). Some understand it of Cyrus, others of an angel; but the most ancient Jewish doctors understood it of Christ, the Redeemer of the elect. “My Redeemer liveth” (Job 19. 25). The Hebrew word for redeemer signifies such a one as is near akin, and has right to redeem a mortgage; so Christ is near of kin to us, being our elder Brother, therefore has the best right to redeem us.

III. Christ is called a Mediator in the text. “Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.” The Greek word for mediator signifies a middle



person, one that makes up the breach between two disagreeing parties. God and we were at variance by sin, now Christ mediates and becomes Umpire between us; He reconciles us to God through His blood, therefore He is called the Mediator of the new covenant. There is no way of communion and intercourse between God and man but in and through a Mediator. Christ takes away the enmity in us, and the wrath of God, and so makes peace. Nor is Christ a Mediator of reconciliation only, but intercession. "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands ... but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9. 24). When the priest had slain the sacrifice, he was to go with the blood before the altar and mercy seat, and show it to the Lord. Now, in Christ, our blessed Mediator, consider two things:

1. His Person;
2. His graces.

1. *His Person.* His Person is amiable; He is made up of all love and beauty. He is the effigy of His Father. "The express image of His Person" (Heb. 1. 3). Consider,

- i. Christ's Person in two natures.

a. Look upon His human nature as incarnate. The Valentinians deny His human nature; but John 1. 14 says, "The Word was made flesh." It is spoken of Christ the promised Messiah. Christ took our flesh, that the same nature which sinned might suffer; and "The Word was made flesh," that through the glass of His human nature we might look upon God.

*Why is Christ called the Word?*

Because, as a word is the interpreter of the mind, and reveals what is in a man's breast, so Jesus Christ reveals His Father's mind to us concerning the great matters of our salvation (see John 1. 18). Were it not for Christ's Manhood, the sight of the Godhead would be formidable to us; but through Christ's flesh we may look upon God without terror. And Christ took our flesh, that He might know how to pity us; He knows what it is to be faint, sorrowful, tempted. "He knoweth our frame" (Psa. 103. 14). And He took our flesh, that He might (as Augustine says) ennoble our human nature with honour. Christ having married our flesh has exalted it above the angelic nature.

b. Look upon Christ's divine nature. Christ may be fitly compared to Jacob's ladder, which reacheth from earth to heaven (see Gen. 28. 12). Christ's human nature was the foot of the ladder, which stood upon earth; His divine nature the top of the ladder, which reaches to heaven. This being a grand article of our faith I shall amplify it. I know the Arians and Socinians would rob Christ of the best jewel of His crown, His Godhead; but the Apostolical, Nicene, Athanasian creeds, affirm Christ's Deity. The Scripture is clear for it. He is called "the mighty

God” (Isa. 9. 6). “And in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead” (Col. 2. 9). He is of the same nature and essence with the Father. So Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom. Is God the Father called Almighty? So is Christ. “The Almighty” (Rev. 1. 8). Is God the Father the heart-searcher? So is Christ. “He knew their thoughts” (Luke 6. 8). Is God the Father omnipresent? So is Christ. “The Son of Man which is in heaven” (John 3. 13). Christ as God was then in heaven, when as Man He was upon the earth.

### *Is Christ eternal?*

Christ is the everlasting Father (Isa. 9. 6), may be urged against the Cerinthian heretics, who denied the pre-existence of Christ’s Godhead, and held that Christ had no being till He derived it from the virgin Mary. Does divine worship belong to the first Person in the Trinity? So it does to Christ (see John 5. 23). “Let all the angels of God worship Him” (Heb. 1. 6). Is creation proper to the Deity? this is a flower of Christ’s crown. “By Him were all things created” (Col. 1. 16). Is invocation proper to the Deity? this is given to Christ. “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7. 59). Is recumbency [rest or repose] and trust peculiar to God the Father? this is given to Christ. “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14. 1). Christ must needs be God, not only that the divine nature might support the human from sinking under God’s wrath, but also to give value and weight to His sufferings. Christ being God, His death and passion are meritorious. Christ’s blood is called *sanguis Dei*, the blood of God, in Acts 20. 28, because the Person who was offered in sacrifice was God as well as Man. This is an invincible support to believers; it was God who was offended, and it was God who satisfied. Thus Christ’s Person is in two natures.

ii. Consider Christ’s two natures in one Person, God-Man. “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3. 16). Christ had a twofold substance, divine and human, yet not a twofold subsistence; both natures make but one Christ. A scion may be grafted into another tree – a pear-tree into an apple; which, though it bear different fruits, is but one tree; so Christ’s Manhood is united to the Godhead in an ineffable manner; yet though there are two natures, yet but one Person. This union of the two natures in Christ was not by transmutation, the divine nature changed into the human, or the human into the divine; nor by mixture, the two natures mingled together, as wine and water are mixed; but both the natures of Christ remain distinct, and yet make not two distinct persons, but one Person; the human nature not God, yet one with God.

2. Consider Christ, our Mediator, in His graces. These are the sweet savour of His ointments, that make the virgins love Him. Christ,

our blessed Mediator, is said to be “full of grace and truth” (John 1. 14). He had the anointing of the Spirit without measure (see John 3. 34). Grace in Christ is after a more eminent and glorious manner than it is in any of the saints.

i. Jesus Christ, our Mediator, has perfection in every grace (see Col. 1. 19). He is a panoply [array], magazine and storehouse of all heavenly treasure, all fulness. This no saint on earth has; he may excel in one grace, but not in all; as Abraham was eminent for faith, Moses for meekness; but Christ excels in every grace.

ii. There is a never-failing fulness of grace in Christ. Grace in the saints is ebbing and flowing, it is not always in the same degree and proportion; at one time David’s faith was strong, at another time so faint and weak, that you could hardly feel any pulse. “I said ... I am cut off from before Thine eyes” (Psa. 31. 22). But grace in Christ is a never-failing fulness; it never abated in the least degree; He never lost a drop of His holiness. What was said of Joseph in Genesis 49. 23, 24 may more truly be applied to Christ. “The archers ... shot at him ... but his bow abode in strength.” Men and devils shot at Him, but His grace remained in its full vigour and strength: “His bow abode in strength.”

iii. Grace in Christ is communicative. His grace is for us; the holy oil of the Spirit was poured on the head of this blessed Aaron, that it might run down upon us. The saints have not grace to bestow on others. When the foolish virgins would have bought oil of their neighbour virgins, saying, “Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out” (Matt. 25. 8), the wise virgins answered, “Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you.” The saints have no grace to spare for others; but Christ diffuses His grace to others. Grace in the saints is as water in the vessel, grace in Christ is as water in the spring. “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1. 16). Set a glass under a distiller and it receives water from it, drop by drop; so the saints have the drops and influences of Christ’s grace distilling upon them. What a rich consolation is this to those who either have no grace, or their stock is low! They may go to Christ, the Mediator, as a treasury of grace: Lord, I am indigent; but whither shall I carry my empty vessel, but to a full fountain? “All my springs are in Thee” (Psa. 87. 7). I am guilty; Thou hast blood to pardon me; I am polluted, Thou hast grace to cleanse me; I am sick unto death, Thou hast the balm of Gilead to heal me. Joseph opened all the storehouses of corn: Christ is our Joseph, that opens all the treasures and storehouses of grace, and communicates to us. He is not only sweet as the honeycomb, but drops as the honeycomb. In Christ our Mediator there is a cornucopia [abundance], and fulness of all grace; and Christ is desirous that we should come to Him for grace, like the full breast that aches till it be drawn.

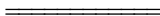
*Use one:* Admire the glory of this Mediator; He is God-Man, He is co-essentially glorious with the Father. All the Jews that saw Christ in the flesh did not see His Godhead; all that saw the Man did not see the Messiah. The temple of Solomon within was embellished with gold; travellers, as they passed along, might see the outside of the temple, but only the priests saw the glory which sparkled within the temple; so believers only, who are made priests unto God, see Christ's glorious inside, the Godhead shining through the Manhood (see Rev. 1. 16).

*Use two:* If Christ be God-Man in one Person, then look unto Jesus Christ alone for salvation. There must be something of the Godhead to fasten our hope upon; in Christ there is Godhead and Manhood hypostatically [divinely, intimately] united. If we could weep rivers of tears, out-fast Moses on the mount, if we were exact moralists, touching the law blameless, if we could arrive at the highest degree of sanctification in this life, all this would not save us, without looking to the merits of Him who is God. Our perfect holiness in heaven is not the cause of our salvation, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ. To this therefore did Paul flee, as to the horns of the altar. "That I may ... be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness" (Phil. 3. 9). It is true, we may look to our graces as evidences of salvation, but to Christ's blood only as the cause. In time of Noah's flood, all that trusted to the high hills and trees, and not to the ark, were drowned. "Looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12. 2), and so look unto Him, as to believe in Him, that so Christ may not only be united to our nature, but to our persons. "That believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20. 31).

*Use three:* Is Jesus Christ God and Man in one Person? This, as it shows the dignity of believers, that they are nearly related to one of the greatest Persons that is, "In Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9), so it is of unspeakable comfort. Christ's two natures being married together, the divine and human, all that Christ in either of His natures can do for believers, He will do. In His human nature He prays for them; in His divine nature He merits for them.

*Use four:* Admire the love of Christ our Mediator; that He should humble Himself, and take our flesh, that He might redeem us. Believers should put Christ in their bosom, as the spouse did. "He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts" (Song 1. 13). What was said of Ignatius, that the name of Jesus was found written in his heart, should be verified of every saint; he should have Jesus Christ written in his heart.

*Slightly adapted*



## THE EXERCISE OF LIVING FAITH IN ADVERSITY

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

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“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3. 17, 18).

See, my soul, in the prophet’s example, the blessedness of living *above* creature enjoyments, by living *upon* Creator fulness. Here is a sun, which never goes down! Here is a fountain, whose streams can never dry up! He that lives upon creature excellency, will want both food and comfort when that excellency dies, for they must die with it, when the period of its flourishing is over. But the soul that draws all from Jesus, the God of his salvation, will have Jesus and His salvation to live upon, and to be an everlasting source, when nature, in all its varieties, ceases to supply. My soul, what are thy resources for a day of famine? Canst thou join issue with the prophet? If blasting, or mildew, or frost, shall nip the fig tree of its blossom; both the vine and the olive fail; yea, if the staff of life, as well as the sweets of life, should all be gone; hast thou Jesus to live upon; canst thou rejoice in Him, when there is nothing else left to rejoice in; and call Him thine, and the God of thy salvation, when none will own thee, and thou hast none beside Him to own?

They say that music upon the waters always sounds best. Be this so or not, yet the melody of the soul is certainly sweetest when nature is out of tune, if the believer can take his harp from the willow, and sing aloud on the tribulated waters of sorrow, to the God of salvation. And this is a song never out of season, but has peculiar joy in the note, when from a new-strung heart, the believer sings it *of* the God of his salvation, and addresses it *to* the God of his salvation. Blessed Lord Jesus! give me grace, like the prophet, so to sing and so to triumph, that since, lose what I may, I cannot lose Thee, while Thy creature comforts remain, I may enjoy them, from enjoying Thee in them: and when all are taken away, still, having Thee for my portion, may I sing aloud with the prophet, though all earthly enjoyments cease, “I will still rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

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**Note:** The articles by J.H. Gosden on the Church of God will be resumed next month, if the Lord will.

## THE PRAYER ON MOUNT CARMEL

*From Elijah the Tishbite*

*by Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacher (1796-1868)*

We have already had three remarkable instances, in Elijah's history, of the efficacy of the fervent prayer of the righteous man. First, "he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." Secondly, he prayed for the restoration of the widow's son, and the child was restored to life. Thirdly, he prayed for the answer by fire to consume the sacrifice, and to decide the controversy with Baal and his priests. And now we have him praying again, and the heaven gives rain, and the land once more brings forth her fruit. Let us here learn the blessing of walking with God, and conversing with the Keeper of Israel by continual prayer.

"And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel" (1 Kings, 18. 41-46).

The fire has borne its testimony; the waters now speak. In how many and various ways does our gracious God testify of Himself, that He is the living God of providence. This, also, is done in answer to the prayer of Elijah.

Here is,

1. The preparation for prayer;
2. The prayer itself; and,
3. The answer to it

1. We are to imagine ourselves at the foot of mount Carmel, in the plain below, where the prophets of Baal were slain. Those idolatrous priests have fallen by the hand of Elijah and his new followers, and their blood is mingled with the brook Kishon; and praise redounds to God, who is holy in all His ways, and who is glorified by the overthrow of His enemies, as well as by the hallelujahs of His friends.

Three years and a half had the heavens been shut up from yielding a drop of water to the thirsty land of Israel. What an appearance must the face of the country now have presented! All vegetation parched and

burnt up; man and beast reduced to skeletons, and all flesh faded like the grass. They who had now become believers in God must have been filled with unusual terror. They had attained to the knowledge of Him amidst the thunders of His judgments; He had appeared as in flames of fire.

Even for the sake of these poor, trembling sheep, our prophet was heartily desirous that his Lord and God should again show His goodness and lovingkindness. He longed earnestly, that for the glory of God and the people's good the brazen skies should now dissolve in abundance of rain, and the season of famine and distress terminate. For this purpose it was necessary that Elijah should speak to God. The prayer of faith was to him what the staff was to Moses, with which he divided the Red Sea, and struck water from the flinty rock.

Ahab appears to have remained with the people by the brook Kishon, and to have witnessed everything, even the slaying of his priests – not without a partial assent, for Ahab was evidently a weak, capricious tyrant, destitute of character, and governed and moulded by present circumstances. The miracle on Carmel, and the enthusiastic cry of the people, “The LORD, He is the God”! had not left his heart unmoved, but made a momentary impression; so that he might have even thought at the time, “Be it so, that Jehovah is God!” But his heart was not changed; no true faith had taken possession of it. Many a one may have impressions from what is taking place around him, so as to be moved by them for a time; but he soon recovers his former state of mind, and goes on afterwards just as if nothing had happened. Such was the case with Ahab and others, at the fiery testimony on Carmel.

Elijah, about to retire for prayer, wished to be relieved from the company of Ahab and his attendants, and he said unto him, “Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.” In these words we cannot help discerning a bitter reproof given to the wretched monarch. It looks as if he had said, “Thy carnal ease is thy principal care; now take it; it will not much longer be disturbed by drought and famine.” It was also a cutting reproof, as implying that the king's presence was not wanted; especially while Elijah was about to converse with his God. And does it not convey a touching reproof to any of us, if the children of God are obliged to become mute and monosyllabic on our entering their company, and immediately turn the discourse upon the weather, politics, or the news of the day? Is it not a divine admonition to us, when we cannot help feeling that we are burdensome to them, that we interrupt them, and when it is gently hinted to us that we do not perhaps feel ourselves quite at home, that we are rather out of our element? Yes, to be thus sent away from Christian society, and banished as it were from the sanctuary of God, is surely a foretaste of future

judgments. And how many amongst you must daily swallow the bitter pill of being told, in one way or another, “Get thee up, eat and drink” – “we should be glad to be without you; we cannot go on comfortably while you are present.”

“Get thee up,” said Elijah; and added, “for there is a sound of abundance of rain” – a sound of a rustling, as is usual before an approaching storm, in the tops of the trees and upon the waters. Whether he heard it only in faith, with the ear of the spirit, or whether God rendered his bodily hearing so acute that he really heard it from afar in the elements, or in the higher regions of the air, we need not enquire. It is enough that he heard it, and it sounded to him like the tolling of the bell for prayer, even as a forerunning Amen to the aspirations for which he was preparing himself; and it strengthened him in the hope that his will, in desiring rain, was one with the will of God, who would now send rain. My brethren, we sometimes hear such a sound also; and whenever we hear it, let it be to us what it was to Elijah – a summons to prayer. It ought to be so to us, according to God’s intention. When, at any time, the preaching of the truth is blessed to a church, and the word reaches the soul – when a movement appears in a congregation, and a general excitement prevails – when tears of emotion flow, and people meet together and say, “What a powerful, impressive sermon!” there is then a rustling, and it is then time, ye children of God, to lift up your hands and pray, that after the sound, the rain may come.

Again, when some judgment has occurred in the neighbourhood; when a barren fig tree has been unexpectedly cut down before our eyes; when a scorner has been evidently smitten by Providence, that the simple may beware; or whatever it be, when the whole neighbourhood is alarmed, and unbelievers themselves are obliged to confess that the hand of God is visible – then pray that it may not stop there. When you are informed that one individual is desiring the sincere milk of the gospel, and that another has risen up from the seat of the scornful, and shows an inclination to come amongst the people of God; when you perceive that among the members of your household there is an enquiry after eternal things, and that your children begin to hear gladly of the Lord Jesus; then, when the sound reaches your ears; then it is time to lift up your heart in prayer. Yes: be watchful, ye children of God! never fall asleep on the walls of Zion, keep your ears attentive, and listen in every direction – in the church and in your houses, among your friends and relatives; and when you hear the rustling, even if but faintly and as at a distance, go immediately to your closet, fall down at God’s footstool, stretch out your hands and cry, “O Lord, we will not let Thee go, unless Thou pour upon us the gracious rain of Thine inheritance.” And the same course should be pursued when there begins to be a rustling, not



merely amongst others, but in your own selves; when it thunders and lightens in your own darkness; when a word strikes you, and a ray of light comes into your soul; when the glory of Christ is more clearly manifested to your mind, and your soul enjoys a foretaste of His grace, then give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure. The rustling is not the rain itself; but it is the forerunner of the rain, and a divine summons to prayer. O, regard it as such!

While Elijah was thus employed, Ahab, we are told, went up “to eat and to drink.” Miserable man! after all the great and heart-affecting scenes of the day, he felt just as if he had witnessed an interesting, though somewhat tedious comedy, after which refreshment is welcome, and food is relished. Would that such characters were not too common even at present! Many among us are not a whit better than Ahab. But a fearful woe awaits those who suffer the most powerful testimonies, the loudest calls to repentance, and the most affecting works of God to pass before them like a shadow or a dream. They please themselves with such things for a while, as with a “pleasant song” or beautiful painting; but carry nothing away with them from our churches and meetings, except perhaps a feeling of the length of the service, or some topic for conversational display, together with a good appetite for the next carnal meal. Yes, this is all; though perhaps in the morning the Lord by His Spirit has answered as with fire before their eyes and ears. However, we will not detain them; let them “go, eat, and drink!”

*(To be concluded)*

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## THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH: THE DAY THE LORD HATH MADE

*Extract from a sermon by John S. Green*

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The psalmist could say, “This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” And when you feel, my friends, a little of the true spirit of the Sabbath, I believe it will sometimes raise your affections heavenwards. You will say, “If it is so blessed to come into the sanctuary and to worship Jesus, God’s dear Son, what will it be like to be with Him for ever, to be in heaven; to be,

‘Where congregations ne’er break up  
And Sabbaths have no end’?”

Sometimes you may almost feel your heart ready to leap out of your poor body, so to speak, when there is that longing, that looking forward to seeing Jesus as He is. There is that longing to be free from sin, and the things of this poor time-state, that you may love Him and worship Him in glory, for ever and for ever.

“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” We will thank God for His earthly Sabbaths. We will thank Him for those few blessed days when some of us hope He has appeared unto us, and given us an earnest of that inheritance which is above. And, my friends, I do not believe you and I will get nearer heaven than this: being favoured to worship with God’s dear people, to lose sight for a few moments of all other things, to feel our hearts and our affections set upon the Lord Jesus Christ, to feel Him really precious to our hearts, and to feel that love to the dear people of God, to feel we are united to them. This is a foretaste of heaven. This is a sweet foretaste of that which many of our dear friends whom we have known on earth, are now enjoying in heaven above. They were taught to love the Lord, to love His day. They were favoured to worship Him; they enjoyed the blessedness of the gospel, and now they see Him as He is, and we are left here on earth. But the Lord can still give us a few more good days. He can still appear for us; He can still cause our hearts to rejoice and our cup to run over, so that we shall have to say, we will rejoice and be glad in this day, because of the Lord’s goodness and His mercy towards us.



## REMINISCENCES OF A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF GOD

*The writings of Joseph Azor Short, member of the church at Chippenham, and for many years a faithful minister of the gospel, who died on June 14th, 2004, aged 91*

*Mr. Short writes thus of his own pathway:*

“I was born of godly parents in 1912 but like the rest of Adam’s sons, ‘born in sin and shapen in iniquity.’ Though brought up to attend chapel and Sunday school, yet I still walked in the ways of sin, mocked God, and called upon Him only when in trouble. However, from about 1939 onwards the Lord began to hedge up my way, but I broke through the hedges. Then He began to hedge me about with ‘hewn stones,’ and to ‘weaken my strength’ in the way. I now had to pray in reality to the only One that could help me.

“I was now constrained to be at chapel each time the doors were opened; there was now in my heart a seeking after the things of God. In 1951, the Lord was pleased to remove by death my father-in-law, the late Joseph Kilmister, a minister of the gospel. As I talked to him, in what proved to be his last illness, he told me how the Lord had told him how everything was right between God and his soul. He said that he would have nothing altered, and that he felt the peace of God. For the first time I saw *grace*; the grace of God shining in a poor sinner’s face, and just for a little time I felt knit to him. I saw also that God had given to me a

revelation; a great revelation. O how favoured I felt to be, a great sinner like me being favoured as it were to see God's secrets; His mighty works made manifest!

"Also, a little after this, I sat with two of my children one Sunday morning in chapel, and as the minister preached I felt a warmth flood over my heart, and I said to myself, 'This is what I have heard the people of God speak of, and God has conveyed it into my poor soul.'

"But the time was fast approaching when the Lord was to deepen His work in my soul. I lost my father and mother in 1953 and a number of the Lord's children were removed home.

"I believe, in the latter half of 1953, the Lord gave me a dream in which I was passing back and forth over the mouth of hell, and seeing a number of my fellow creatures enter into the mouth of hell, never to return, and dreading lest I should fall into hell. I was helpless and full of fear, when a mighty arm was stretched forth and took me and lifted me up, and put me on a great rock. (I literally walked this out in after years.) In all these dealings the Lord, I felt, was placing those 'hewn stones' around me; I could not get out.

"On December 7th, 1953, being unwell, I decided to go and see my earthly physician. I cycled down to the surgery in the town centre. He told me to go home, go to bed, and he would come and see me on the morrow, but as I went home I was in terrible pain. I had to pray my way home, as it was all uphill to our house on Malmesbury Road, and beg for strength. I was eventually given enough strength to arrive home; no one else was in the house (they having gone to Bible Class). The pains in my chest being unbearable, I sank down into a chair, and as I did the Lord spoke to me in an audible voice, 'Be still, and know that I am God' (Psa. 46. 10). I could not move, not so much as a little finger. Was I now to be ushered into eternity? I was brought to cry for mercy, and that if it was His will to take me, would He spare me until my wife and three children came home? Then the audible voice came again, 'There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it' (Job 28. 7, 8). I now cried for mercy for Jesus' sake. I believe I now knew Him as the God who spoke to the patriarchs; no change; not the shadow of a turning.

"Again the voice came for the third time: 'What I do, thou knowest not now.' O the solemnity!

"After about one-and-a-half hours, my wife and children came home. I could only speak in a whisper; they put me to bed. I had to leave everything in the Lord's hand; not send for the doctor and, if I was spared, wait for the morrow.

"The morrow did come and the doctor came about 10 a.m. After he had examined me he grunted and told me to stay in bed. As he went

down the stairs I heard him say to my wife, 'He has given his heart a pretty good shock. It will be a long job. I will come and see him tomorrow.' Actually, I was off work for two years and four months.

"On December 8th, 1953, my wife had to go to town to get the doctor's prescription for me, and when she was gone the Lord came again, and took me into the river that is spoken of in Ezekiel 47. 3-5, 'And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.'

"And there was I, a poor sinner, being borne up in the river of God's love; peace, perfect peace, not a wave of trouble, everything in its right place; then I realised I was still on earth. 'But the sweetness who can tell?' There was I with not enough breath with which to speak, not strength to sit up in bed, and the love of God in my full soul, 'The love of God passeth all knowledge.'

"December 9th: For two or three years we had had family reading and prayers at the close of the day; now it was just impossible for me to read, so this night my wife had to do the reading and she read Isaiah 43. 1-7 and it did not seem to be her voice; as she read the Lord spoke each one of those verses into my soul with power and I wept under the bedclothes; this now was a bringing into the banqueting house and it lasted till the evening of the next day and if the Lord had not then withdrawn Himself, I should have gone to glory, for my poor, frail body could not stand the 'glory of the Lord.' If this was lying at death's door, it was next door to heaven.

"O the power that the Lord conveyed into my soul! I was redeemed, the Lord Himself promising to be with me; deep waters, floods and fires then were nothing to me! Then what broke me altogether was the Lord said I was precious in His sight, me who was the least of my father's house in this blessed place. I had to give up wife and children and tell my partner if the Lord took me, to do nothing in a hurry, but to wait upon the Lord, He could provide a better husband if it was His will.

"It was a few days after this that the Lord was pleased to lay upon me the exercise of the ministry. Though sometimes so weak that I could not bear the weight of the bedclothes upon me, my wife having to wash and do everything for me, yet a faith was given to me to hope in the Lord, though oftentimes it seemed that I should be ushered into eternity; the Lord giving me a desire, that though I had served Satan for over forty years, I might now serve the Lord in some humble capacity.

"After a while, Satan was allowed to buffet me and bring everything into question for about three weeks; I begged the Lord if I was a child of His, He would send the deacon of our chapel (Mr. Salway) to see me.

"But, as oft as I sought this of the Lord, these words would come, 'He must needs go through Samaria.' However, after three or four weeks Mr. Salway did come to see me, but when he came into my bedroom he was nothing to me; I was to rest in the promises of God that He had given me. Then on January 3rd, 1954, being a Sunday, I was alone again in the house in the morning, begging of the Lord to appear for me as only He could. He led me to Jeremiah 24 where is found that solemn, discriminating word distinguishing between the good figs and the naughty (bad) figs. The Lord again raised me to a hope in His mercy. Verses 5-7: 'Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set Mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart.' So it was for my good that I was sent into the land of the Chaldeans and in the midst of the great conflicts there was a looking for the 'good' the Lord had promised.

"January 10th, 1954:

'Whatever cross lies at thy door,  
It cometh from the Lord.'

(H. 335)

"January 17th 1954:

'I find my striving all in vain  
Unless my Lord is near;  
My heart is hard; I'm such a wretch –  
Can neither love nor fear.'

(H. 676)

"Later that same day:

'Weaned from my lordly self,  
Weaned from the miser's pelf,  
Weaned from the scorner's ways,  
Weaned from the lust of praise.  
  
'All that feeds my busy pride,  
Cast it evermore aside;  
Bid my will to Thine submit;  
Lay me humbly at Thy feet.'

(H. 686)

"Still much conflict, still seeking the Lord's face, still being dashed down.

“One day the doctor came and said I might go down out of my bedroom. I felt it to be the worst news I ever heard; leave my bedroom, that was my ‘Bethel.’ O the dismay that filled my heart! Go out from Bethel; have to mix with the world. I begged the Lord that if those exercises I had felt concerning the ministry were of Him, no man might have a hand in it.

“Another waymark was given to unworthy me on July 7th, 1954 in the words of Nahum 1 verses 12 and 13: ‘Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.’

“I was away from the house of God about four or five months and then when enabled to go I could not sit in the chapel for weakness, for when the people sang, the perspiration would drip off my chin; thus for months I sat in the vestry. Also up until this time, several of the Lord’s servants came to see me but none could enter into my case. I had to walk like Abraham: the Lord called him alone, ‘and he went out, not knowing whither he went.’ Truly the Lord did shut me up to Himself, and I often felt like Moses in the ‘backside of the desert.’

“Now about this time the Lord began to reveal the Holy Spirit to me by His gracious operations. As I wandered a little way in the lanes or fields, there would be that union and conversing with God; God would talk to me, melt me and I would talk to God. On one occasion I felt His presence for two or three days and I could say, ‘When I awake, Thou art still with me.’ But I think it was the third day, I awoke about one o’clock in the morning and He was gone, my heart was cold; so the Spirit of God would lead me and so bless the Word to my soul.

“This was a period of great stress physically. I would often go for a walk of three or four hundred yards and then my strength was gone, and I had to pray to God for strength to get home, begging the fulfilment of the promises He had given me. Then my wife would have to push and help me upstairs, and so to bed sometimes for a day or two, ‘What hath God wrought!’

“So it went on until September 1955, when my doctor decided to have me into hospital. I saw the best specialists in the district, but they could only shake their heads and suggest this or that. After a week or ten days at Chippenham hospital, they decided to take me to the Royal United Hospital at Bath. O how I begged the Lord for a word to go with! O that He would direct me to a portion out of His Word! I opened the Bible and my eyes fell upon 1 Chronicles 1, my heart sank; I cried, ‘O Lord, help me!’ and I looked again, and my eyes were directed to the last three verses of 2 Kings 25. 28-30: ‘And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; and changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before

him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.’

“O this was like a key fitting into a lock, the gracious leading of the Spirit of God! Instantly the ministry welled up again and I went in the strength of these words to Bath. I had to go through many trying examinations, but the Lord was with me, even providing three nurses in that hospital who I believe knew something of God. After a month I was brought home again; my progress was very slow, but though I often went back in feelings, I was being strengthened by the mighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in body and spirit. ‘He that believeth shall not make haste.’

“I was now brought through to March 1956. The doctor thought I might soon try to make a start back to work. I started back on May 16th, 1956 after a space of two years and four months, working only in the mornings and going home at lunchtime. Now this required many more errands to the throne of grace as I had to pray my way to work, pray my way through the morning, and pray my way home again.

“Here the Lord was very gracious, as I had begged the Lord for a long time that I might be led into meditation upon His Word and that the Holy Spirit would open it up to my understanding, and the Lord began to answer my poor petitions. As I worked and laboured for the bread which perisheth, the Lord would come and set my mind on things above, sometimes for a whole morning. When lunchtime came, I had completed my work and not known I had done it, and done it better than if my mind had been upon it. In these days someone would often approach to ask me something, and I would look up to God with child-like faith and say, ‘Lord, take him away,’ and whoever it was would walk away without speaking; however, this would leave me very weak in body, as at times the glory of the Lord was more than I could bear.

“The Lord now began to exercise me concerning the ordinances of His house, baptism and the Lord’s table; the devil often telling me that in my weak state, to be baptized would be the last thing I ever did.

“One morning at this time a man of West Indian origin, speaking of a work colleague who had died, said, ‘The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ The Lord so came that morning and opened it up to my understanding with such power I could have stood before the kings of the earth without a fear, and declared unto them the wonders of salvation and the penalty of sin.

“At this time as I sat under the preached Word, the Lord would often lead me a word or a sentence in front of the minister. These were times of great refreshing and confirmation of the things for which the Lord had raised in me a hope.

“Naturally, I have no gifts for speaking; I felt it must all come from the Lord, and there was one thing I desired – the sacred anointing.

“During 1956, having obtained many helps, the Lord gave me several words concerning baptism. I felt liberty in asking the Lord that if it was of Him, He would cause one of His servants to speak the words, ‘Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.’ The late Mr. Champion was used of God to speak them, and I felt I must go. Unbeknown to me, my wife was also exercised, so we went before the church and were each helped to give our experience, were accepted and baptized by Mr. Jesse Moody of Melksham on August 22nd, 1956. I felt no sweetness in the ordinance, but as I went home these words were dropped into my soul with feeling: ‘And the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.’ That was how it was; the Lord had done everything, and it was wondrous in our eyes.

*(To be concluded)*

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### GRACE ALL-SUFFICIENT

*“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you” (2 Cor. 9. 8).*

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“My grace is sufficient for thee.”

The promise I know and believe;  
But I long from my fears to be free,  
And life-giving grace to receive.

I am pained with the burden of sin;  
My failings and faults I deplore;  
I am troubled without and within,  
And long for free grace to restore.

O why should I comfortless be,  
And why for my want of grace grieve?  
My ruin and poverty see,  
And long for the Lord to relieve?

Can it be there is no grace for me –  
No water in Bethlehem’s well?  
Yet I read, “Grace sufficient for THEE” –  
And why not for me? – Who can tell?

I’ll wait on the God of all grace,  
Who can give me all grace, rich and free;  
At His feet I will lay my sad case,  
I shall find grace sufficient for ME.

Herbert Dawson (1890-1969)

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THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
DECEMBER 2020

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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 MAN CHRIST JESUS

*By Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843)*

“For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2. 16-18).

I. *The sovereign mercy of Christ in becoming Man.* “For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” We read of two great rebellions in the history of the universe – the rebellion of the angels and the rebellion of man. For infinitely-wise and gracious purposes, God planned and permitted both of these that out of evil He might bring forth good. The *first* took place in heaven itself. Pride was the sin by which the angels fell, and therefore it is called “the condemnation of the devil.” “They kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.” “God spared them not, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” The *next* fall took place upon earth. Satan tempted, and man fell – believed the devil rather than God, and so came under the curse: “Thou shalt surely die.” Both of these families came under the same frown, under the same condemnation; both were condemned to the same “everlasting fire.” But the glorious Son of God resolved, from all eternity, to die for sinners. Now, for which of the two shall He die? Perhaps the angels in heaven would long that He should die for their once brother angels. The angelic nature was higher than that of man. Will He not die for angels? Now, here is the answer: “Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” Here is sovereign mercy passing by one family and coming to another. Let us wonder and adore the sovereign mercy of Jesus.

1. Do not be surprised if Jesus passes many by. The Lord Jesus has been riding through our country in a remarkable manner, seated on His white horse, and wearing many crowns. He has sent out many arrows and pierced many hearts in this place, and brought many to His feet; but has He not passed many by? Are there not many given up to their own hearts’ lust, and walking in their own counsel? Be not surprised. This is the very way He did when He came to this earth; He

passed the gate of hell. Although His bosom was full of love and grace, although “God is love,” He felt it not inconsistent to pass fallen angels by, and to come and die for men. And so, though Jesus is love still, yet He can save some, and leave others to be hardened. “Many widows were in Israel in the time of Elijah the prophet, but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Zidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.”

2. If Christ has visited your soul, give Him all glory. “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory.” The only reason why you are saved is the sovereign compassion of Jesus. It is not that you are better than others, that you were less wicked, of better dispositions, more attentive to your Bible. Many who have been left have been much more blameless in their life. It is not that you have sat under a peculiar ministry. God has made the same ministry a means of hardening multitudes. It is the free grace of God. Love God for ever and ever because He chose you of His own free will. Adore Jesus that He passed by millions, and died for you. Adore the Holy Ghost that He came out of free, sovereign mercy and awakened you. It will be matter of praise through eternity.

II. *Christ made like us in all things.* Christ not only became Man, but it behoved Him to be made like us in all things. He suffered being tempted. There are only two points in which He was different from us.

First, *In being God as well as Man.* In the manger at Bethlehem there lay a perfect Infant, but there also was Jehovah. That mysterious Being who rode on an ass’s colt, and wept over Jerusalem, was as much a man as you are, and as much God as the Father is. The tears He shed were human tears, yet the love of Jehovah swelled below His mantle. That pale Being that hung quivering on the cross was indeed Man; it was human blood that flowed from His wounds; but He was as truly God.

Second, *In being without sin.* He was the only one in human form of whom it can be said, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; the only one on whom God could look down from heaven and say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Every member of our body and faculty of our mind we have used as the servants of sin. Every member of His body and faculty of His mind were used only as servants to holiness. *His mouth* was the only human mouth from which none but gracious words ever proceeded. *His eye* was the only human eye that never shot forth flames of pride, envy or lust. *His hand* was the only human hand that never was stretched forth but in doing good. *His heart* was the only human heart that was not deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. When Satan came to Him, he found nothing in Him.

Now, in these two things it behoved Him to be unlike His brethren, or He could not have been a Saviour at all. In all other things it behoved Him to be made like us. There was no part of our condition that He did not humble Himself unto.

1. He passed through all the terms of our life from childhood to manhood. *First*, He was an Infant of days, exposed to all the pains and dangers of infancy. "Ye shall find the Babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." *Second*, He bore the trials and pains of boyhood. Many a one, no doubt, would wonder at the holy Boy in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. He grew in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and with man. *Third*, He bore the afflictions and anxieties of manhood, when He began to be about thirty years of age.

2. He tasted the difficulties of many situations in life. The first thirty years, it is probable, He shared the humble occupation of Joseph the carpenter; He tasted the trials of working for His daily bread. Then He subsisted on the kindness of others. Certain women, which followed Him, ministered unto Him of their substance. He had not where to lay His head. Many a night He spent on the Mount of Olives, or on the hills of Galilee. Then He bore the trials of a gospel minister. He preached from morning till night, and yet with how small success! so that He could say, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought and in vain." How often He was *grieved by their unbelief*! He marvelled at their unbelief. "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" How often He *offended many* by His preaching: "Many said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Jesus." How often *they hated* Him for His love! "For My love they are My adversaries: but I give Myself unto prayer." How His own disciples grieved Him by their want of faith! "O ye of little faith, have I been so long time with you?" The unbelief of Thomas; their sleeping in the garden; forsaking Him and fleeing; Peter denying; Judas betraying Him!

3. What trials He had from His own family! Even His own brothers did not believe on Him, but mocked. The people of His town tried to throw Him over the rocks. What pain He suffered from His mother, when He saw the sword piercing her fond heart: how He said to John, "Behold thy mother!" and to His mother, "Behold thy son!" even in the midst of His dying agonies.

4. What trials from Satan! Believers complain of Satan, but they never felt his power as Christ did. What an awful conflict was that during forty days in the wilderness! How fearfully did Satan urge on Pharisees and Herod and Judas to torment Him! What an awful hour was that when He said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness!" What an awful cry was that, "Save Me from the lion's mouth" when He felt His soul in the very jaws of Satan!

5. What trials from God! Believers often groan under the hidings of God's countenance; but ah! they seldom taste even a drop of what Christ drank. What dreadful agony was that in Gethsemane, when the blood gushed through the pores! How dreadful was that frown of God on the cross, when He cried, "My God, My God!" In all these things, and a thousand more, He was made like unto His brethren. He came into our place. Through eternity we shall study these sufferings.

*First*, Learn the amazing love of Christ, that He should leave glory for such a condition.

*Second*, Learn to bear sufferings cheerfully. You have not yet suffered as He did.

III. *The end – That He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.* The work of Christ as an High Priest is here laid down as twofold. *First*, to make an atonement for our sins. *Second*, To succour His people under temptations.

1. *To make atonement.* This is the great work of Christ as our High Priest. For this it was needful that He should become Man and die. Had He remained God alone in the bosom of His Father, He might have pitied us, but He could not have died for us, nor taken our sins away. We must have perished. Every priest in the Old Testament was a type of Jesus in this; every lamb that was slain typified Jesus offering up His own body a sacrifice for our sins.

Let your eye rest there if you would be happy. Those few dark hours on Calvary, when the great High Priest was offering up the amazing sacrifice, give light for eternity to the believing soul. This only will cheer you in dying. Not your graces, not your love to Christ, not anything in you, but only this – Christ hath died. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Christ hath "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

2. *To succour the tempted.* All believers are a tempted people. Every day they have their trials; every time is to them a time of need. The unconverted are little tempted; they are not in trouble as others, neither are they plagued like other men. They do not feel temptations rising in their heart; nor do they know the power of Satan. Before conversion, a man believes as little in the devil as he believes in Christ. But when a man comes to Christ, then he becomes a tempted soul, "poor and needy, seeking water and there is none."

*He is tempted by God.* God did tempt Abraham; not to sin, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. Still, God always tries His children. He never gives faith but He brings His child into a situation where it will be tried. Sometimes He exalts him, to try if he will turn proud and forget God; sometimes He brings him low, to see if he will murmur against God. "Blessed is the man that endureth

temptations.” Sometimes He brings them into a strait, where the trial is, whether they will believe in Him alone, or trust to flesh and blood.

*The world tempts a child of God.* They watch for their halting. They love nothing better than to see a child of God fall into sin. It soothes their conscience to think that all are equally bad. They frown; they smile.

*Their own heart is a fountain of temptation.* Sometimes it says, What harm is there in that? It is a little sin. Or, I will just sin this once, and never again. Or, I will repent after and be saved.

*Satan hurls his fiery darts.* He terrifies them away from Christ, disturbs them at prayer, fills their mind with blasphemies, hounds on the world against them.

Ah, believers, you are a tempted people! You are always poor and needy. And God intends it should be so, to give you constant errands to go to Jesus. Some may say, It is not good to be a believer; but ah! see to whom we can go.

We have a merciful and faithful High Priest. He suffered being tempted, just that He might succour them that are tempted. The high priest of old not only offered sacrifice at the altar – his work was not done when the lamb was consumed. He was to be a father to Israel. He carried all their names graven over his heart – he went in and prayed for them within the veil. He came out and blessed the people, saying, “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.”

So it is with the Lord Jesus. His work was not all done on Calvary. He that died for our sins lives to pray for us, to help in every time of need. He is still Man on the right hand of God. He is still God, and therefore, by reason of His divinity, is present here this day as much as any of us. He knows your every sorrow, trial, difficulty. Every half-breathed sigh He hears; it comes into His human heart at the right hand of God. His human heart is the same yesterday, today and for ever. He pleads for you, thinks on you, plans deliverance for you.

Dear, tempted brethren! go boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help you in your time of need.

Are you bereaved of one you loved? Go and tell Jesus (see Matt. 14. 12), spread out your sorrows at His feet. He knows them all; feels for you in them all. He is a merciful High Priest. He is faithful too, never wanting in the hour of need. He is able to succour you by His Word, by His Spirit, by His providence. He gave you all the comfort you had by your friends. He can give it you without them. He has taken away the stream that you may go to the fountain.

Are you suffering in body? Go to this High Priest. He is intimately acquainted with all your diseases: He has felt that very pain. Remember how, when they brought to Him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, He looked up to heaven and sighed, and said, *Ephphatha!* He sighed over his misery. So He sighs over you. He is able to give you deliverance, or patience to bear it, or improvement by it.

Are you sore tempted in soul – put into trying circumstances, so that you know not what to do? Look up; He is able to succour you. If He had been on earth, would you not have gone to Him? Would you not have kneeled and said, “Lord, help me?” Does it make any difference that He is at the right hand of God? He is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

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### JESUS OF NAZARETH

*By Mr. Gerald D. Buss*

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It is one of the condescending attributes of the Saviour that joined to the incomparable name of Jesus, should have been joined the name of lowly Nazareth.

Nazareth was a place of no consequence in the eyes of many in Israel. Its isolated geographic position, the unpolished Galilean accent of its inhabitants, along with a reputation for loose morals and religion, made it a by-word in the eyes of many, especially among the Pharisees, as an undesirable place of abode. So much so that Nathanael, when he was called by Philip to see Jesus Christ, asked: “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip wisely answered: “Come and see” (John 1. 46). A similar question was asked of Nicodemus in John 7. 52: “They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.”

Yes, Nazareth was by its reputation an unlikely place for the Messiah to come from, but did not Isaiah say that He would be “as a root out of a dry ground”? Mary and Joseph when they returned from Egypt went to their city, Nazareth, and in so doing the prophecy was fulfilled concerning Christ: “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt. 2. 23).

Those who know something of their own hearts, will think it an even greater wonder that by His Spirit, He should dwell in their hearts by faith.

“Dear Lord, and shall Thy Spirit rest  
In such a wretched heart as mine?  
Unworthy dwelling! glorious Guest!  
Favour astonishing, divine!”

(H. 1078)

Dwelling in Nazareth was one of the steps Christ took in His humiliation, as we read in Philippians 2. 7: "But made Himself of no reputation." Here Jesus was brought up in His holy childhood, and in fact lived in Nazareth for the first thirty years of His earthly life, in apparent obscurity, yet all the while He was "about His" – heavenly – "Father's business" while serving in Joseph's carpenter's shop. This was part of His obedience to His Father, and a part of that royal robe of righteousness with which He has adorned His people. A great part of that robe was wrought in Nazareth.

When His earthly ministry began, His early roots were not forgotten. When Blind Bartimaeus sat by the wayside begging, hearing a great tumult, he was told, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." The lowly name of Nazareth was no hindrance to the believing Bartimaeus. "And he cried, saying, Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." His faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, "saved him" as the Lord Jesus said – not just from the blindness which had afflicted him for so long, but we may believe that he was saved in the gospel sense; a sinner saved by grace. When the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He was acclaimed as "Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

When He hung on the cross, His superscription was "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

When He came forth from the tomb, triumphant over death and the grave, did He lose this title? The young man, evidently an angel, said to the fearing women, "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him" (Mark 16. 6). A wonderful testimony that He is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8).

Even after His ascension, this name was still dear to His disciples. Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts 2. 22). It was in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that Peter healed the lame man at the gate called Beautiful (see Acts 3. 6).

Even more remarkable was the testimony of Paul, the apostle, who testified that when he was apprehended on the road to Damascus, the voice of Christ was heard by him saying, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest" (Acts 22. 8). In another place he says that Jesus spoke in the Hebrew tongue.

So even on His throne, as on His cross, the Lord Jesus was not ashamed to mention lowly Nazareth. He has not forgotten His low estate here below, and still retains His human heart, which beat so lovingly in lowly Nazareth as on the cross, for His dear people's sake. "He is not

ashamed to call them brethren,” even though they are of low estate through the Fall; poor in spirit by divine teaching, and beggars needing continual mercy from His condescending love.

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## A WORD FOR THE PRESENT CALAMITY

*By John Preston (1587-1628)*

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*John Preston was a very influential Puritan, one of the leaders of the Puritans during his life. He preached before King James I and King Charles I, and was chaplain to Prince Charles (later Charles I). His career was centred around Cambridge. He died on Lord's day, July 20th, 1628. As he lay dying, he was asked if he was afraid. He said, "No; I shall change my place, but I shall not change my company."*

You that think your state the best, even you have had a hand in this plague; you think that other men's sins, the sins of wicked men, are the cause of it, but God knoweth, that they cannot pray and have no life in them, as you have; and though their sins also be a cause, and a main cause, as appears by the Amorites, whose sins, when full, God punished, yet I say they are yours also.

And therefore, when there is an evident sign, that God hath a controversy with a kingdom and the churches, and a sign of His wrath is proclaimed from heaven, then every man must do something. Now fear the Lord, be zealous, repent and do your first works; begin now to mend your pace to heaven.

And yet would there were only a want of zeal among you; yea, is it not in disgrace? is not a zealous man hooted at, as an owl among us? The excellency of it is exceedingly abated and eclipsed, the zeal of it is withered, the Lord is departed from us. Learn to be more zealous, and God will return and cause you to flourish again; for when God looks upon a people, it is with them as with the earth in spring time; and when He departs from them, they are as withered trees in winter.

Where now is the zeal of former times, the communion of saints, the warming and whetting of one another by mutual exhortations? Where is the boldness for the Lord? Those holy prayers, those former times are gone; the light of those times remain, but not the heat.

*Note:* None were more aware of the need of the Holy Spirit to fulfil the just precepts of God's holy Word than men such as John Preston. So though the language to us may appear somewhat legal, may our deeply-felt impotence drive us to seek more earnestly the grace to walk in God's ways. G.D.B.



## THE DESIRE FOR RESTORATION

*By Charles Bridges (1794-1869)*

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“I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments” (Psa. 119. 176).

The natural disposition to wander from the fold is constant ground for prayer for the help of the Lord’s judgments, to give us clearer light and preserving principles. Yet our need of this safeguard opens to us a most humbling truth. Who can gainsay the testimony from the mouth of God – that “all we like sheep have gone astray”? But how afflicting is the thought, that this should not only be the description of a world living without God, but the confession even of God’s own people! And yet where is the child of God that does not set his own seal with shame to the confession – “I have gone astray like a lost sheep”? “Who can understand his errors?” If he be not found, like Peter, in the open path of wandering, yet has he not need to cry, “Cleanse me from secret faults”? Is he never led away by sense, fancy, appetite? If the will be sincere, how far is it from being perfect! And only a little yielding, a little bending to the flesh, giving way to evil – who knows what may be the end of this crooked path? Who knows what pride, waywardness, earthliness, may be working within, even while the gracious Lord is strengthening, guiding, comforting His poor, straying sheep? That they should ever wander from privileges so great, from a God so good, from a Shepherd so kind! What can induce them to turn their backs upon their best Friend, and sin against the most precious love that was ever known, but something that must, upon reflection, fill them with shame! The blame is readily cast upon the temptations of Satan, the seductive witcheries of the world, or some untoward circumstances. But whoever deals with himself must trace the backsliding to his own heart: “This is my infirmity.” And have we replaced what we have wilfully yielded up, with anything of equal or superior value? May it not be asked of us, “What fruit had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.”

But there is no enjoyment while distant from the beloved fold. It is as impossible for the child of God to be happy, when separated from his God, as if he were in the regions of eternal despair. He has not lost – he cannot wholly lose – his recollection of the forsaken blessing. In struggling, weeping faith, he cries, “Seek Thy servant. I cannot find my way back: the good Shepherd must seek me. Once I knew the path: but now that I have wandered into bye-paths, I am no more able to return, than I was to come at first. I have no guide but the Shepherd whom I have left.” How cheering, then, is His office character! “Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out: as a shepherd seeks out

his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.” Cannot I set my seal to His faithful discharge of His office, “He restoreth my soul”?

If I want further encouragement to guide my steps homeward, let me think of His own description of tender faithfulness, and compassionate yearnings over His lost sheep; not showing it the way back to the fold, and leaving it to come after Him: but laying it upon His own shoulders, and bringing it home, all upbraidings forgotten; all recollection of His own pains swallowed up in the joy, that He has “found the sheep which was lost.” Let me remember the express commission, that brought the Shepherd from heaven to earth, from the throne of God to the manger, and thence to the garden and cross, “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Let me see upon Him the especial mark of the Good Shepherd, giving His life for the sheep. Let me observe this sacrifice, as covering the guilt of my wanderings, and opening my way to return – yes, drawing me into the way. Surely then, I may add to my contrite confession the prayer of confidence: Seek Thy servant. I cannot forbear to plead, that though a rebellious prodigal, I am still Thy servant, Thy child: I still bear the child’s mark of an interest in Thy covenant. Though a wanderer from the fold, I do not forget Thy commandments. Nothing can erase Thy law, which was written in my mind and inward parts by the finger and Spirit of God, as an earnest of my adoption, as the pledge of my restoration. What man writes is easily blotted out; what God writes is indelible. Let me then lie humbled and self-abased. But let me not forget my claim – what has been done for me. Thus, again, I hope to be received as a “dear” and “pleasant child”; again to be clothed with “the best robe,” to be welcomed with fresh tokens of my Father’s everlasting love, and to be assured with the precious promise, “My sheep shall never perish, and none shall pluck them out of My hand.”

Such, Christian reader, would be the application we should make of this verse to ourselves; and such a penitent confession of our backslidings, united with a believing dependence on the long-tried grace and faithfulness of our God, would form a suitable conclusion to our meditations on this most interesting Psalm. We would unite the tax-collector’s prayer with the great apostle’s confidence; and, while in holy brokenness of heart we would wish to live and die, smiting upon our bosom, and saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” the remembrance of our adoption warrants the expression of assurance, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Yet, as it regards the experience of David, is there not something striking, and we had almost said, unexpected, in the conclusion of this Psalm? To hear one, who has

throughout been expressing such holy and joyful aspirations for the salvation of his God, such fervent praises of His love, that we seem to shrink back from the comparison with him, as if considering him almost on the verge of heaven – to hear this “man after God’s own heart,” sinking himself to the lowest dust, under the sense of the evil of his heart, and his perpetual tendency to wander from his God, is indeed a most instructive lesson. It marks the believer’s conflict sustained to the end – the humility, and yet the strength, of his confidence; the highest notes of praise combining with the deepest expressions of abasement – forming that harmony of acceptable service, which ascends “like pillars of smoke” before God. And thus will our Christian progress be chequered, until we reach the regions of unmixed praise, where we shall no longer mourn over our wanderings, no longer feel any inclination to err from Him, or the difficulty of returning to Him – where we shall be eternally safe in the heavenly fold, to “go no more out.”

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7. 15-17).

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### THE PRECIOUSNESS AND SUITABILITY OF THE NAME OF CHRIST IN OUR PRAYERS

*By Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

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Be sure you offer all your closet prayers in Christ’s name, and in His alone. “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it”; “That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give it you.” O sirs! this is your privilege as well as your comfort, that you never deal with God but by a Mediator. When you appear before God, Jesus Christ appears with you, and He appears for you; when you put up your petitions, then He doth make intercession for you. Christ gives you a commission to put His name upon all your requests; and whatsoever prayer comes up with this name upon it, He will procure it an answer. In the state of innocency, man might worship God without a mediator; but since sin hath made so wide a breach between God and man, God will accept of no worship from man, but what is offered up by the hand of a Mediator. Now this Mediator is Christ alone. “There is

one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” One Mediator not of redemption only, as the papists grant, but of intercession also, which they deny.

The apostle plainly tells us that the office of intercession pertaineth unto Christ, as part of His mediation (see Heb. 7. 25). It is certain that we need no other master of requests in heaven, but the Man Christ Jesus, who being so near the Father, and so dear to the Father, can doubtless carry anything with the Father that makes for His glory and our good. This was typified in the law. The high priest alone did enter into the sanctuary, and carry the names of the children of Israel before the Lord, whilst the people stood all without. This pointed out Christ’s mediation. In Leviticus 16 you read of two things. First, the cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat; secondly, the blood of the bullock that was sprinkled before the mercy seat. Now that blood typified Christ’s satisfaction, and the cloud of incense His intercession.

There is no coming to the Father, but by His Son. Christ is the true Jacob’s ladder by which we must ascend to heaven. Joseph, you know, commanded his brethren, that as ever they looked for any good from him, or to see his face with joy, they should be sure to bring their brother Benjamin along with them. O sirs! as ever you would be prevalent with God, as ever you would have sweet, comfortable, choice returns from heaven to your closet prayers, be sure that you bring your Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the arms of your faith, be sure that you treat and trade with God only in the name of the Lord Jesus. Christ’s name is so precious and powerful with the Father, that it will carry any suit, obtain any requests at His hands. The prayers that were offered up with the incense upon the altar were pleasing and came up with acceptance (see Rev. 8. 3). There are no prayers that are either heard, owned, accepted, regarded, or rewarded, but such as Christ puts His hand to. If Christ doth not mingle His blood with our sacrifices, our services, they will be lost, and never ascend as incense before the Lord. No coin is current that hath not Caesar’s stamp upon it; and no prayers go current in heaven that have not the stamp of Christ upon them. There is nothing more pleasing to our heavenly Father, than to use the mediation of His Son. Such shall be sure to find most favour and to speed best in the court of heaven, who still present themselves before the Father with Christ in their arms of faith.

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I owe my heaven to Christ, and do desire, although I should never enter the gates of the New Jerusalem, to send my love and praises over the wall to Christ.

*Samuel Rutherford*

## THE WONDROUS WORKS OF GOD

*By J.W. Sperling-Tyler (1912-1989)*

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“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder” (Isa. 9. 6).

I am persuaded that the Lord will never forsake us utterly. We have celebrated His birth: O the prospect we have as we wait for His second advent! Be not faint hearted: look to Jesus. He reigns. O the brightness of our prospect! Soon He will turn the night to day, weeping to rejoicing, distress to singing and melody. You will prove how the Lord has appeared for you because Jesus reigns: the government is upon His shoulder. This is a clarion note; it is not an uncertain sound. Listen to the trumpets sound and your soul will be made joyful in the Lord.

Look at this: “His name shall be called Wonderful.” “Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things” (Psa. 72. 18). The Lord will do wondrous things for you. You have the promise and the expectation of it, the trial and the enjoyment of it, and the trial will be sanctified to capacitate your soul for the enjoyment. I will give you a word from the Lord. When the Lord turns your captivity He will give you twice as much as before. “Wondrous things.” You will look on and say, “This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes” (Psa. 118. 23); “Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things” (Psa. 72. 18), and these things will excite you to everlasting praise and wonder throughout eternity.

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## THE SURE REFUGE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

*By Charles Bridges (1794-1869)*

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“The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” – margin: set aloft (Prov. 18. 10).

Consciousness of danger induces even the animal creation to seek for refuge. To man, a strong tower offers such a covert. But man as a sinner – does he realise his imminent peril – his threatening ruin? O let him believe and embrace the testimony of the gospel! This glorious manifestation of the name of the Lord shows to him a strong tower. The full declaration of this name sets out most powerfully the extent and completeness of the refuge. Every letter adds confirmation to our faith. Every renewed manifestation brings a fresh sunbeam of light and blessing. Sense of danger – knowledge of the way – confidence in the strength of the tower – all give a spring of life and earnestness to run into it. We fear not here the sharpest or swiftest dart that may be shot against

us. We realise our security from external trouble, and in trying exercises of faith! We are safe from His avenging justice, from the curse of His law, from sin, from condemnation, from the second death. We joy in our safety – yea, in our exaltation. Our best interests are beyond the reach of harm; and the righteous nation takes up the song of triumph: “We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.”

But only the righteous are found here. What know the ungodly of this refuge? Our God’s mercy is holy mercy. He knows how to pardon sin, not to protect it. He is a sanctuary to the penitent, not to the presumptuous. What joy is it, that the gates of this city are always open. No time is unseasonable. No distance, no feebleness, hinders the entrance. The cripple may run, like Asahel, swift of foot. All that enter are garrisoned to salvation. Satan is raising batteries against the fort, using all means to take it, by strength or stratagem, unwearied in his assaults, and very skilful to know his advantages. But notwithstanding all his disturbing power, “the peace of God” daily fortifies our hearts from fear of evil. Such is our strong tower! What owe we to our gracious Saviour, who has made our way to it so free, so bright? We repose in the bosom of God, and are at peace.

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### THE PRAYER ON MOUNT CARMEL

*From Elijah the Tishbite*

*by Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacker (1796-1868)*

*(Concluded from page 345)*

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2. When Ahab was gone, Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; in spirit, however, we find him descending into the valley of humiliation. On Carmel’s summit, where all was calm and still, as in a solitary closet, no unbidden guests followed him; there he could converse uninterruptedly with the Lord. On the top of Carmel, too, he could the sooner perceive if his prayer was heard; and he stood there, as on a lofty watchtower, from whence he could widely survey both sea and land. However, he does not seem to have made much use of this commanding view; for, on reaching the summit, he kneels down, closes his eyes, bends his head forwards towards his knees, and in this posture he begins to address the Lord, and to pray for rain. Behold him! Would it be supposed that this is the man who, a short time before, stood upon Carmel as a vicegerent [one with delegated authority] of God, seemingly empowered with a command over the elements? Yet he now humbles himself in the dust, under the feeling of his own poverty and weakness. What does his whole demeanour express but abasement and consciousness of his littleness and unworthiness!

But it was the will of God that we should for once behold His great prophet in such a situation, and overhear him in his closet, in order to teach us where his strength really lay; to show us that it has been God's rule, from ancient times, to work with weak instruments, and to do wonders by bruised reeds, in order that we might see whence even an Elijah derived his greatness, and not be tempted to place the honour and glory upon the head of man, instead of laying it at the feet of Him to whom it belongs; and that we might feel the force of that encouraging sentence of the Apostle James, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." When Elijah stood before the people, he was God's ambassador, and as such, had to speak and to act in virtue of his high commission; but when he stood before God, he was a poor sinner and a worm, who was only able to live by mercy, and had nothing to demand, but was obliged to beg everything at the throne of grace. On the summit of Carmel the feeling of his unworthiness seems to have quite overwhelmed him. How could it be otherwise, when he looked back upon the events of that day, and upon the whole course of his life to that moment! What success had been granted him, in the fulfilment of his desires and prayers. What succour, what preservation, what answers had he experienced! And who was he? He will have it confessed before God and men, how unworthy he is of the least of all these mercies; how willing he is to regard himself as the chief of sinners. And in this consciousness, he appears before the Lord, entreating again a new wonder, although the altar is still smoking from the fiery testimony which the Lord at his request had so recently given.

When Elijah had wrestled awhile with God in the depth of self-abasement and poverty of spirit, in a manner which perhaps few of us know from experience – for all believers do not tread in a path of such a deep and thorough humiliation – he said unto his servant, "Go up now," that is, to the declivity of the mountain, "and look towards the sea!" He placed him, as it were, on the watchtower, to look out and inform him when his prayer was beginning to be answered by a sign of rain becoming visible in the distant horizon. For he was certain of a favourable answer, in faith on the word and truth of Him who had said to him at Zarephath, "Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth!"

The servant went, looked out in the distance, and cast his eyes about on all sides; but the sky was as clear as crystal – not a cloud to be seen. He came back, and said, "I see nothing." But it is a matter of daily experience, that help does not appear at the first cry, nor is the harvest reaped the moment after the sowing time of prayer. This is certainly not agreeable to flesh and blood; but, spiritually considered, it is very

salutary. What would be the consequence, if God's treasures were always open to us at our first knocking? Should we not then seem to be rulers and commanders in the city of God, and forget our dependent condition? Should we not be in danger of making an idol of our prayer, as the Israelites made of the brazen serpent, and think it is our prayer that effects all: that in it we possess a secret charm, a divine rod, or a legal claim upon the bounty of God? We should soon become self-sufficient. Therefore our gracious God does not always appear to hearken to the first cry, but lets us generally stand awhile at the door, so that once and again we are obliged to say, "I see nothing." We ought then to reflect a little, and become deeply conscious that we have, in reality, nothing to claim, but that all is mere unmerited favour. If we make our first approach to His footstool in the character of just persons, He keeps us back until we feel that we are poor sinners, unworthy petitioners, and are ready to say, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Such is His method.

"There is nothing," said the servant. But our praying Elijah does not despair. The reason why we generally so easily grow weary, and so soon cease from praying, is because we are not sufficiently in earnest for the blessing we implore. This, however, was not the case with Elijah. He therefore bids the servant to "Go again seven times." But why precisely seven times? Does it mean only several times, or is there here any particular emphasis in the number of seven? And why was the servant thus to go again and again? What would it avail him to hear every time, "There is nothing"? O it stimulated the prophet's ardour – it animated him to wrestle the more earnestly with God – it made him still less and less in his own eyes, and drew forth deeper and deeper sighs from his contrite soul. How would his fervour in prayer thus augment from one minute to another!

To obtain a speedy hearing is much more agreeable to our natural feelings, but waiting long is far more beneficial for us. Those are the most blessed spots on the face of the earth where prayer is wont to be made with the greatest fervency and perseverance. During this process of persevering prayer, our corrupt nature receives the most painful and deadly blows; the heart is then most thoroughly broken up, and prepared for the good seed of the Word; the remains of self-love are then demolished the most effectually; the chambers of imagery are then the most properly cleansed; the foundation of truth in the soul is laid deep, and when the answer comes at length, how great is the joy!

3. The servant returns the seventh time, and says, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." Elijah's prayer is answered! It is true, it is only a little cloud at first – hardly visible. But, when God gives the firstfruits, He gives the harvest in due time. If



thou hast received a little grace, rejoice! thou hast hereby a pledge that thou shalt receive more. If there be something of His Spirit in thee, know that abundance of grace is in reserve for thee. Forgiveness is a pledge of adoption, and renewal of spirit commenced will be carried on, through faith, unto the day of Christ. Therefore let every sincere Christian rejoice, who sees in himself or in others a little cloud of divine grace. Let him but continue instant in prayer, and the blessing shall increase abundantly.

And the prophet said unto his servant, "Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not." Thus was literally fulfilled what Elijah had said: "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Therefore the Lord did not let the full shower come all at once – but, first of all, a little cloud that was scarcely visible, that Elijah might have time to announce the approaching rain to the king, that the rain might come at the word of the prophet; and that it might be fully apparent that Jehovah, the God of Elijah, was the Governor of the world. The servant comes to the king, who perhaps was stationed in a pavilion upon the mountain, whilst the sky is still clear and seems to promise anything but rain. "Prepare thy chariot," was the message; "get thee down, that the rain stop thee not"! "Rain!" would the astonished guests exclaim; "Rain!" would the people cry, full of joyful hope; and scarcely had they lifted up the eyes, when every region of the sky seemed to reply, "Yea, and amen; abundance of rain!"

Dark thunder-clouds ascend out of the sea, one after the other; the heavens become black, the wind sets all the sea in motion, roars through the forests, and a violent storm pours down upon the land. O welcome streams! refreshing floods! The face of the earth is renewed, and all nature rejoices. A breath of life breathes over the fields, wood and meadow are clothed with new verdure, the birds resume their music in the branches, and man, and beast, and everything seems as if resuscitated. The voice of rejoicing is heard in the dwellings of the righteous, and joy fills the hearts of the godly. Ahab is already seated in his chariot, and on his way to his royal seat in Jezreel. But "the hand of the LORD was on Elijah." Jehovah invigorated him with supernatural bodily powers, so that the prophet, girding up his loins, ran before Ahab's chariot, which doubtless was at full speed, on account of the deluging rain. The prophet was now a living memorial to the king, to remind him of all the great things which the God of Israel had brought to pass by his prophet; that Ahab might not easily forget them, but carry the fresh impression of them to Jezebel. Elijah therefore outran the chariot before his eyes, through all the torrents of rain and tempest, till he came to the entrance of Jezreel.

The Apostle James, as we have before noticed, adduces this instance of Elijah's success in prayer as an encouragement to us to persevere in prayer, and to believe that we also shall not fail of being answered, if we only pray in faith; because, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5. 16). And indeed, who can recount all the wondrous instances in which the truth of this declaration has been realised! Through prayer, Moses turned away the fierce wrath of the Almighty from Israel; with outstretched arms he smote the host of Amalek; and Manoah, by the voice of his cry, drew down a visible manifestation of the divine presence in human form (see Judg. 13. 8). Through prayer at Mizpeh, the prophet Samuel smote the army of the Philistines, and caused the thunder of terror to roll over Israel's foes (see 1 Sam. 7. 9-12). Through prayer, Josiah the prince died in peace (see 2 Kings 22. 19, 20). Through prayer, fifteen years were added to Hezekiah's life; the three men were preserved in the burning fiery furnace; and to Daniel it was said by Gabriel, "I am come for thy words." At the prayer of the brethren on the day of Pentecost, the heavens were opened; and, another time, after they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and all were filled with the Holy Ghost (see Acts 4. 31). Prayer burst the fetters of Peter, and broke open the doors of his prison. Prayer rebuked storms, healed the sick, and brought back the dead to life.

And what shall I say more of the power, the wonders, and the performances of prayer – the whole Scripture is full of them. And our church also would be full of them – all Christendom would be full of them, were there more prayer in our Israel, and more of this incense on our public, family and private altars. But prayer sleeps amongst us; for what we call praying, morning and evening, according to custom – the sleepy, dull, and heartless repetition of devotional language – does not deserve the name of prayer. Keep these ceremonious compliments to yourselves, the Lord does not want such service. The confessions of the broken and contrite heart, the cry of the humble, the expression of real, godly sorrow, the opening of our cares to our heavenly Father, the breathings of grateful love, the acknowledgment of dependence on the name of Jesus – these are the things which go to constitute true prayer.

Brethren, pray that the Spirit of grace and supplication may be poured out upon you; and then ask what you will, it shall be done for you. He that "cannot lie" has promised it. Only ask in His name, as the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, trusting in God's faithfulness to His promises, and you will certainly succeed at last. If six times the answer should be, "There is nothing," yet wait on. The seventh time, which is the proper and the Lord's time, will give the answer you need. Too often we omit to notice God's answer to our own prayers, otherwise

how often should we find, to our glad astonishment, that, at the time of our supplication, the commandment had gone forth to help us. Therefore let the call to prayer be ever regarded by us as the invitation to an unspeakable privilege. Continue instant in prayer. Pray in the Spirit, in the Holy Ghost, and not in your own self-sufficiency, and you will pray with power. Pray for yourselves, pray for all, and pray with faith and expectation; for in the immutable Word, that Word which must survive both heaven and earth, it stands recorded, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you" (John 16. 23). Amen.

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### POOR JOSEPH

*By Edmund Calamy (1600-1666)*

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A poor, unlearned man, named Joseph, whose employment was to go on errands and carry parcels, passing through London streets one day, heard psalm-singing in the house of God, and went in, having a large parcel of yarn hanging over his shoulders. It was Dr. Calamy's church, St. Mary's, Aldermanbury. A well-dressed congregation surrounded the doctor. He read his text from 1 Timothy 1. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." From this he preached, in the clearest manner, the ancient and apostolic gospel, the contents of this faithful saying, that there is eternal salvation for the vilest sinners, only through the worthiness of Jesus Christ, the God that made all things. Not many rich, not many noble are called by this doctrine, says the apostle; but "God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty."

While the lively and thoughtless part of the congregation listlessly heard this glorious truth – and, if they were struck with anything, it was only with some fine expression or well-turned sentence that the doctor uttered – Joseph, in rags, gazing with astonishment, never took his eyes from the preacher, but drank in with eagerness all he said; and trudging homeward, he was heard thus speaking with himself: "Joseph never heard this before; Jesus Christ, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners like Joseph; and this is true; and it is a 'faithful saying.'"

Not long after this, Joseph was seized with a fever, and was dangerously ill. As he tossed upon his bed his constant language was, "Joseph is the chief of sinners; but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and Joseph loves Him for this." His neighbours who came

to see him, wondered, on hearing him always dwell on this, and only this. Some of the religious sort addressed him in the following manner: "But what say you of your own heart, Joseph? Is there no token for good about it? No saving change there? Have you closed with Christ, by acting faith upon Him?" "Ah, no," says he, "Joseph can act nothing – Joseph has nothing to say for himself but that he is the chief of sinners; yet, seeing that it is a 'faithful saying,' that Jesus, He who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, why may not Joseph, after all, be saved?"

One man, finding out where he heard this doctrine, on which he dwelt so continually and with such delight, went and asked Dr. Calamy to come and visit him. He came, but Joseph was now very weak, and had not spoken for some time, and though told of the doctor's arrival, he took no notice of him; but when the doctor began to speak to him, as soon as he heard the sound of his voice, he instantly sprang upon his elbow, and seizing him by his hand, exclaimed as loud as he could with his now feeble and trembling voice, "O, sir, you are the friend of the Lord Jesus whom I heard speak so well of him. Joseph is the chief of sinners; but it is a 'faithful saying,' that Jesus Christ, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, and why not Joseph? Oh! pray to that Jesus for me, pray that He may save me: tell Him that Joseph thinks that he loves Him for coming into the world to save such sinners as Joseph."

The doctor prayed. When he concluded, Joseph thanked him most kindly; he then put his hand under his pillow and took out an old rag, in which were tied up five guineas,\* and putting it into the doctor's hand (which he had kept all this while close in his), he thus addressed him: "Joseph, in his folly, had laid up this to keep him in his old age; but Joseph will never see old age: take it, and divide it amongst the poor friends of the Lord Jesus; and tell them that Joseph gave it them for His sake who came into the world to save sinners, of whom he is the chief." So saying, he reclined his head. His exertions in talking had been too much for him, so that he instantly expired.

Dr. Calamy left this scene, but not without shedding tears over Joseph, and used to tell this little story with much feeling, and as one of the most affecting occurrences he ever met with. It suggests the following observations:

1. Let us admire the power of divine grace. The whole congregation, whether rich or poor, were sinners in the sight of the holy God, and stood equally in need of that salvation which by the gospel was preached to them. But while the thoughtless assembly heard it with

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\* A guinea was twenty-one shillings in pre-decimal currency – a large amount in those days.

inattention, the Word of God came with “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” to the heart of Joseph, and fixed his attention to its infinite importance. To what can we ascribe this difference, but to the free grace of Him who hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes, and hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?

To display the riches of this grace, the apostle tells us that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, for the express purpose that no flesh should glory in His presence, but that he that glorieth should glory *only in the Lord*. This is very different from the general views of men. There is a proneness in men, when convicted of sin, to go about to establish a righteousness of their own, not submitting to the righteousness of God; while others endeavour, by their own exertions, to make their hearts better, and so prepare them for the reception of Christ. Joseph had no idea of such a way of salvation. When asked about his heart, if there was no token for good about it, no saving change there, “Ah,” said he, “Joseph has nothing to say for himself, but just that he is the chief of sinners; but it ‘is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’”

2. The gospel, when received, produces love to God and to His people. Joseph had received the word, not as the word of men, but – as it is in truth – the word of God, and it wrought effectually in his believing it. He experienced the truth of the apostle’s assertion, “We love Him, because He first loved us.” “O pray,” said he, “to that Jesus for me; pray that He may save me! Tell Him that Joseph thinks that he loves Him for coming into the world to save such poor sinners as Joseph.” It was a sense of the love of Christ manifested in saving sinners, that first attracted his attention, drew forth his warmest affections, and occupied all his thoughts. A sense of the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, always produces love, and this is shown by universal obedience to the will of God, and studying to adorn the doctrine of God by a life and conversation becoming the gospel. Joseph could not now manifest his love to God in this way, but he does it by showing love to His people, and that *because* they were the friends of Jesus. When he heard Dr. Calamy’s voice, he exclaimed, “O sir! you are the friend of the Lord Jesus whom I heard speak so well of Him, *and whom I love for what you said of Him*”; and to this profession of love he added a substantial proof, in giving to the poor friends of Jesus all he possessed in the world.

3. The gospel is sufficient to support the mind in the immediate prospect of death. Joseph did not comfort himself with the thought that he was no worse than his neighbours, and therefore, as God was merciful, he would be safe enough. The atonement of Christ was the only ground of his hope and confidence, in the view of death, judgment and eternity. Being justified by faith, he had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God.

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Think of this, ye that forget God. Remember that your breath is in your nostrils, and perhaps this night your soul may be required of you. Be entreated to consider your ways, and seek grace to flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel. *Slightly adapted*

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### WHAT IS IT TO BE A BELIEVER?

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Chapel House,  
Mayfield.

October 30th, 1925

My dear Friends,

I hope you are both kept in an exercised state relative to things belonging to a never-ending eternity. “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” – that is days are fast slipping away and we know not what awaits us, therefore the need of redeeming time, snatching it as it were, lest all our time is taken up with the things of time and sense. To be well exercised is to redeem the time, and if exercised upon the greatest of all matters, viz. to be accepted in the Beloved, we shall be found in secret prayer, and often in the multitude of our thoughts these concerns will be uppermost. This is such a day of hurry, and so many things crowd in upon us, and like Martha, we are so careful and troubled about many things that we forget the one thing needful, till conviction sets in and then we realise where we are and the needs be of spiritual life.

I was speaking from “As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed” on Sunday. I felt what an important matter to know whether we were indeed believers, as eternal life was evidenced thereby. It came to me like this: “What is it to be a believer?” And the answer is: To be brought under the power of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. I could see that if one was really brought into a needy, destitute place and had no hope or help out of Christ, and therefore longed for an interest in His finished work, that was the nature of true, saving belief; it was the power of the gospel in thus giving repentance unto life. Also where this faith was – “For he that cometh to God must

believe that He is” – there would be sooner or later an entrance into the death of Christ as the only satisfaction for sins and acceptance with God, and as soon as a soul believes into that death, forgiveness would be realised and peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Such then, would be a believer in the fullest sense, “and they from faith to faith would go till they naught but Christ should know.”

This new wine is first put into new bottles; that is, life would be in the soul to receive the truths of the gospel to be nourished thereby. If the gospel is received only in judgment, it is like the old bottles that must burst and spill the contents. “However weak the life of God is in the soul, it will hold whatever the spirit of God reveals,” and as regards myself it seems but a small measure indeed.

Yours sincerely,

C. Sawyer

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### THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervev Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 314)*

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The Lord’s supper is an ordinance properly observed by baptized believers in church communion, and is a service of commemoration setting forth, in God-given symbols of bread and wine, the precious, sin-atoning death of the dear Redeemer; the bread representing Christ’s body, the wine setting forth His blood. The institution of this ordinance as recorded in Holy Scripture manifests the loving care of Christ for His dear church and people, with whom, through a believing partaking, He frequently manifests His presence and approval. The infinite virtue of Christ’s death in satisfying the awful justice of God whose vindictory, penal wrath fell without mitigation upon the Surety’s sacred and devoted head, and the consequent deliverance of His unworthy people, was typified in the Passover, of which the Lord Jesus on the eve of His sufferings partook for the last time. Immediately thereafter, He instituted the ordinance of His supper which is to be continually observed in the church as “shewing forth His death, till He come” (see 1 Cor. 11. 26). As Christ’s death delivers from the wrath of God (which is the second death), so He is called in reference thereto, “Christ our Passover ... sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5. 7), superseding the Jewish rite by His supper to celebrate that by His one sacrifice He actually effected the expiation of all His people’s sins for ever and thus became their shelter from the wrath due to them in a broken law.

Faith, when strengthened by the Holy Ghost unto an appropriation of Christ, says,

“How then can wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in Thy righteousness  
And sprinkled with Thy blood?”

“If Thou hast my discharge procured,  
And freely in my room endured  
The whole of wrath divine,  
Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,  
And then again at mine.” (H. 227)

This confidence of faith and enjoyment of peace, being the effect of Christ’s sufferings and death brought home to the conscience by the Holy Ghost, will ever be accompanied with true repentance, and tempered with a humble, reverent, chastened spirit. When in such a spirit the ordinance is attended to, it is far removed from a mere, formal rite, and becomes one of the most sacred privileges of church membership, and a means of strengthening the bond of love between the children of God. But a careless, unexercised participation, lies under the awful sentence, “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11. 27). Here the distinction between “unworthily” and “unworthy” must be carefully observed. For who in himself is worthy? Perilously near presumption would be that communicant who partook of the Lord’s supper asserting his personal worthiness. “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (verse 28). The result of that examination undertaken under the direction and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, will be to discover afresh the need of the efficacy of the atonement of Christ, and to awaken new hunger after His righteousness – the very spiritual substance of the ordinance. In such a state a humbled sinner, being a baptized believer, is welcomed to communicate at the “feast,” and such will seek by faith to receive the substance with the sign. But guile, malice, discord, prejudice, jealousy, envy, anger, pride – any sin nursed or allowed, prohibits an approach to this solemnity, which, as it is an outward profession of communion, becomes, in such circumstances, an act of hypocrisy.

The manner of administration usual among us we believe approaches as nearly as possible to the scriptural direction and example. “The bread which we **break**,” not cut. “This is My body which is broken for you.” “The **cup**,” not individual cups. “Drink ye all of it,” – “all ye drink of the wine from the one cup”; “This cup is the New Testament in My blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Properly, our churches do not administer the ordinance to members of churches not



of the same faith and order, to do which is to introduce confusion and to weaken denominational witness. At the same time, we ever should bear in mind that spiritual communion of heart is possible between the truly godly even when church communion is debarred on the ground of order. A sincere explanation of this principle on the one hand and a candid recognition of it on the other, has frequently preserved in peace that spiritual union existing between children of God who differ on this very important though not essentially vital point. Nor is this compromise. Godly fear does not dictate the yielding of principle for the sake of peace, but it does inculcate an “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4. 3).

It is the duty of every candidate for membership to become acquainted with our doctrinal position and order as clearly set out in our Articles of Faith and from time to time in this magazine; and with the Scriptural Rules which have been formulated for the practical guidance of our churches. These we propose to consider, with the officers of a gospel church, in a future number.

*(To be continued)*

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## REMINISCENCES OF A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF GOD

*The writings of Joseph Azor Short, member of the church at Chippenham, and for many years a faithful minister of the gospel, who died on June 14th, 2004, aged 91*  
*(Concluded from page 352)*

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“There was still the constant exercise concerning the ministry; then towards the end of the year the Lord dropped these words with power: ‘For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the Judge: He putteth down one and setteth up another.’ I wondered what these words did mean. The next day on October 18th, as I was reading my Bible whilst eating my lunch at work, these words seemed to stand out from the page: ‘And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest’ (Jer. 45. 5).

“I felt the Lord was now going to do something, and I watched day by day as to what it meant? On January 23rd, 1957, I was elected to be a deacon, and felt such a child, but the two verses previously mentioned were partly for this matter to keep me from wrong thoughts and trace it to the Lord’s appointments. I had to look to Him for grace and help, which was much needed as our aged pastor was failing very much.

"I went along now for some time feeling the weight of being called to office, sometimes almost crushed. The Lord would permit this and that evil to come to pass and Satan was permitted to discourage me, but it drove me to the throne of grace, and none of the people knew how I was walking. Some I believe looked for my faltering, but I believe the Lord delivered me, again and again.

"About this time the Lord gave another precious promise: 'For I will give thee a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist' (Luke 21. 15). This was another token that the Lord intended to set me upon the walls of Zion and make me a minister. But now the devil was often permitted to molest me and turn one and another against me. It became a very solitary path where there was one, and only one, source of deliverance. There was one minister with whom I had liberty to speak, but I said nothing to him of my exercises concerning the ministry.

"In July 1957 the Lord was pleased to lead me to these words which are found in Ezekiel 44. 5: 'And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.'

"This made a great impression on me inasmuch as when I arrived at work in the morning, I straightway found it again in the Bible. I can only describe the effect it had upon me as thus: 'And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried.' There was a very solemn command from the Lord regarding the ministry. Two or three years now followed of being 'emptied from vessel to vessel'; sometimes there would be a sweet revelation of some portion of His Word and sweet meditation, and then feeling to know practically nothing of God or the plan of salvation; begging and crying for the power of the Holy Ghost, sometimes hot, very often cold, and alone, and a great part of the evils of one's heart being stirred up; just a few I could call my friends. Then one day one of the Lord's servants said to me he wondered if the Lord was preparing me for the ministry. I tried to put it off, but afterwards I had to tell him the truth, and begged him to say nothing as I had expressed a desire of God that no man should have anything to do with it if it could please Him.

"Then about this time the Lord said to me, 'Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand' (Isa. 33. 19). At times I trembled and tried to put it out of one's mind; the devil and my carnal heart would often say, You have no strength, which was true, for the Lord had taken it all away. I had to beg for strength; I was like Jacob

when he passed over Penuel and still am; the Lord had touched me, and then the devil and my heart would say, 'That it would be better to go on how you are, forget about it.' But here and there in the ministry the Lord would cause one of His servants to drop a word, and the fire would burn again.

"There was still more preparation. A minister had been preaching one Sunday evening at Chippenham chapel, and after the service I asked if he would come home and have a cup of tea before he went on his journey. So he came round, and while my wife was making the tea, he said, 'Joe, I have had these words hanging over me for some time and I do not know yet what they mean.' Luke 22. 31 and 32: '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.' It proved that he was 'the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message.'

"It was a word for me as I had been in heavy trial for months, and it concerned others beside myself. I tried to take it to the Lord, and one day I thought I had a word from the Lord, Psalm 105. 14: 'He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes.' The very same day I received this word, I went and put my own hand to the matter. O what condemnation! The Lord brought me before Him as a guilty wretch. I thought I should go to hell, having been convinced of sinning, not against man, but against God. I was afraid to go to sleep lest I woke in hell, but that night He put a cry in my heart and mouth: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' What vehemence in those cries none but those who have passed this way can know. The morning came and I staggered off to work still begging for mercy. Some time after arriving, the Holy Spirit put another cry in my heart and lips: 'Behold, I am vile.' It was not long, to my amazement, before, to the eyes of my faith, the Holy Spirit led me to Calvary, where from the foot of the cross I saw Jesus and He looked at me. There was no anger in His face, but a look of pity and compassion and love. O how this broke my heart, what peace flowed into my soul! This was in a workshop full of men; not one spoke to me till the third day after, but they knew something had happened. The words sweetly and powerfully flowed into my soul: 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom. 8. 1). I could say with the apostle, 'And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time' (1 Cor. 15. 8). When I arrived home that evening, as soon as I went into our house my wife said to me, 'Has He come?' I could only nod my head. A few days after I asked her why she had asked the question and she smiled and said, 'Moses wist not that his face shone.' O the love and mercy of our condescending God! The words also came

while I was at work that great day: ‘They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced,’ and it was my sins which had nailed Him to the tree, and the hymn of John Newton was the language of my soul.

‘I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His cross I stood.

‘Sure never till my latest breath  
Can I forget that look;  
It seemed to charge me with His death,  
Though not a word He spoke.

‘My conscience felt and owned the guilt,  
And plunged me in despair;  
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,  
And helped to nail Him there.

‘A second look He gave, which said,  
‘I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou mayst live.’ (H. 1025)

“I wept, I loved, and I could say He loved me; this lasted for two days. I wondered if this was the time come at last, but no, I must wait for a longer period, being emptied from vessel to vessel, sometimes being favoured to have some portion of His Word opened up to my soul, and meditating therein oftentimes. At other times the Bible was a sealed book, not knowing what I read, sometimes not even able to read; all confusion within and without. Sometimes having a sermon preached to me by dying saints upon their last bed of affliction, and out of all these times and exercises desiring, above all things, that I might know and receive the anointing of the Holy Ghost; being made conscious that this, and this alone, was needful.

“I must now come to the year 1962. I felt inwardly persuaded that the time was drawing nigh, but if it came to pass, as I felt it must, how was I to journey from one place to another not being able to drive myself? This was the exercise of the last half of 1961. Then the Lord provided a car for my son James, and when the time did come, gave him a willing heart to take me wherever I had to go.

“I went one Friday evening in February to St. Andrews Hospital in Chippenham to see some of the Lord’s children who were there, and while I was there I met one of the Lord’s servants. He came and spoke to me and said that he found that he was booked for two different little chapels on the following Sunday afternoon. Could I help as I had sometimes taken a service, reading a sermon when there was no minister? But I felt very reluctant to go, and he said, ‘Do as you feel led, but I

should be glad if you would go to one of the places.' After a while I said that I would go with the Lord's help, for I needed this, to pray and read a sermon. I had hardly left him before it was repeated a number of times in me, you will have to preach. O what a place was I now in! I almost wished I had not met him (dear friend that he was).

"Immediately the Lord dropped these words with such power into my soul that I trembled and yet rejoiced: 'And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Eph. 2. 1).

"All that Friday night and all the next day they were with me, reverberating through my whole being. If I walked in the fields, if I went in home, again when I went to bed Saturday night, again Sunday morning, they were too powerful to attempt to put from one's mind, and the Holy Spirit would open them up and the prayer would come to mind, 'You begged the Lord that no man should have any hand in this thing.'

"I could tell no one; the afternoon came and I told my wife that I had been asked to take the service at this little chapel at Hilperton. After a while she said, 'Whose sermon are you going to read?' I told her that I did not know, so to slay any more questions I went and took a book of sermons out of the bookcase, but not to look at; I could not open it. As the time drew near to leave for the chapel, Satan was permitted to attack my soul with words like these: 'When you get to the chapel you might feel different to what you do now. If I were you I would put that book of sermons in your pocket as you might be shut up.' For I had felt such boldness I could have stood before kings while the Lord the Holy Spirit opened up the Word.

"This was how I went, in much trembling. When I arrived at the little chapel, I gave out the hymn and read the chapter, begging the Lord either to lead me into His Word or stop me according to His will. After the hymn I said, 'Friends, I feel I shall have to speak to you as the Lord helps me,' and at once the Lord began to pour in His truth and it just flowed out. After the service no-one said a word. As I travelled home I came to a spot in the road where the Lord spoke these words with power into my soul, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' It was a gentle rebuke and yet a loving one. I knew what I had done wrong: I had taken the book of sermons.

"After the service at our chapel that night, I said to my brother deacon, 'Do not be surprised if you hear anything concerning me.' I left it at that. I went to the prayer meeting the following Wednesday evening, but he said nothing so I felt I had to tell him. But he could not seem to grasp the import or nature of it. I believe he said, 'It might wear off,' so I said, 'We will leave it for the time.' After a week he asked me how I felt, to which I replied that I still felt the exercise. He said he felt he could not deal with it, so suggested having a pastor, as our pastor,

Mr. Carr, was in the Home at Tunbridge Wells. He mentioned one name but I felt no drawing to him so I said, 'I will wait till after next Sunday.'

"The next Sunday Mr. Mortimer of Broughton Gifford was engaged to preach, if the Lord willed. O how I did beg of the Lord to make it plain! In due course the Lord's day came, and Mr. Mortimer took for his text in the morning, 'This year thou shalt die.' O what a time! I knew the chapter, Jeremiah 28. I had for a long time been afraid to read it when I lay on the sick bed, but when I did read it there was no condemnation for me. Till I read it my Bible would often open upon it, and I would turn from it.

"In the afternoon we went with Mr. Mortimer to a little chapel at Grittleton for the afternoon service, and he took for his text, 'Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live' (Jer. 38. 20). O how it all welled up again!

"In the evening he took for his text at Chippenham, 'Why sit we here until we die?' and there was I sitting upon the seat. It came with such power into my soul that I felt I must tell Mr. Shiles, the deacon, the matter must go forward. Mr. Mortimer turned aside in the sermon and said, 'We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace' (2 Kings 7. 9).

"After the service I said to Mr. Shiles that I felt I must go forward. As Mr. R. Kinderman of Manningford was expected to preach on the next Thursday evening, I resolved that if I felt the same I would tell him of my exercises, with a view to asking him if he would be in the chair at our church meetings, when the matter was raised. This was agreed. After hearing Mr. Kinderman preach the next Thursday evening, I ventured to tell him my exercises, and it was arranged that he should come and take the chair.

"A church meeting was called on March 9th, 1962 for me to give an account of God's dealings with me, which I was helped to do, and they decided that they would ask me to exercise the gift which God had given me.

"On March 30th, 1962, at a special church meeting by the request of the church I preached before them speaking from Deuteronomy 33. 27: 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.' At this meeting they were not all of one mind, and another church meeting was arranged, if the Lord willed, for April 12th.

"Before this church meeting commenced, I was asked to have a word of prayer in the vestry before we went into the chapel. I begged the Lord, 'Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence' (Psa. 17. 2). I felt that God must send a man to preach, not the church, but if God sent

a man He would set His seal upon it. At this meeting I spoke, as helped of God, from Colossians 2. 6: ‘As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.’

“After this meeting a vote was taken and all were in favour of my going forth in the Lord’s name, but one, and it was decided I should go forth, the church desiring the Lord’s blessing.

“But I felt I had not received the answer to my prayer, ‘Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence.’ However the doors began to open up, I having put my hand to none of them.

“About five months afterwards, at the close of a Sabbath day, when tired, weary and cast down, I crept out of the side door of the chapel where I had been preaching and a little old lady came and found me at the back of the chapel and said to me, ‘Mr. Short, I know one thing; the Lord has set you upon the walls of Zion.’ But it was not her voice I heard; it was the Lord answering my poor prayer. I have to say, ‘And having obtained help of God, I continue until this day.’”

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**What it means to be “Mortal” and why the Body of Jesus was Immortal**, by Henry Cole D.D., with a historical introduction by Matthew J Hyde; 115 pages; hardback; £8.95; published by the Huntingtonian Press and obtainable from 72a Upper Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4EB.

This book was published in 1827 by Dr. Henry Cole during the time that Edward Irving, a gifted London preacher with a large following, was proclaiming most erroneous sentiments about the Person of the Lord Jesus, and an appendix in this book gives a considerable extract from a letter by Dr. Cole to Edward Irving regarding his errors. In the years previous there had also been a lot of publications amongst Huntingtonian ministers expressing differing views about the use of the word “mortal” in respect of the body of the Lord Jesus. There was an extended review, of nearly thirty pages, of Dr. Cole’s writings by J.C. Philpot in the 1859 Gospel Standard.

We are constrained to “earnestly contend for the faith, once delivered to the saints” and yet to endeavour “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” And in seeking to walk in both of these together, we often find that some might use the same terminology as we do, but mean something completely different; again others use different terminology but in essence are contending for the same truths. And especially when considering the “mystery of godliness,” we often find that human language fails adequately to express the glory of the truths of the gospel.

Perhaps it is not surprising when all these things meet together, as in the subject of this book, that there have been difficulties and disagreements and

weaknesses as the historical introduction to the book shows. Dr. Cole defines what the word “mortal” means from its original roots and shows very clearly that this cannot be applied to the body of the Lord Jesus without implying serious doctrinal errors. So he concludes that the body of the Lord Jesus was immortal. Yet he does not define the meaning of “immortal,” and as J.C. Philpot pointed out, there are difficulties with using this word too in its normal meaning – we use the expression “an immortal soul,” for example, in the sense of something that can never die; yet the Lord Jesus did die, albeit by a voluntary laying down of His life (John 10. 17, 18). And some most ungracious conflict has arisen in the past over the use of the word “mortal,” with some simply meaning that the body of the Lord Jesus was capable of dying, though not subject to death through the curse of a broken law as all men are by nature.

We each need much grace to contend earnestly for the truth against those who oppose it, and to speak faithfully, yet to bear in love with others who in reality believe the same truth but may use words with different meanings, or do not really understand the implications of the words they do use.

John A. Ingham, Luton

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### THE ANGELS' SONG

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The song of the angels, when Jesus descended,  
 Was truth in its openings by prophets long told,  
 The shepherds did listen, the Pharisees scorned,  
 And wise men from far did their treasures unfold.

The angels attended when Christ was in danger,  
 And warned poor Joseph to Egypt to flee,  
 And brought Him again from the land of the stranger,  
 And watched o'er His childhood in wild Galilee.

The angels His agony saw in the garden  
 And watched o'er His wilderness conflict as well,  
 'Midst beams of Omnipotence saw the Jew harden  
 In asking His blood, on their offspring to dwell.

The angels the stone rolled away from His prison,  
 Inviting the saints to behold where He lay,  
 Assuring the dear, longing souls He was risen  
 And changed death and darkness to bright, shining day.

Yes, angels the story can tell of redemption,  
 And wonder and sing of the victories of Christ,  
 But sinners know best, of the glorious exemption  
 From death and damnation, and I with the rest.

A.B. Taylor (1804-1887)

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THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD

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Interim Editor: G.D. Buss (November to December)

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The year 2020 has been a tumultuous year for many reasons, and we would seek grace to humble ourselves under the just hand of God in those events which also have overtaken the *Gospel Standard* magazine, and in the changes which have ensued. This completes the 186th yearly volume of its witness.

It is our desire that the same standards of doctrine, experience and precept be adhered to, which have made the witness of the *Gospel Standard* distinctive over its long history until now, and we seek an interest in the prayers of our readers that divine guidance may be given as to its future editorship.

We would not lightly ask that the apostle's exhortation be followed: "Brethren, pray for us."

G.D. Buss (Interim Editor)