

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JANUARY 2021

---

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5. 6).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1. 9).

“The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded” (Rom. 11. 7).

“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” – “And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” – “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8. 37, 38; Matt. 28. 19).

---

AN OPENING WORD

---

Dear Friends,

One feels poorly qualified as Interim Editor in comparison with my predecessors, to address a few remarks to our readers as we enter upon a new year, but as such an address is customary, we trust our readers will bear with us as we would seek the Lord’s help to write a brief, seasonable word for the present times.

Rarely has there been such a year to look back upon as the year 2020. Internationally, nationally, in our churches and personally, the godly feel that the mighty hand of God is upon us. The wise man, Solomon, said: “And the living will lay it to his heart” (Eccles. 7. 2). Sadly, there seems scant evidence of such an exercise among the rulers of this world, and we have to mourn in a personal way, how little do we, like Rebekah, ask the question: “If it be so, why am I thus?” (Gen. 25. 22). Elihu, the one friend of Job who understood the signs of the times said, “He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy” (Job 37. 13). It was one of the first signs of repentance among Joseph’s brethren when they said, “What is this that God hath done unto us?” (Gen. 42. 28).

The pandemic which is a universal judgment of God, as in the days of Noah, is a solemn reminder to us that God does not wink at sin, and though in mercy He may delay judgment, yet there comes a moment when for His own honour and glory, the hand of divine chastisement must be felt. Nor must those who are spared think for one moment that it is because of any inherent goodness in themselves; rather as our Lord said when the tower of Siloam fell and killed many: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13. 5). Sadly, as in

the case of Pharaoh, the distress, in general, seems to have hardened men's hearts rather than bringing them to consider their ways.

For Great Britain, it has to be said that it is a wonder that God has not stretched out His hand against us before now. The blatant denial of God, His laws and His Word, and the sinister exclusion in many fields of those who fear His name by those who say, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," is an increasing offence to the God who has done such great things for us in generations past. We wait in vain for our leaders openly to recognise the hand of God, and their impotence in handling the present crisis, and to call for earnest and wrestling prayer. It was with sadness that we noted that our Queen, unlike her father King George VI, made no mention of the Christian faith or the need of prayer in her address during the first lockdown.

But what of our churches? Surely the Lord is displeased. Satan has been permitted to sow division and chaos among the Lord's people. Our ability freely to worship collectively in the Lord's house has been severely impacted, many of the Lord's people confined to their own homes in isolation, and though modern technology has enabled the truth to be disseminated in ways unheard of by our forefathers, we long for the days when God's people can unhindered again say with David: "I was glad when they said unto me; let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Psa 122. 1, 2). Like the captives in Babylon, we have had to hang our harps on the willow branches (see Psa. 137), but as one good man, now in glory, said: "They did not throw them away. They were yet to be used."

Perhaps one of the chief controversies the Lord has with us, is the scant appreciation of the privileges of public worship and the precious promises that appertain to the gathering of His people in His name. It would be a mercy if the present distress made our worship of the Lord's name more deeply exercised and spiritual. Further, there is a solemn and grievous danger that it is so easy to listen to a service in the home, without the effort of going to the Lord's house, that it becomes a substitute for collective worship. Paul rightly exhorts: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10. 25).

While we would not slavishly cling to tradition, yet we should guard against the removal of ancient landmarks. "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Prov. 22. 28). Landmarks were an important and necessary part of life in the desert and wilderness, as they were the only way of guiding travellers through unfamiliar terrain, without which they could easily lose their way. So we treasure the landmarks of those distinctive doctrines we love. Some would like these removed, but how exposed our churches would be to the influx of error

if they were to be removed. Sadly, in so many of those churches which once valued these landmarks, we see the solemn departure and its effects, sometimes in a very short space of time. Church order and inter-church fellowship is another landmark we should cherish as a group of churches. It was not a spiritually-prosperous time in Israel when, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21. 25), and our unity as a group of churches would be dangerously fragmented if that principle were to be followed among us. Likewise, the landmark of separation from the spirit and practice of the world is in danger of being removed. How each of us needs to be kept, lest by a loose profession of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we should be a stumbling block to others and bring reproach on that worthy name that we bear. We are reminded of the father who began climbing a cliff face, suddenly to find his young child was following also and in danger of falling to its death.

So, in so many ways we live in shaking times. The Apostle Paul tells us that the Lord permits things to be shaken that may be shaken, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain (see Heb. 12. 27). What a mercy to have that “little” which the righteous man has, from which he cannot be parted even in the most trembling times. David asks in Psalm 11. 3: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” The answer is given in the very next verse: “The LORD is in His holy temple.” This is where David looked to at Ziklag; where Jonah in his feelings looked to from the belly of hell; where godly Jehoshaphat looked to when his enemies were busy at the cliff of Ziz. It would be a wonderful mercy if out of this present distress we could say in due season: “Now know I that the LORD saveth His anointed; He will hear him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God” (Psa. 20. 6, 7).

There is blessed encouragement for the rightly-exercised in the words of Psalm 42: “Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him.” Though the valley of dry bones so aptly describes our present condition, may we not, like Ezekiel in chapter 37 of his prophecy, when asked, “Can these dry bones live?” reply “O Lord GOD, Thou knowest.” It was the breathing of the Holy Spirit which changed that valley from desolation to deliverance. This is our greatest need, both collectively and personally. “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits” (Song 4. 16). May we often hear the voice of our Beloved this year saying both personally and collectively: “I am come into My garden....” May He gather our scattered, dry and dead bones and cause our churches to live in 2021, and His dear name shall have all the praise, though the benefit be ours.

Whatever the sovereign will of God has in store for us in 2021, we may be assured of this: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2. 19).

Our thoughts go to our friends at home and abroad whose loyal and prayerful support is much valued.

The Lord be with you all.

With sincere Christian love,  
G.D. Buss (Interim Editor)

---

### **A SUITABLE PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR**

*Substance of a sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton, on Lord's day morning, December 10th, 1917*

---

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end” (Psa. 119. 33).

We are not told who the psalmist was whom the Holy Spirit inspired to write this longest chapter in the holy Word of God, and yet we can discern much about his character from the Psalm. There are perhaps three things we should mention. Firstly, it is very evident he had a great love and reverence for the Word of God. In one-hundred-and-seventy-four of the one-hundred-and-seventy-six verses, the Word of God is mentioned in one way or another. The Word of God was very precious to the psalmist, and if you and I have the same spirit in our heart that the psalmist had, then the Word of God will be precious to us – not just out of curiosity, not just because of the very interesting history that it unfolds, but something more than that. Jeremiah could say, and it is a wonderful thing if you can say it: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” It is a wonderful thing if you have in your heart, written by the Holy Spirit, even one sentence from this holy Book that you can call yours. Jeremiah said it was “*unto me*” – something very personal.

So the psalmist loved the Word of God, and the important point about the Word of God is that it was written by the Holy Spirit with one great end in view: to reveal the incarnate Word, God's beloved Son, God manifest in the flesh. One of the many names He bears is the Word. This is what makes the Scriptures precious, when we find Christ on the sacred page. Like John the Baptist in Luke chapter 1, when the mother of our Lord went to visit his mother, and he was yet in the womb, the

very sound of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ caused him to leap in the womb. Has your heart ever leaped as you have found something on the sacred page that spoke well of Christ, and your heart rose up at that word? "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend," of whom the word is speaking. Such are God's children and such are those being led by Him.

The second thing about the psalmist: he was a man of prayer. Very evidently if the Word of God is in your heart, it will make you a praying man, woman, boy, girl, by its very nature, because the Holy Spirit being who He is, making the Word spirit and life in the soul, brings forth those desires, those confessions, those exercises that are consistent with God's holy Word. It has often been the case, especially in the early part of a work of grace, where those in whom the Holy Spirit is working find the prayers of the dear people of God very helpful to them, feeling they cannot pray much themselves, and we still feel that, some of us, after many years of professing to pray. How often we come across prayers in God's holy Word which exactly suit us. That is a wonderful mercy, and it would be a great mercy if this prayer suits us: "Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."

The third thing about this Psalm: it begins with a very high note, a wonderfully high note: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in His ways," and so on. A very high standard is set through the Psalm by the Holy Spirit. Well, you come to the end of the Psalm, the very last verse, and see what the psalmist thinks as he looks back. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments." He did not want the standard lowered. He felt to come so far short himself. He felt like a lost sheep needing to be sought out, brought back.

There is a wonderful word in Isaiah 53 that just suits those who feel like the psalmist, who have come short. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." And we must pause there. "His own way" – the way of sin, the way of unbelief, the way of pride. "His *own* way." But then, "The Lord hath laid on *Him*" – that is the dear Lamb of God – "the iniquity of us all" – all His dear sheep. Have you ever felt a conflict about your own way? Perhaps even at this time and you look back over the year now ended and realise your way has not been as the Word of God instructed. It has not been consistent in thought and word and deed with the holy precepts. You feel guilty. You feel unworthy. "What am I to do? Where am I to look?"

Well, there is a remedy, and the remedy is to look to that One on whom the iniquity of those who have turned to their own way was

imputed, to see their iniquities put away at Calvary, washed away by His precious, sin-atoning blood. If you feel the power of that forgiving, loving, overwhelming mercy, you will hate the sin, but love the Lord for making a provision for that backsliding, wandering sinner that you and I are by nature. O what a mercy that word is in Hosea: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." It is the only word that suits feeling sinners. We have no merits, no good works to plead. Our own way has only brought shame and guilt on our conscience, and yet there is the answer as set forth in Isaiah 53.

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." It seems to me there are three things here for us to consider.

Firstly, a teachable spirit; secondly, the one and only way of salvation; and thirdly it seems the psalmist had a desire and a concern lest he should not keep it unto the end, lest he should be like Demas, who departed, "having loved this present world," or like Ahithophel, who walked with David in sweet counsel to the house of God, yet eventually hung himself. The root of the matter was so evidently not in him. God's children are tried.

"When any turn from Zion's way,  
(Alas, what numbers do!)  
Methinks I hear my Saviour say,  
'Wilt thou forsake Me too?'" (H. 999)

You perhaps look in your heart, and remember your own way. Where has it led you? Do you ever tremble where it might lead you to? Is it possible for such a rebel, such a wayward sinner as me to be saved? That is why the psalmist longed to know that he would be kept to the end. He believed this: if the Lord taught him, then he would be kept. That is the great point. "Who teacheth like Him?"

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes." There are two sorts of people who are very difficult to teach. There are those who think they know it all and do not need to be taught anything. There are such people, and they are so self-righteous and think it is demeaning to be taught. The others are those who do not want to learn. They have no interest in either the subject or the teacher. Those two characters even in natural things are very difficult to teach. It is even more so in spiritual things, for unless a change of heart is given, such are unteachable. Yet by nature we are like both of those. We are proud, independent, self-righteous creatures. We ought not to be, but we are, left to ourselves. What a mercy it is if you have asked God to give you a teachable spirit.

"Blessed are the meek." There is the Word of God. "Blessed are the meek" – those who are teachable. Let us be very clear, the old nature, the carnal mind, the natural mind that you have is unteachable.

That may sound a strange thing to say. But the Word of God stands by me. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." We have another word: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him." So, if we are to be teachable, what is needed? A new heart, a new spirit. Therein lies the root of the matter. The psalmist here had that new nature, that new heart that longed to be taught. "Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes." I am a poor, ignorant man, Lord. I am prone to wander. I make so many mistakes.

"If Thou should'st leave us, we must fall;  
Without Thee, cannot rise." (H. 679)

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes." There are many wonderful words in the Word of God, but here is one which the apostle wrote to the Corinthians, when he said, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." In other words, the Holy Spirit has written – engraved, we might say – the truth in the hearts of God's people. Now something that is engraved is permanent. Poor Job in the depth of his trouble said, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" His prayer was answered, and the words he wanted recorded were these: "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and all these thousands of years later, those words are remembered, and will be till the end of time. That was an engraved word. Sometimes we sing, and it takes some singing if we ponder the words,

"Jesus, engrave it on my heart,  
That Thou the one thing needful art;  
I could from all things parted be,  
But never, never, Lord, from Thee." (H. 1105)

Now engraving work is by its nature cutting work, and the Holy Ghost with the skill He has as the Imparter of the truth so engraves the truth on the heart of a child of God that it is permanently there. In the Book of Ecclesiastes Solomon said, "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it." Have you any of God's truth, not just in your mind but written in your heart? It is good to have it in your mind. There is an interesting historical fact concerning this Psalm. There was a man who was due to be executed; in those days it was the custom for the criminal to be allowed to say something before their execution. As a lad, his mother had taught him to learn the whole of Psalm 119, and so he started to recite this Psalm, and he got to the last section of it, when a horseman came up with the

king's pardon in his hand, and the man was not executed! He was very thankful he had learnt Psalm 119! I wonder if he had it in his heart though? It is a wonderful thing to be able to recite it, but how much more it is to have it in our heart!

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes." Are you saying that because you have made so many mistakes yourself? You have wandered; you have strayed; everything seems to go wrong; you realise you need a Guide; you need a Guard; you need a Keeper; you need Christ. Teach me, unworthy me, Lord. Yes, the slow learner that some of us feel to be. "Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes." It is personal, something that we need personally. So, you need a teachable spirit, and once you have a teachable spirit, then you begin to learn.

You think of the mad Gadarene, that untameable, unteachable man of whom we read in the Word of God, and until he met the Lord Jesus, no man could teach him. Then we find him sitting at the feet of Jesus, "clothed, and in his right mind" – the wonderful transformation grace had made! The point was, when you were sitting at someone's feet, you were learning. Mary sat at Jesus' feet. Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. In schools in those days, the pupils sat on the floor, literally at the teacher's feet. How much better to sit at the feet of Christ in humility! He sat at the feet of Jesus, "clothed, and in his right mind." What was his right mind? A teachable spirit.

Is there a poor rebel reading this? I am sure there is. We are all rebels by nature. The rebel finds it hard to submit to someone else's will. We are like that by nature. The Word of God tells us, "The rebellious dwell in a dry land." If you and I fight against God's will in any matter, who will have the last word? Not you. You will not succeed in that warfare. You need the grace of meekness. Lord, give me a teachable spirit. One of our hymns says,

"Rebellious thou hast been,  
And art rebellious still;  
But since in love I took thee in,  
My promise I'll fulfil." (H. 1032)

Lord, teach this poor, rebellious man. Teach him to be still. Teach him to believe. Teach him to repent. Teach him to hope. Teach him to love. Teach him to obey.

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes." How does the Lord teach? You might say, "Well, you have told us: The Holy Spirit is the divine Instructor," and He is, but the Lord Himself, the Holy Spirit, does use means. In Hezekiah's case, the Lord brought him into a great strait. Man is brought to nothing when the Lord puts his little finger upon us. Hezekiah was in a besieged city. He had no son and heir, and more than



that, he did not feel ready to die. His sins had not, to his satisfaction, been pardoned, and how could he face a holy God? It was his affliction that was used of God to make him teachable. As in this very psalm, (verse 71) the psalmist says: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." When the Lord heard his prayer, that short, expressive prayer: "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me," the Lord dealt with his literal sickness, He slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians, Sennacherib the king of Assyria departed, and He promised him a son and heir. But most of all, He pardoned his sins.

"Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back" – all of them. It is a big word. The more you go on in the way of faith, that word *all* will grow. You will be a much bigger sinner in your own sight as you grow in grace. Hezekiah's heart must have leaped for joy; it did. "The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day"; "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit."

So, Joseph had to pass through those times of hatred from his brethren, being thrown into a pit, sold as a slave, unjustly accused, languishing in a prison cell. Why were all these things taking place? "Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes." The hymnwriter said,

"I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith, and love, and every grace....  
But it has been in such a way  
As almost drove me to despair." (H. 295)

A way that stripped me of all my self-righteousness, all my independence, all my self-love, and put me as a needy, guilty sinner where the good hymnwriter came, and this is a meek, teachable person:

"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)

"Teach me, O LORD." There is none other can teach. Job said, "Who teacheth like Him?" None other can teach like the Lord teaches.

The second thing is, "The *way* of Thy statutes." It is unique, personal. It is personal in this sense: it is a way that is ordained for every child of God to walk. It is also reminding us there is only one way of salvation. "There is none other name ... whereby we must be saved." One of the blessed ways of looking at this second part of our text is this: to see how the Lord Jesus Christ, God's dearly-beloved Son, walked. He was "the undefiled in the way." He walked "in the law of the Lord." He delighted to do His Father's will. The statutes were precious to Him.

They were in His heart, and in His holy life, from its first to its last breath, He walked “undefiled in the way.”

Almost the first recorded words of the Saviour were, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” What was His Father’s business? “The way of Thy statutes.” That was His Father’s will. That was His Father’s delight, and that was the delight of the dear Lord Jesus Christ. If you walk in union with Him, then you too will delight in the way of His statutes, but realising you are continually coming short as a poor sinner, under the covenant of works there is no hope for you and me because of what we are by nature. We continually come short. What a mercy if we are led by the Spirit to be sheltering beneath the perfect obedience, righteousness, holiness of the dear Lord Jesus Christ! One said,

“This is the way I long have sought,  
And mourned because I found it not;  
My grief, my burden long has been,  
Because I could not cease from sin.

“The more I strove against its power,  
I sinned and stumbled but the more;  
Till late I heard my Saviour say,  
‘Come hither, soul, I AM THE WAY.’

“Lo! glad I come; and Thou, blest Lamb,  
Shalt take me to Thee as I am.” (H. 144)

Note that: “As I am,” in all my wretched state.

“Nothing but sin I Thee can give.”

Are you waiting to give something more than sin? You want to give a soft heart, a repenting spirit. These things come from God.

“If you tarry till you’re better,  
You will never come at all.” (H. 723)

We must come just as we are, and the Holy Spirit alone can enable us to do it.

“Nothing but sin I Thee can give,  
Nothing but love shall I receive.” (H. 144)

Has the Lord taught you that way?

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes” – the way of salvation, the way of “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” the way of which the Lord Jesus Himself spoke: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”

And the way of God’s statutes in this respect also. There is what is called a statute book on which the laws of the land are written. Well,

dear friends, God writes His law in the hearts of His people, and He gives them a love for it. Unless we love the law, we will not obey it; we will not keep it. Unless we love God's Word, we will not obey it or keep it. Unless we love the example of Christ, we will not obey it. It must come from a loving heart.

When I was a lad, I was brought up in a family with eight children, and there was a lot to be done. It was before the days of dishwashers, and so washing up was quite a task! I did not mind doing the washing, but the drying up I did not like at all! I did it, but I did not enjoy it, and it was not true obedience; it was not from the heart. How much of our obedience is from the heart, because we love the word we are obeying, we love the One who commanded it? That is the point. We will not keep God's ways unless we love them. Paul speaks of those who received not the love of the truth and therefore did not continue in it (2 Thess. 2. 10). How we need the Lord to give us a love for the truth, a love for His statutes, a love for His ways, a love for Him who is the Way. Then we will be inside our text in a right way.

The Lord Jesus Christ loved these statutes. He loved the law He was obeying, and He magnified it and crowned it with His own obedience. We read in the Hebrews, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." That is what you need; that is what I need – the Lord to write it in our hearts, write it where we will love it, where we will live it!

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." We do not obey to earn salvation. It is the fruit of grace in the heart – altogether different from trying to earn our salvation by works. It is a mercy when love in the heart constrains. "For love's sake."

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Friends, we do not often live in the spirit of that good hymn.

Now, says the psalmist, "Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." It seemed that underlying this was a concern lest after all he should make shipwreck of faith, after all he should be what the Word of God called "reprobate silver." If you went into a silver mine, you would find quite a lot of the spoil is turned aside, not needed. No doubt there are traces of silver in it, but it is useless. The Scriptures warn about being reprobate silver. We do want to be kept to the end. "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." We need to be kept.

Dear Peter thought he could keep himself, and he was full of love when he said it: "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." He meant it from the bottom of his loving heart, but he was not looking in the right place for strength, and he had to learn in a very sad way, a very necessary way. He came into Satan's sieve. Before that night was gone, he denied his Lord and added oaths and curses to it, until the Lord turned and looked on him – a look of reproach, but there was a look of love in it as well. It reminded Peter what the Lord had said to him: "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." Now friends, that is the secret of being kept: to be inside the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, if He is praying for us, interceding for us as He did for Peter.

You will notice – and it is a wonderful thought when you come into any trouble – the Lord prayed for him before he came into the trouble. The prayers of the Lord for Peter preceded the sieve. You will come into deep waters, and the prayers of the great High Priest have gone before you. "*I have* prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." You say, Didn't Peter's faith fail? His natural profession failed; his carnal man, his natural man failed; and yet there was a grain of living faith that could not fail because "what God does, He does for ever." That living grain of faith was in the hands of his dear Saviour, and that is a mercy.

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." I think of good John Kershaw in this respect. If ever a man walked a profession well by God's grace, he did, but his great concern was that in his last years, by some unwary step he might bring reproach on the name of Christ. He needed to be kept to the end – not nearly to the end – to the very last step when he would exchange "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." I remember visiting a friend who was within a few days of her end, and she said how amazing it was to have got to this very last point. What a miracle to be able to say on a dying bed, "It is well" – kept right to the end.

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." What God does is a permanent work. What He does is a lasting work. What God does is a work that endures the fires, the deep waters.

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end." Now one or two further things. The first is this: are you in that place where you feel you need teaching? Have you come to a point in your life, to say, Lord, I know not what to do, which way to take,

which way is the right way? You need our text – what Moses said when he came to a standstill: “Shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people.... For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us?” Moses needed teaching. He felt it. He needed guiding. Here is a text then, a word for those who have come to a point where they want to know the right way, what is the right thing to do, how to handle this thing that has come, this burden on your spirit.

“What wilt Thou have me to do?” That was the Apostle Paul’s first prayer. He had not asked that question before; he always thought that he knew what to do. But when he became meek, it was: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” When you pray that prayer, are you submissive to the answer? There was King Zedekiah, who asked what the word of the Lord was, and when he had it, he rebelled against it and would not obey. That is handling the Word of God deceitfully. If we really are meek, and say, “Lord, shew me now Thy way,” then we are made willing, whatever the answer. It is our desire to be found in that way and no other.

Secondly, this prayer never wears out. We will need teaching to our dying day. There is so *much* we do not know, so *little* that we do know. The Apostle Paul prayed that prayer near the end of his journey: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” The dear man still felt there was so much to be learned, and the nature of this teaching is that having learned a little, you want to learn more – more of a precious Christ, more of your need of salvation, more of the blessed Spirit. We need to be taught to the end of the journey.

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.” The mercy is, there is an end. I like that word in the Proverbs. We often neglect the Proverbs, and we should not do. There are many precious gems in that book. “Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.” It is a wonderful thing if God has given you an expectation, an end in view. And that end in view: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” – one that God has given you authority, a warrant to pray for, to expect. The psalmist puts it like this: “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.”

“Teach me, O LORD” – unworthy, weak, feeble, fallible me – “teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.”

## NEW YEAR SIXTY YEARS AGO – AND TODAY

*By B.A. Ramsbottom*

---

Sixty-four years ago I preached for the first time on the first Lord's day in the year. It was at a chapel up in the wild Yorkshire dales. I had a job, not only to find the chapel, but the village itself!

I have one or two memories of that day. It is the only chapel I have ever seen where the baptistry is outside, at the front of the chapel. I was reminded that this was where the beloved John Booth was baptized, and his gracious account of it:

"I judged there would be five hundred people present. I am glad to say that the Lord did entirely free me from every fear of man, and I stood and faced the crowd, looking them full in the face. I could not help noticing a few of my old companions who had, as they said afterwards, come to watch me be 'dipped.' They seemed very anxious to get a good view. I saw them smiling at one another, but this did not daunt me, for I recollected that the last time Mr. Schofield baptized in the baptistry at Thurlstone I was as ignorant of the true meaning of baptism as they are now."

But I do not want just to be reminiscent, although there are the memories. What were my two texts so many years ago? In the morning, "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." In the afternoon: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." The wonderful thing is they are as true (and relevant) today as then.

\* \* \*

As the year 2021 dawns, we seem to be approaching a different world. "Change and decay in all around we see." Constant change, and little seemingly for the better. This dreadful coronavirus is still with us. God has spoken!

But though everything seems turned upside down, the condition of our country (and our own hearts) seems solemnly the same. Fifty years ago I wrote (*Gospel Standard* January 1971):

"What do we find at the end of 1970? Discontent, disappointment, uncertainty. Everything is shaken. Men boast of progress and advancement. But what has the year witnessed? ... Never has there been such a time of change. Nothing seems stable or secure.... Young people find an awful sense of insecurity and instability. Many are seeking an escape in drugs. Student unrest abounds." There is a removing of the things that can be shaken.

What a mercy that God's people have a sure foundation and possess "the things that cannot be shaken, that remain"! Which takes us back to the first Lord's day in 1957, and the two texts of that day. Gloriously

there are “the things which remain,” and “know no change with changing time.” So the everlasting truth of my two texts in 1957:

1. “I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Almighty God is still on the throne. His sacred Word stands eternally the same, “truth unchanged, unchanging,” despite the infidelity of the age. The everlasting covenant is ordered in all things and sure. The precious blood of Jesus has not lost its power, and never will. The Holy Spirit’s work cannot be overthrown. Above all else: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

It is our mercy if through grace we have a personal interest in these things – though the poor, weak, changeable sons of Jacob, who deserve to be consumed, who feel they may be consumed, but in Christ “not consumed.”

“The gospel bears my spirit up;  
A faithful and unchanging God  
Lays the foundation of my hope,  
In oaths, and promises, and blood.”

2. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

Like the old minister who was asked by the eighteenth century prime minister if there was anything he desired more than anything else, and answered, “More grace!” this is our great need. And what a fulness of grace there is in Christ, and what a promise that His people will partake of it.

Grace to save – grace to sanctify – grace to keep – grace to help in every time of need – grace to uphold – grace to bring safely through at last.

May we be favoured during the new year to know the wonders of God’s grace – all flowing from the Lord who never changes.

---

---

## THE FIVE “I’S” OF THE WORD OF GOD

---

The Word of God is *inspired*.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3. 16).

The Word of God is *infallible*.

“God, that cannot lie” (Tit. 1. 2).

The Word of God is *immutable*.

“The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10. 35).

The Word of God is *incisive*.

“The Word of God is ... sharper than any twoedged sword” (Heb. 4. 12).

The Word of God is *important*.

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me” (John 5. 39).

## HOW SHALL THEY PREACH EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?

*By Alfred Dye (1851-1930)*

I shall now write of a few trials and blessings, and of my removal to Maldon. After I had been preaching about two years, I was invited to preach an anniversary sermon at Saxlingham. I had spoken there before, and, it being the place of my spiritual birth, and where I, with the rest of our family, were taken when children by my dear mother, I always had much feeling in that pulpit: therefore thought much upon this invitation to preach at the anniversary. I remember that it was during the Russo-Turkish war.

Well, one night I had a dream. I dreamt that I was a soldier in an army marching, as I thought, against the Russians. I thought I was in the back ranks, and on each side of me were ministers that I knew, who were in the letter of truth, and in front were some very fine soldiers. I thought my spirit for the fight was such, I earnestly wished that the general or officer would set me in the front with these big men, so that I might give it to the enemy. Well, presently there appeared the most beautiful person I ever saw, in most glorious uniform, and with his sword in hand, marching at the end of the files, and very soon he lifted his sword and called me to follow him. I did so, and he took me to the front rank, and on we went, through woods and marshes, up hill and down dale, after the Russians. I awoke, and behold, this was a dream; but what it meant I could not say. However, the Lord made it plain, as follows.

Time rolled on and the Saxlingham anniversary came. It is always held on the Whit-Monday, and I was supplying for Mr. Haynes, at St. Ives, on the Sabbath. Going along in the train, I began to wonder what text I should take, and my mind seemed rather stayed upon one in the Song of Solomon, for, thinks I, "It is the anniversary, and I must show them that I can preach. Ministers often preach out of the Song of Solomon at anniversaries; and so will I, too."

Well, that man of God, the late Charles Cock, of West Mersea, preached in the afternoon, and I was to speak at night. Now this man preached so blessedly, and went right into the line of things that I had made ready to my hand, that I was completely pulverized, and my beautiful Song of Solomon text, like the worldling's riches, made to itself wings, and flew away, like an eagle toward heaven, and poor Alfred was left poor indeed. However, before Mr. C. finished his discourse, the Lord showed me my fleshly pride, and my soul was humbled within me; and these words kept running upon my mind: "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." O this "unto me," "unto me," kept ringing in my heart; I could not get rid of it, and I saw that this



grace was given to Paul – ay, unto *me*, that I should preach. It was, therefore, ministerial grace referred to. “O but,” thought I, “if I preach of a call to the ministry I shall offend all the ministers in the chapel. They will think it absurd and presumptuous for a young man, twenty-four years of age, to stand up and tell them what a call to the ministry is. I will not preach from it; no, that I won’t. I will take up only the latter clause, ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ.’ There is enough there for the tongues of ‘all angels and men.’”

I went into the pulpit with the intention of reading only the latter clause, “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” However, when I stood up to do so, the Lord hung a holy, solemn lock upon my jaws, for I could not move my tongue; and there I stood for some seconds, with all the ministers’ and people’s eyes upon me; and like that the Lord made me stand until my *heart* consented to read the whole of the verse. The first words, therefore, I spoke were these. “Friends, I determined, because of the presence of ministers, all older than myself, that I would only read the latter part of this verse, which you will find in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and eighth verse; but I am obliged to read the whole or none: ‘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.’”

I first noticed the humbling grace expressed by the apostle, as being that which made him feel less than the least of all saints; also, that the Lord made me to feel the same; and I also told them plainly that ministers who were never humbled were never sent of the Holy Ghost to preach. I then showed what grace the apostle did *not* refer to in the text, and then what he *did*. First, it was not simply a call by grace out of the world; nor was it simply the grace of God as faith, hope, love or humility, from a manifestation of Christ as our salvation; nor was it a gift for prayer or reading. I then showed how men were forced into the ministry by men, and the effect of their preaching. I said, “They are received into the church as good men; and, because of their natural gift for speaking, the people who are in the letter only, persuade them into a pulpit. A few texts which the Lord has blessed to their souls, in relation to their own salvation, or to their establishment in the truth, they speak about pretty well; but this, time after time, becomes wearisome; and, as there is nothing of the Scripture in an experimental sense opened, the living souls begin to tire, and say one to another, ‘I thought I heard him at first, and I like his prayers, and I believe he is a gracious man; but really, there is nothing. He doesn’t seem to grow in the ministry.’ Now, friends,” I said, “all this shows that the man was never anointed and sent of the Holy Ghost,” and then I showed a little of this ministerial grace, and where, and when, and how I received it, and the effect upon me and my

hearers; and thus the Lord helped me to lay the axe to the root, and to fear no man. But, O dear me! It set all the ministers, with but one exception, on fire; indeed, one poor man would have no supper. Yea, I firmly believe, had there been a respectable way of killing me, or of pushing me down the brow of some hill, it would have been done.

Going home to Norwich, a deacon and another person attacked me before a brake-load of people [a brake was an open, four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage]; but Alfred stood his ground. Also, Mr. Cock was attacked respecting my preaching, going to his lodgings, and also when at supper; but all he said was, "Friends, take my advice, and let the young man alone. The Lord has called him to the work."

Mr. C. preached at Framingham the next day, and I went to hear. After I arrived, I ventured to the door of the vestry to say, "Good morning!" When I opened the door I saw several of my enemies sitting, and Mr. C. among them. Mr. C. arose and came to me, got hold of my hand, and said, "Young man, they tell me you shaved them too close last night; but not too close for me. I like a sharp razor; and if you cut my head off, it won't take the love of truth out of my soul, will it?" "No, sir, indeed it will not." And after the day was over at Framingham, Mr. C. got hold of my hand, and said, "Young man, you are now where I was forty years since. I had a swarm of bees around my head in those days. I know all about it. You pay no attention to them; but go on, and the Lord bless you!"

---

---

## A TALE THAT IS TOLD

---

"We spend our years as a tale that is told" (Psa. 90. 9).

What a precious thing time is, and yet we rarely give the attention to it that we ought, except perhaps at the close of a year, or an anniversary, but we press on with our lives, giving little thought to the fact that soon for us time will be no more. As Job said, speaking of the end of his time here below, "He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more" (Job 7. 10).

In Psalm 90, Moses the man of God reminds us of time's *temporary* nature. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow" (verse 10). Paul writing to the church of Corinth reminds us: "For the things which are seen are temporal."

Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus exhorts them thus: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5. 16). This emphasises to us the *importance* of time. It is that part of our very

existence, during which it will become manifest whether we are the Lord's people or not. Solomon tells us that when our allotted time is done, it is like a tree that falls and moves no more. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccles. 11. 3).

The same wise man tells us that God has *measured* our span of time: "A time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccles. 3. 2). Not all rivers are the same length. Our river of time may be shorter than another's. On the length of our days we may not presume, as that is known only to God. Those who are made wise unto salvation, realising the importance of the soul and of time, "give diligence to make their calling and election sure" (see 2 Pet. 1. 10). They are not left either to the slumber of fatalism or presumption, two rocks upon which many have foundered eternally. As Paul says concerning these exhortations: "So much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10. 25).

The solemnity of our very existence is that as one man expressed: "What is time? but a bubble floating on eternity's vast sea."

*Eternity* must inevitably follow our time spent on earth. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9. 27). Our eternal destiny of either heaven or hell will be revealed at that dread moment. O how vital it will be then to be found in Christ, as Paul says, "Not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (see Phil. 3. 9).

Now Moses, being well aware of these vital truths, says that our lives are "as a tale that is told." The tales of the lives of God's people, though varied and peculiar to each child of God in one sense, yet in another have a common thread which runs through each "tale."

Note these few verses from the tale of some of God's children.

David: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51. 5). (A tale of sin.)

Christ to Nicodemus: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3. 7). (A tale of regeneration.)

Paul: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace" (Gal. 1. 15). (A tale of grace.)

Jacob: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day" (Gen. 48. 15). (A tale of providence.)

Peter: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1. 5). (A tale of preserving care.)

Christ to the dying thief: "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23. 43). (A tale of redemption.)

Blessed are those, who being taught by the God of all grace during their time here below can say with David: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psa. 23. 6).

Dear reader, what is the tale of your life? Unless it has the same stamp upon it as the days of these gracious souls, when you are “cut off” as in Psalm 90. 10, it will be to fly away into endless misery. No wonder Moses said, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psa. 90. 12). He also said elsewhere, “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end” (Deut. 32. 29). May we each so do.



## THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF GOD’S PROMISES TO SINNERS

*By Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)*

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11. 28).

There are two features especially worthy of notice in the invitations which are scattered up and down the Scriptures of truth: one is, their *limitation*; the other, their *largeness*. By their *limitation*, I mean, that they are confined to God’s quickened family; that they do not extend themselves into, what I might almost call, infinite space; but are circumscribed within a circle, and that descriptive of the characters of those in whose hearts the Spirit of God is at work. The other feature worthy of notice is, the *largeness* of these invitations as far as is compatible with their limitation.

I will endeavour to explain my meaning more fully. In the invitations, the Spirit of God traces a circle; and that circle does not extend its boundaries beyond the quickened family of the living Jehovah. But within that circle there is a largeness, so as to comprehend every one of God’s own people that are embraced within it. These two apparently contradictory features are reconcilable thus. God knew what was in the hearts of His people; He knew that they would require every possible encouragement that He could give them; and yet He would not stretch the encouragement beyond those for whom it was intended. He would not lavish His gracious invitations upon an ungodly and rebellious world; and yet in these very invitations, He would use language which, though within the bounds of due circumscription, should fully reach unto and embrace every quickened soul.

Let us look, for instance, at the invitation contained in Isaiah 55. 1, and see if we cannot trace out these two features: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "*That thirsteth*" – there is the limitation; the utmost bound of the circle is not extended beyond those who are spiritually athirst for the living God. And yet, within that circle, how large, how wide, how comprehensive is the invitation! "Ho, *every one* that thirsteth." How widely do the arms of the invitation extend themselves, to draw into and fold within their embrace all, without exception, in whose bosom the Blessed Spirit has raised up those spiritual desires after the waters of life which are expressed by the figure of "thirst"!

Again, look at the invitation which dropped from the Lord's own lips: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7. 37). The Lord Himself limited His own gracious invitation to those who thirsted after Him; but within that limit, how He enlarged it to suit the case of every one who spiritually thirsted to be wholly His! "If any man" – not some, not few, not many; but "if any man" – whether many or few, whatever be their state or condition – if this spiritual feature be but found in them, "let him come unto Me and drink."

So again, in the invitation, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. 45. 22), we still see these two prominent features. "*The ends of the earth*," spiritually understood, refer to God's poor, tried family, who often feel themselves to be at the remotest distance from the Lord. But all these are freely invited. "All the ends of the earth"; all that feel themselves in that remote spot, all who know themselves to be spiritually far from a holy God, and mourn over their distance and separation, are freely and fully invited to look unto the Lord for salvation.

The same two features we also find in the text. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The invitation does not spread itself beyond the circle of those who "labour and are heavy laden." It does not extend itself so wide as to take in those who have no burden nor sorrow in their hearts. It is not lavished upon the ungodly and rebellious; and yet within that circle, how freely and graciously does the Lord invite all in whose hearts this fruit of divine teaching is. "Come unto Me," He says, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden." So that while the limitation excludes the dead in sin and unregeneracy, the enlargement takes in all the quickened and the exercised; and thus while the circumscription of the circle prevents its being abused to foster self-righteousness and presumption, the wideness of the circle, by embracing all that are spiritually burdened and sorrowful, shuts out hopelessness and despair.

## THE BELIEVER AS CHRIST'S EPISTLE

*By John Berridge (1716-1793)*

“Ye are our epistles” (2 Cor. 3. 2).

This was the language of the great Apostle Paul (who in his own eyes was less than the least of all saints), in an address to the Corinthian church, the members of which had been some of the most abandoned characters; and to whatever place the apostle went, where letters of commendation were required of the visiting ministers, he pointed to those conspicuous converts, who were living epistles, and so eminent as to be known and read of all men. The change in them was so great, as to render it evident to everyone: the drunkards were become sober; the dishonest just; the miser liberal; the prodigal frugal; the libertine chaste; and the proud humble. To these the apostle appealed, for himself and fellow-labourers, as letters of commendation, who were living epistles at Corinth, and as lights in the world.

In an epistle there must be *paper*, or *parchment*; a *pen*; *ink*; a *writer*; and *somewhat written*.

First: the *paper*, or *parchment*, we may consider, in these divine epistles, as the *human heart*, which, some people say, is as clean as a white sheet of paper; but if it be so on one side, it is as black as sin can make it on the other. It may appear clean like a whited sepulchre *without*, but it is full of all uncleanness and defilement *within*.

Second: the *pen* may be well compared to the *ministers* of the gospel, who are used in these living epistles as such; and many of them are willing to acknowledge themselves very bad pens, scarcely fit to write with, or any way to be employed in so great a work.

It seems they have been trying for many years to make good pens at the universities; but after all the ingenuity and pains taken, the pens which are made there *are good for nothing till God has nibbed them*. When they are made, it is well known that the best of pens want *mending*. I find that the poor, old pen that has been in use now for a long while, and is yet employed in scribbling, needs to be mended two or three times in a sermon.

Third: the ink used in these divine epistles I compare to the influences of divine grace upon the heart; and this flows freely from the pen when it has a good supply from the fountain head, which we constantly stand in need of; but sometimes you perceive the pen is exhausted, and almost dry. Whenever any of you find it so, either at Tabernacle, St. Ann's, or Tottenham Court Chapel, and are ready to say, O what a poor a creature this is; I could preach as well myself – that may be true; but instead of these sad complaints, lift up your hearts in prayer

for the poor pen, and say, Lord, give him a little more ink. But if a pen is made well, and quite fit for use, it cannot move of itself; there must be an agent to put it into motion, and,

Fourth: the *Writer* of these glorious and living epistles is the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people talk about, and are very curious in fine writing; but there is something in the penmanship of these epistles which exceeds all that was ever written in the world; for, as the Lord spake, so He writes, as never man ever spake or wrote. One superior excellency in these epistles is, that they are all so plain and intelligible as to be known and read of all men, and the strokes will never be obliterated. As pens cannot move of themselves, so we profess when we take on us this sacred character, to be moved thereunto by the Holy Spirit; nor can we move to any *good purpose* without His divine assistance.

Lastly: in all these epistles there must be *somewhat written*. Many things might be said here, but I shall include the divine inscription of these epistles in *repentance, faith* and *holiness*. Repentance is written with a *broad-nibbed pen*, in the *old black letter* of the law, at the foot of Mount Sinai. Faith is written with a *crow-quill pen*, in fine and gentle strokes, at the foot of Mount Calvary. Holiness is gradually and progressively written; and when *this* character is *completely* inscribed, the epistle is finished, and sent to glory.\*

---

---

## THE SECRET EXERCISES OF A GOSPEL MINISTER

*Extract from the diary of Kenneth Macrae (1912-1963)*

---

*Friday, December 29th, 1922:* Today the enemy well-nigh overwhelmed my soul and ruined all my Sabbath work. Engaged as I was upon the preparation of my sermons, he would not let me rest, but continually cast horrid and distracting thoughts into my mind, so that at last all liberty was gone and I feared that I was to be left to darkness. Guilt on the conscience at first kept me from seeking the help of the Lord, but, at last, realising that I had no other refuge, in desperation I repaired unto a throne of grace. Blessed be His name, it was not in vain, for when I turned to the sermon which I was to prepare upon Isaiah 41. 17, and which, because of my condition, I was almost afraid to look at, I found my bands were broken, and the very bitterness of my experience only enabled me the more feelingly to enter into the case of "the poor and the needy." Thus was Satan foiled and his very efforts to

---

\* Berridge is not here speaking of the false Arminian doctrine of progressive sanctification, but rather of the growth of grace in the new nature and heart as in Philipians 1. 6. Ed.

snare me and mar my work, were made to serve to the Lord's glory and the furtherance of what he tried to destroy. May this be a lesson to me to betake myself to the Lord when pressed by Satan's temptations and to ignore the restraining influence of consciousness of sin upon the conscience which keeps me so often from Him.

---

---

## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*  
*(Continued from page 377, December 2020)*

---

### *The offices of a gospel church*

The offices of a gospel church relate:

1. To the spiritual and eternal – the ministry and rule; and
2. To the material and temporal – the diaconate.

The ministry and rule. The chief office is the ministry of the Word. It is perfectly futile for men to determine to establish a "church" anywhere except Christ sends His Spirit in the ministry. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" No power of intellect, no authority of temporal position, no command of wealth, no possession of any secular privilege, no mere logical acquiescence in regularised doctrine or practice, can be sufficient ground for the establishment of a church. *God in His Word and Spirit through the ministry, is essential.*

We have before observed that Jehovah can sovereignly dispense with His own ordained means, but it would be contradictory of His wisdom usually to do so. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1. 21). Churches cannot be planted by mere human organisation; the vital materials requisite – members and officers – must be prepared and supplied and co-ordinated by the God of all grace; for a true church is something more than the outward co-operation of a number of professed Christians. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psa. 127. 1). But where Christ will have a "candlestick," He will bring together in His holy providence, and by His Spirit and grace, a number of persons whom He will incline to submit to His authority in the ministry of His Word. The Lord Jesus Christ who is Head of all life and influence and spiritual motion in the individual believer, is also *Head of order* in His church. Having directed His disciples before His ascension to heaven, to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and



of the Holy Ghost,” He added, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28. 19, 20).

The law of the house being holiness (Ezek. 43. 12), it is supremely important definitely to ascertain what is to be observed and how. Nor has the faithful Lord left His people without sufficient direction in the Scriptures of truth and from the recorded practices of the apostles, to determine in every fundamental matter; while in things in themselves important, yet not essential, much may be inferred by the humble disciple, from the practice of the sub-apostolic churches. We have already briefly noticed the two standing ordinances of gospel churches – believers’ baptism and the Lord’s supper (pages 311-314 and 375-377, 2020 *Gospel Standard*). It is fitting that these should be dispensed by persons who are divinely, and by the consent of the church, invested with an official capacity. Paul indeed makes the ordinance of baptism subordinate to preaching: “Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 1. 17); that is, not absolutely, but relatively. He *was* sent to baptize equally with the other disciples, but being an apostle, “lest any should say that he had baptized in his own name,” he actually baptized very few, purposely avoiding rivalry in that connection. His chief work was preaching the gospel which is “the power of God unto salvation to them that believe.”

The whole communication to man of God’s saving purposes “in divers ways and manners,” from the primary promise – itself a declaration of Christ – in Eden (Gen. 3. 15), may be generally called a preaching of the gospel. But our scope here is a brief enquiry into the New Testament ministry in relation to established gospel churches. One great distinction between the Old Testament ministry and that of the New is that the latter is a “reporting” of things actually accomplished: things which hitherto were “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow” (1 Pet. 1. 11, 12). Thus in the New Testament apostolic ministry there was a confirmation by “eyewitnesses” of the Old Testament prophecies – “of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.” What was “first spoken by the Lord was confirmed” unto Paul and others “by them that heard Him; God bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will” (Luke 1. 2; 2 Peter 1. 16; Heb. 2. 3, 4).

*Institution of the gospel ministry.* The ordered exercise of a gospel ministry in New Testament times has the very immediate authority of the Lord Jesus Himself. By Him, who “spake as never man spake,” and upon whom was the “Spirit of the Lord GOD,” because He was anointed “to preach good tidings unto the meek,” sent to “bind up the brokenhearted,” and “to proclaim liberty to the captives,” etc. (Isa. 61. 1)

– by Him was the gospel ministry instituted, by His commission it is given to the chief of sinners and least of all saints to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ – the sum and substance of all good news from heaven. The question Jehovah asked Moses (“Who made man’s mouth?”) still carries in it an encouragement for those who, though solemnly feeling their insufficiency for so awful and holy a work, are yet thrust into it by the commission of the Lord Himself. For doubtless the ministry of Christ’s gospel is the very highest employment to which a man can be called in this world. Of the office of the ministry it can be truly said, as of Christ’s priesthood, “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God” (Heb. 5. 4). The providential opening of a “door” which is so frequently deciphered by would-be preachers as being a call to the ministry, is very far removed from the call of God to the work.

By His own perfect preaching and personal call, the Lord made disciples and sent out first the twelve, then “other seventy also,” to go before His face “into every city and place whither He Himself would come” (Luke 10. 1). These were instructed to declare, “The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you,” and to work miracles in His name, being forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles or into the cities of the Samaritans. Strictly, therefore (there being in Christ Jesus neither Jew nor Gentile), the definite institution of the New Testament gospel ministry was after the resurrection of the blessed Lord of Life from the dead. In Matthew it is recorded that the eleven (Judas having “gone to his own place”) being appointed to meet Jesus in Galilee, received from Him their sacred ordination (Matt. 28. 19, 20, before quoted). Mark tells us, “He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16. 15). This universal preaching of the gospel foretold by the Lord (Matt. 24. 14), was not till now committed to His disciples. Thus dawned the era prophesied: for the gospel was preached before “unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. 3. 8; Gen. 12. 3). Luke tells us (Acts 1. 1, 2, 8) that “Jesus ... through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen: to whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs,” saying, “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*.” This powerful descent of the Holy Ghost on the Pentecost after Christ’s ascension, ushered in the ministry described by Peter (1 Pet. 1. 12): “Them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

## OLD GEORGE

*“By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15. 10).*

*The story of George Ramsbottom (1798-1853). George and his brothers were responsible for building Cheesden Pasture Mill (probably in the 1820s or 1830s) where hard cotton waste was broken up, and carded and spun into weft. Like so many of the first cotton mills, it was built up in the hills (near a fast-flowing stream) and worked by a water wheel.*

*Cheesden Pasture Mill had one room set apart with forms and a pulpit, and here for many years John Kershaw, the minister at Hope Particular Baptist Chapel, Rochdale, preached several times a year, most of the work people attending. “Cheesden Pasture” is advertised in the old Gospel Standards.*

*George Ramsbottom was affectionately known to all as “old George,” though only in his fifties when he died.*

*The account is signed, “A lover of Zion.” Who he was we do not know, but we wonder if it was John Kershaw himself, especially because (like his namesake, the beloved disciple) his name is not mentioned.*

George Ramsbottom was removed from the church militant (assembling at Hope Chapel, Rochdale) to join the church triumphant, November 21st, 1853, aged 55. He was brought up amongst the Independents at Park Chapel, in the parish of Bury, and was led by the Lord to remember his Creator in the days of his youth.

For a considerable time he could not tell what was the matter with him. The preaching he sat under did not reach his case. In the providence of God, in the year 1820, he with a few of his neighbours went out of curiosity to Hope Chapel, Rochdale.\* The minister preached from Matthew 9. 12: “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” For the first time he heard his case truly and scripturally opened up. He felt that he was a sin-sick soul. The Holy Spirit had quickened him, convinced him of his sins and the sinfulness of his nature. The language of God’s saints, as recorded in the Scriptures, was brought forward by the minister; and he said every sentence found a place in his very heart and soul, especially the following: “O Lord, I am vile, and I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” The language of the leper, “Unclean, unclean!” was his soul’s language. And again, “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”; “We all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” The language of David also in Psalm 38: “There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.” This and the five following verses were descriptive

---

\* John Kershaw (1792-1870) was minister there from 1817 till his death.

of his feelings. And the seventh chapter to the Romans he felt to be true, and that he was brother to Paul, who had to lament his weakness, wretchedness and sinfulness.

The great Physician, and His precious blood, were afterwards by the blessed Spirit sealed home to his conscience; and, feeling that he was interested in the same, the joy of his heart was so great that he told his friends if Rochdale had been given him, his joy would not have been so great. With David, he could say, "Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

From this time his ears were as if nailed to the door-posts, although he had nearly six miles to go. It was said by the friends at his death that he had been more regular at the chapel on the Lord's day, for more than thirty years, than the minister!

Being rather of a timid spirit, it was years before he joined the church. A book was given him to read, in defence of infant sprinkling. Being grieved with it, his spirit was stirred within him to take up his pen and make some remarks upon it. On this coming to the knowledge of his minister, he requested to see it and was much pleased with it, and said to him on one occasion before he left his house, that as he had taken up his pen in defence of the truth, he would esteem it a favour if he write him an essay upon a portion of God's Word, and that he would turn a leaf to the verse, where he would find it when he was gone, and would like him to have it ready against he came next month. As soon as his pastor was gone, he looked in the Bible to see what the text was he had to write upon; and found it was Acts 22.16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized."

The effect produced was such that the next week he went to his pastor, and told him that when he looked at the portion of God's Word he had directed him to, and thought of writing upon it, that proverb came powerfully to his mind, "Physician, heal thyself," and that he could not in his present circumstances write upon it; but that he must "arise, and be baptized," as he could not any longer rest in the neglect of the ordinances of God's house. He appeared at the next church meeting, and gave a blessed account of the gracious dealings of the Lord with his soul. He was received by the brethren with great joy, and the following Lord's day was baptized and added to the church. On this occasion his cup of joy ran over. Before he left the vestry, after writing his name in the church book, he told the minister and deacons that he had never left that place before with so much joy and solemn satisfaction in his soul as he did that night, having the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Hymn 369 (Gadsby's Selection),

"How pleasant, how divinely fair,  
O Lord of Hosts, Thy dwellings are,"

was sung, the sweet savour of which rested on our spirits for some months.

His whole heart and soul were in the peace and prosperity of Zion. When any money was wanting, being a man of property, his purse was always open in support of the cause of God and truth. He did all he could for the furtherance of the gospel in his own immediate neighbourhood, and felt great pleasure in seeing the Word of the Lord run, and have free course, and prosper in the ingathering of precious souls to Jesus our spiritual Shiloh. He possessed greater abilities for writing than speaking. He was so much grieved with the letter on baptism in Mr. Irons'\* *Jazer* that he took up his pen and addressed a letter to him upon his glaring perversions of the Word and ordinances of God. He also wrote to a friend in defence of the gospel as the believer's rule of life and conduct. Many who have seen it very highly approve of it, the doctrinal, experimental and practical bearing of the subject are so strikingly and scripturally set forth.

He was confined to the house several months before his death, his complaint being dropsy. During his affliction his mind was wonderfully supported, by the living experience of the faithfulness and preciousness of the promises of a faithful and covenant-keeping God. The last time his pastor went to see him, he encouraged him to go on preaching the same great and glorious truths that he had been defending in his hearing for more than thirty years; for, said he, they are the comfort and support of my soul now in the prospect of death, and, with great emphasis, he added, "Be growingly determined to have nothing to stand between a just and holy God, in His righteous law, and the poor guilty sinner, but the glorious Person, blood and righteousness and advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, for 'None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good'; and go on insisting upon the Person and work of God the Holy Ghost in bringing poor sinners, with a broken heart and godly sorrow, to the feet of Jesus, and in the glorifying of Christ, by taking of the things of Christ and revealing them to the souls of His people; for such is the preaching that God has honoured in my soul."

Many of the Lord's family who visited him in his affliction were much comforted in hearing him speak of the great things the Lord was showing him. He was one of the singers.\*\* The last time his most intimate singing friends went to see him, he would have several of the precious hymns and tunes sung in which he had often joined in the house of God with melody in his heart to the Lord. Before they parted he said, "Friends, this is the last time we shall unite in singing the praises of the

---

\* Joseph Irons (1785-1852), Independent minister at Grove Chapel, Camberwell, London.

\*\* At Hope Chapel, Rochdale, those who could sing well sat together in the gallery to help lead the singing.

Lord together in this world. Before you go, we will sing my most favourite hymn, and I will line it out,”\* which was that precious hymn of Mr. Gadsby’s (667): “Immortal honours rest on Jesus’ head.” As he lined it out, he commented upon it with great liberty and freedom; and as they sang it, the afflicted man, as had been his usual custom, sang the bass. The singing of this hymn will long be remembered by the surviving friends who united with him.

He told his pastor that as he had received great comfort and soul support from the words of our Lord, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in *no wise* cast out” (John 6. 37), his request was that he would preach from them after his death, as his funeral text,\*\* for the benefit of his surviving friends and relatives, which was attended to, and it is hoped to the encouragement of many.

His family grave was at the Independent chapel, where he had been brought up to attend; but he said, “My body must lie in Hope chapel graveyard, where the Word of the Lord has been so much blessed to my soul.” This was also attended to, and devout men followed him to his grave, and greatly lamented him. He has left a widow and one son, whom he dearly loved, and for whom he offered up many prayers. As a master he was both loved and feared by all the work people in the factory. It was his delight, as far as he was able, to do good to all men, especially the household of faith. He was a pillar in the house of God, a true and faithful friend, a valuable member of society, and an example to all around him, and no one was more ready to exclaim, it is “by the grace of God I am what I am.”

---

## BOOK REVIEW

---

**With an Everlasting Love** – Selected Sermons of Hugh M. Cartwright; paperback; 219 pages; £11.70; published by Reformation Press. **From the Mouth of Lions** – Sermons on the Book of Daniel by Hugh M. Cartwright; paperback; 240 pages; £12.90; published by Reformation Press. **Walking in the Light** – notes of prayer meeting addresses by Hugh M. Cartwright; 253 pages; £14 plus £3.25 postage; hardback; published by Ettrick Press. Reformation Press books are available from [www.reformationpress.co.uk](http://www.reformationpress.co.uk); Ettrick Press books from 98 The Brow, Brighton, BN2 6LN.

Hugh Cartwright was born in 1943 and became Pastor of Ferintosh Free Church, Ross-shire in 1969. In 1990 he was appointed to a professorship at the Free Church College, but following a prolonged period of difficulties, he joined

---

\* Read it out verse by verse (or perhaps two lines at a time) as it was sung.

\*\* It was the custom at that time for a church member to give the pastor a text to be spoken on after his death.

the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1998, and was appointed to the pastoral care of the Edinburgh Church, where he remained for the remaining thirteen years of his life.

Perhaps it may seem out of place for one who never heard Hugh Cartwright preach to presume to write a review of his sermons. Our knowledge of him was chiefly through his articles in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, and his gracious, self-effacing yet insightful writings deeply attracted us; he seemed to combine both faithfulness and meekness in an unusual way and we could not but hold him in high esteem. We were much saddened by his death in 2011. The three volumes of sermons and addresses which have been published since have only served to increase that esteem; we may not have seen eye to eye with him on some minor points, but we could walk heart to heart with him in his preaching which left sinners with no ground to look to but the blood of Christ.

All the sermons and addresses in the three books listed were from the days of his Edinburgh pastorate on which the Lord's blessing seems to have rested in an unusual way – his congregation increased three-fold or more and was mostly made up of young people. The sermons are transcribed from recordings, but the addresses were taken from notes written down by one of his hearers. *With an Everlasting Love* was published in 2015, and is a selection of sermons; the other two books were published in 2020. *From the Mouth of Lions* is a series of sermons from the Book of Daniel. It is especially noticeable here how the author is always concerned to set forth practical and experimental lessons for his hearers and not to be side-tracked into dwelling on historical, providential or prophetic details, even where these are necessarily mentioned in the context. Considering *Walking in the Light* is largely taken from notes, we were pleased to find that there was no lack of continuity; the transcription and editing were excellent. We could not but notice the balance between the chosen addresses, some dwelling on the doctrine of the gospel, some on Christian experience and others on the necessity for self-examination and a gracious walk. The preface to the book explains: "Although they are only notes, I hope that they will nevertheless convey some impression of Mr. Cartwright's earnestness with his hearers; his faithfulness to the sense and context of the Scriptures he preached from, and his clarity and directness in driving home the implications of each passage's teaching for our worship and our walk." This summarises the book well.

We are pleased to recommend the sermons and addresses of Mr. Cartwright as one not a Strict Baptist, yet who faithfully preached the everlasting gospel and whose gracious walk was an ornament to his profession. And though there may be differences, we can add in the words of the Apostle Paul (which is the subject of one of the addresses in *Walking in the Light*), "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6. 16).

John A. Kingham, Luton

---

---

## NOTICE OF DEATH

**Maurice William Short**, beloved deacon of the church at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, passed suddenly to his eternal rest on November 23rd, 2020 aged 75. "The memory of the just is blessed."

## CAST DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED

---

Surrounded with doubts and dismay,  
 Uncertain which path to pursue,  
 No promise enlightens the way,  
 No sweet Ebenezers in view.

No answer to prayer, though I cry,  
 And spread my case to the Lord,  
 He seems to pass silently by,  
 And answers me never a word.

In worldly affairs but a fool,  
 In heavenly ones worse than that,  
 Sore tried in adversity's school,  
 I murmur how hard is my state.

Will He always see fit to chastise,  
 Nor ever to mercy incline?  
 Shall I never attain to the prize,  
 Nor the joys of salvation be mine?

So worthless my prayers appear,  
 So little in earnest, so vile;  
 No wonder they reach not Thy ear.  
 O quicken them, Lord, with Thy smile.

I fly to my chart, but in vain;  
 I strive there my pathway to find.  
 The way that to others seems plain,  
 Is to me as the path of the blind.

O shine with Thy light on Thy Book,  
 For surely 'tis needed by such,  
 And grant Thy poor servant a look,  
 If Thou wilt not vouchsafe him a touch.

O help me to trust in Thy name,  
 Whatever misfortunes befall,  
 And call, through the flood and the flame  
 Upon Thee, as my All and in all.

May the dawn on my spirit be found,  
 The day-star from heaven glad my eyes.  
 May His righteousness gird me around.  
 And the sun in His beauty arise.

Lord, shine on the path I must tread;  
 O guide me through life's troubled sea;  
 And when the cold earth is my bed,  
 May my spirit sleep sweetly in Thee.

B. M.



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**FEBRUARY 2021**

---

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

---

**OBED-EDOM**

*A few thoughts on a gracious man's testimony*

There are some characters mentioned in the Scriptures, of whom no erring is recorded, men such as Joshua and Daniel for example. That they were sinners, they truly felt and mourned over; however the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to record their faults, but only what grace made them.

Such a character was Obed-edom. He was one whom God raised up for a specific responsibility and for which he was graciously equipped. Though not of the seed of Abraham, by birth a Gittite, yet God used him for His honour and glory.

Since the days of Samuel, the ark of the covenant had been in the house of Abinadab after it was retrieved from the Philistines. It was a grief to the godly that it had not been brought to Zion, the name given to the spiritual capital of Israel. King David was among those who were concerned in this matter, so he endeavoured to bring the ark back. Sadly, although his motive was good, he did not seek the Lord's help, but devised his own way of returning the ark. It was placed upon a new cart, not on the shoulders of the Levites as had been commanded in the time of Moses. When the oxen leading the cart stumbled, Uzzah put out his hand to steady it, and the Lord smote him dead for his presumption. This brought the whole procession to a halt, and rejoicing turned into mourning, so much so that David dared not bring the ark any further on its proposed journey (see 2 Sam. 6).

A similar tragedy occurred earlier when the men of Bethshemesh looked into the ark when the Philistines returned it (see 1 Sam. 6). The memory of that should have been a warning to David to take this matter to the Lord before acting.

The Lord said to Moses, "See ... that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8. 5). We have no right, especially in worship, to diverge from "the pattern" given us in God's Word. Any divergence from truth in praising God is not an acceptable sacrifice in His sight.

What was to be done with the ark? This is where this lovely character Obed-edom appears on the page of Scripture. Did he offer the use of his house to David, when it was carried into his home, or did

David ask him first? We are not told, but what we do know is that Obed-edom was willing to have it in his house.

Bearing in mind the solemn events of the day, and also the natural inconvenience of having the ark and no doubt the priests and Levites accompanying it, it would have been a cause of disruption to his family. All of this Obed-edom counted as nothing compared with the favour of having the ark in his house. We read that “the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household” (2 Sam. 6. 11).

There are several simple yet important lessons for us in this incident.

1. That God is never wanting of raising up a man to do His bidding when one is needed. Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, Paul and many others in Scripture confirm this truth. We may not know where to look for such an one, but God does. God makes them willing in the day of His power. In this case He used a Gittite, showing us that He “is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10. 34, 35). Pre-eminently when a Mediator was needed for the salvation of sinners, God sends “the Man of His right hand” – *His only begotten Son* – “whom He made strong for Himself” (see Psa. 80. 17).

2. That God is in no man’s debt in any matter. Does He require a lodging place for His ark in Obed-edom’s house? He blesses him and his house for the sacrifice they were willing to make for His cause. Does the Lord require a pulpit in Peter’s boat? He soon fills it with fishes. God takes precious note of the “inasmuch” of His people’s actions.

3. No doubt the receiving of the ark into Obed-edom’s house entailed some re-organisation and perhaps some discarding of unnecessary furnishings, and even removing things that may have been inconsistent with the testimony of the ark. So, the receiving, by grace, of the Ark, Christ Jesus, into the heart has a sanctifying effect, both in the heart and in the life of the child of God. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him” (Col. 2. 6).

4. Though grace is not inherited, yet God blessed Obed-edom with a gracious offspring. We read in 1 Chronicles 26. 8: “All these of the sons of Obed-edom: they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, were threescore and two of Obed-edom.” Later we read that the sons of Obed-edom were content to be the porters for the temple.

5. We read no more about this gracious man in Scripture, but what we do read is sufficient for us to draw the conclusion that he was like another of whom we read: “He was a faithful man, and feared God above many” (Neh. 7. 2). Such people are the salt of the earth, and though often overlooked by the world, to God they are precious. May we seek, and God grant us “a double portion of their spirit.”

## THE GOOD WORK BEGUN

*Sermon preached by Donald Macfarlane of Dingwall (1834-1926)*

**Text:** “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1. 6).

The Apostle Paul had a special call to visit Philippi, because God had work for him to do there. In a vision, he saw a man from Macedonia saying to him, “Come over, and help us,” and he readily complied with the call, and found there a few who gathered together to worship God. These might be represented by the man from Macedonia, inasmuch as that they felt their need of a man of God to teach them more perfectly. Lydia was one of these, and she profited by the teaching of Paul. The first man there of whose conversion we have an account, and *that* through the instrumentality of the apostle, was the jailor, and thus the good work began at Philippi.

The apostle writes this Epistle, in company with Timothy, when he was a prisoner at Rome. He was imprisoned there for the gospel’s sake. The only reason why he was now shut in confinement in Rome was that he preached the gospel. He therefore calls himself “a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” This Epistle was written some twelve years after he had been called in the extraordinary manner already referred to, to preach the gospel at Philippi (see Acts 16. 9). His preaching was then blessed to some. The good work was begun there, and the apostle in this Epistle assures the church planted there by his instrumentality that that good work should be carried on and brought to perfection.

In endeavouring to speak from this text, let us consider three things:

- I. The good work begun.
- II. The certainty there is that this work shall be carried on to perfection.
- III. The time when the good work is completed – “The day of Jesus Christ.”

I. *The good work begun.* It is the work of the Spirit in the application of redemption to believers. This is a work, and not an act. An act is complete at once, but in a work there is a beginning and a going on with it till it is finished.

The Spirit of God is the Author of this work, for it is a work *in* them. Christ did a work outside of us, but the Spirit does a work *in* us. The Spirit is the sole Author of this work. As the work of redemption was done from beginning to end by Christ alone, and there was none of the people with Him, so the work of applying Christ’s redemption to believers from beginning to end is the work of the Holy Spirit, and there

is none of the people with Him. Let us consider how the Spirit does this work.

1. He quickens to life the dead sinner. The whole soul is quickened to life – the understanding, the memory, the conscience, and the will. We are all spiritually dead by nature. The first thing, then, the Spirit does is to quicken the dead. Nothing good can be done to the dead till they are brought to life. You cannot feed and clothe them as long as they are dead. The Spirit quickens the dead sinner by means of the Word of truth. He comes to the grave of the dead and cries, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” When the Spirit quickens the dead sinner, He then opens his eyes, and the awakened soul sees where he is. He sees that he is in a state of sin and misery. “Adam, where art thou?” Well, he is in a lost condition.

2. He convinces him of his sins, which brought him into that state. He convinces him, first, of his actual transgressions. He begins with the last act of sin the sinner committed, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus – “Why persecutest thou Me?” – and from that sin He brings him back on the whole course of his life, to his childhood, and to the fountain from which his actual transgressions proceeded – the sinfulness of his nature. Memory is revived, and is very active in reproducing to the soul his sins. Some complain of a bad memory, but under conviction of sin there is no reason for that complaint. There is nothing the sinner remembers so well as his sins. The omniscient Spirit that searches the heart and the life has begun His work. Formerly the sinner may have asserted that he was a sinner, but now he is convinced of it. So long as you have any doubt about anything, you are not convinced of it: you wait for more light on the subject. But when you are convinced of it, you say, “I see it now; you need not use any further argument to convince me that the thing is actually as you say. I see it clearly now.” So it is in the work of the Spirit in convincing of sin. God tells us, in His Word of truth, that we are sinners, and such sinners as He describes us to be; but until the Spirit begins the good work in us, we are not convinced of it.

Those who think of themselves otherwise than according to what God says of them in His Word are not convinced of their sins, and are not subjects of the saving work of the Holy Spirit. But all in whom He begins the good work are convinced of their sins. They see it clearly; they have no doubt about it. They may have many doubts that they shall be saved, but they have no doubt as to their being sinners. They may have doubt that it is the good work of the Spirit, but they have no doubt as to God’s testimony concerning themselves. They set to their seal that God is true.

3. The convinced sinner, not yet knowing the way of salvation, begins to seek to be saved by the works of the law. It may be asked, Is

it the work of the Spirit that makes him try to be saved that way? I think we may say that it is. He purposely permits it. All men are by nature under the covenant of works, and we think that the Spirit *permits* the convinced sinner to try the works of the law, not that he may be saved by these works, but that he may find out by experience that by the works of the law no flesh can be justified in the sight of God. Christ sent the young man that asked what he should do to obtain life, to the law. "Thou knowest the commandments." So does the Spirit also, at least by way of permission. The impossibility of being saved by the law is a lesson to be learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Those who think and teach that man can be saved in whole or part by his own works have not been taught by the Spirit of God, but by the spirit of delusion. No work can be the ground of salvation but the work of Christ. This is clearly taught in Scripture, but we must be taught it also by the Holy Spirit, and He teaches it to all in whom He begins "the good work."

4. When the sinner is convinced that there is no salvation by the works of the law, then He enlightens his mind in the knowledge of Christ – in the knowledge of His divine Person as the second Person of the Trinity; of His two natures, as God and Man; and of His threefold office, as Prophet, Priest and King – the one Mediator between God and men, the only name given under heaven among men by whom we can be saved. However long or short be the time which the sinner may take in coming to a saving knowledge of the only Redeemer in these aspects, he in whom the Spirit begins "the good work" is taught to know Him.

5. In this good work there is a new creation. There is a new nature – "All things are made new." All the faculties and powers of the soul partake of this new creation. The mind, the will and the affections undergo a radical change. The Spirit, who is the Author of the work, dwells in all His graces in the new nature. Faith, which implies knowledge of Christ, is the first grace that comes into exercise in receiving Christ. The soul that receives Christ by faith is effectually called. The effectual call embraces the work of the Spirit from the first awakening of the dead soul till he is united to Christ by faith. The call that comes short of this is not effectual. The other graces come into exercise also – love, hope, repentance, etc., have their appropriate exercises.

6. Sanctification is an important part of the good work, and follows regeneration. An unregenerate soul cannot be sanctified. It is those that are regenerated that the Spirit sanctifies. The standard of sanctification is full conformity to the image of Christ. Believers must grow up to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ. There are no dwarfs in the family of God in heaven. Nor are there children there, in the sense of being

imperfect; they are all of the same stature – perfect men in Christ. It is this work the apostle is confident has begun in those to whom he writes.

II. *The certainty there is that this good work shall be carried on to perfection.* It is reckoned that the Philippian believers were now twelve years professing Christians. The good work had hitherto gone on, and the apostle assures them that it shall be carried on to perfection. There are some who teach that the work of grace may begin and yet not be finished. There is not, however, any ground for this opinion in the Word of God. Paul knew better. The apostle says that he is confident that it shall be performed. Confident here means to be fully assured. There is no room for doubt in this matter. Paul uses the same term in the eighth chapter to the Romans, when he says, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8. 38, 39). There are several stable grounds of this assurance:

1. It was God who began the work. His work is perfect. Man may begin a work which he can never finish, but it is not so with God. He began the work of creation, and finished it. He, in the Person of His Son, began the work of redemption, and He said on the cross, “It is finished.” And, in like manner, God the Spirit, will perfect the good work which He has begun. He also will say, “It is finished.”

2. There is adequate provision made for the completion of the good work. He counted the cost before He began. There is enough in the merit of Christ. It is at the expense of Christ, the Spirit begins the good work. It is vain to ask Him to begin it on the ground of man’s works – He will not do it. But He works it on the ground of Christ’s merit.

3. God’s eternal purpose of salvation makes it sure. That purpose is unchangeable; it shall be fulfilled.

4. The Holy Spirit undertook to do it. He will without fail make good that undertaking.

5. It is the nature of grace to grow. Grace may seem sometimes to be under a decay, but it shall never die. It is an incorruptible thing; it will spring up again and come to maturity. It will ripen into glory.

6. The means of grace makes it certain. These were instituted by Christ in the church for this very end, and they shall answer the ends for which they were set up.

7. Providence is another ground of assurance. “All things work together for good to them that love God” – adversity as well as prosperity. “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

8. The mystical body of Christ must be complete. All the members must be gathered to Christ, who is the Head, and be made conformable to Him as the Pattern.

This good work shall be perfected at the day of Jesus Christ. That is the last day, when He comes to judge the world. So far as the souls of the redeemed are concerned, they are made perfect in holiness at death, and do immediately pass into glory. But their bodies lie in the grave till the resurrection. Their bodies are still imperfect, but at the resurrection they shall be made perfect in holiness, like their souls. They shall be raised up in glory. So the apostle extends the good work begun to “the day of Jesus Christ.” And this brings us to our third head:

III. *The time when the good work begun shall be completed: “The day of Jesus Christ.”* This is the day when He shall come again. The good work shall go on till that day. It shall then be completed. The bodies of the saints shall be made perfect, and the number of the redeemed shall be complete. No more sinners shall be called to repentance. The gospel call shall cease. The door of the church and heaven shall be forever closed against the impenitent. No place any longer for such but hell. “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” The redeemed shall be invited to heaven in the words of Christ, the Judge: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” The wicked, on the left hand, shall go into everlasting damnation; but the righteous, on the right, shall go into everlasting life. The day of Jesus Christ is coming. Seek now to be found in Christ. “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” “Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.”

1. All days are the days of Jesus Christ, but this day is in a particular sense His. He gave us many days, but reserved this day for Himself. Men claim this day as their own, thinking that their sentiments will decide it. It is not theirs, but the day of Jesus Christ. It is the day of His revelation, the day in the which He shall come again. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.” It is the day of His second advent (see Matt. 25. 31-46; 2 Thess. 1. 7-10).

2. It is the day in which He shall raise the dead – the day of the general resurrection. The great trumpet shall be sounded, and all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they shall go forth out of their graves.

3. It is the day of final judgment. All shall be judged then – ministers and congregations, parents and children, masters and servants, kings and subjects, all nations shall be gathered before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ at that day. The day is His: all the speaking is His, all the work of the day is His. All men who took the work of this day into their own hands while in the land of the living shall find out, to their sad disappointment, that Christ is Judge at that day, and not they.

4. It is the day of the destruction of this world. “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3. 10).

5. It is the day in which the wicked shall be punished with eternal punishment. Many men now deny that there is such a thing as eternal punishment, but these presumptuously usurp the place of Christ, the Judge, and shut their eyes to the plain teaching of Scripture. They imagine that the day of judgment is theirs, and that they should judge. But it is not theirs. It is the day of Jesus Christ, the Judge of the quick and of the dead. The wicked shall be on that day “punished with everlasting destruction” – not annihilated – “from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1. 9).

6. It is the day in which the good work begun shall be completed. Although the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness at death, yet their bodies lie imperfect in their graves till the resurrection. Then they shall be raised up in glory, re-united to their souls, and their vile bodies made conformable to the glorious body of Christ. The good work of the Spirit, begun at conversion, shall then be completed. The Spirit will then cease His work among men; the means of grace shall cease; the door of the church on earth shall be closed for ever – no preaching of the gospel, no more warnings to flee from the wrath to come. It is no longer the accepted time, and the day of salvation. It is “the day of Jesus Christ” – the day of final reckoning, the day in which the eternal destiny of all the human race, from Adam downwards to the last of his posterity, is unalterably and for ever fixed. A solemn day it is! A day of everlasting joy to the Lord’s people – a day of everlasting sorrow and misery to the wicked.

The good work shall be carried on till this day. Sinners shall be converted from generation to generation, and believers shall be built up in their most holy faith till Christ shall come again at the last day. It was a good work begun in and among them. The work of the Spirit had respect not only to the subjects of His work in that age, but also to the subjects of His work to the end of time.

*Slightly adapted*

---

I will not judge a person to be spiritually dead whom I have judged formerly to have had spiritual life, though I see him at present in a swoon as to all evidences of the spiritual life. And the reason why I will not judge him so is this – because if you judge a person dead, you neglect him, you leave him; but if you judge him in a swoon, though never so dangerous, you use all means for the retrieving of his life.

*John Owen*



## LORD, INCREASE MY FAITH

---

My dear Friend,

Having occasion to send your way, I have ventured to forward the usual quantity, notwithstanding your kind caution. Hope you have found the Lord's courts a Bethel this week. To me it was so, inasmuch as I could join with David: "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! ... For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand" spent elsewhere.

What think you of the utter destruction of the Egyptian tongue and the smiting of the river in its seven streams, and going over dryshod? And how many of these streams have you, my dear friend, passed over? Shall I say six of them are now behind, and only one more to pass over? And having delivered you in six troubles, do you think He will leave you to sink in the last? "Oh, no!" says the faith of my sister, "For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Keep fast hold of the skirt of Him that is King of the Jews, and you are safe enough. Though we may be ready to let go as to our own feelings, this is our comfort: He will never lose His hold of us; for Himself hath said, "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Can you doubt His power, His faithfulness or His love? No. But when I look at my origin, my base conduct, and my utter unworthiness, I begin to sink in my feelings as Peter did in the sea. Ah, my friend, this is looking at the wrong object; but when we are enabled to look unto Jesus, salvation appears as certain and as firm as the everlasting hills; yea, surer too, for, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed." Will this do? "Yes," saith my dear friend; but,

"O for a strong and lasting faith  
To credit what the Almighty saith!"

Well, go to Him as the disciples did, with, "Lord, increase my faith," and see how great things He will do for thee. But I must stop.

I am very unwell, having caught a violent cold and cough; but though it shakes me sadly, it hath not yet seized my heart. Remember me to all the family.  
Affectionately yours,

John Keyt

---

Sin, in the reign and power of it, may cohabit with the most excellent natural gifts under the same roof, I mean in the same heart. A man may have the tongue of an angel, and the heart of a devil. The learned Pharisees were but painted sepulchres. Gifts are but as a fair glove drawn over a foul hand.

*John Flavel*

## CALLED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT

*By W.C. Lamain (1904-1984)*

---

*Mr. W.C. Lamain was a greatly-loved minister in his native country, The Netherlands, who after several pastorates there, became the minister in The First Netherlands Reformed Congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., from 1947 until his death in 1984, aged 80. Despite denominational distinctions, he was held in high esteem by many of our godly friends in Grand Rapids, among them our dear friend, the late Pastor J.K. Stehouwer. During the Second World War, Mr. Lamain had been the minister at a church in Rotterdam where the following amazing deliverance from possible execution by the occupying Germans took place.*

*The Germans had forbidden the clergy publicly to remember and pray for the Dutch royal family in church services. In addition, nothing negative was allowed to be said regarding the Germans. Mr. Lamain did it anyway. But once there were spies in church. Mr. Lamain then came into trouble as he himself wrote:*

It happened in the congregation of Rotterdam-South that we said something regarding the losses on the German side. They were not secret, as they had been published in the newspapers. It was on Sunday morning, February 7th, 1943, that I preached about Psalm 58. 9-11. With the reading of Psalm 58, my attention was drawn especially to the last verses. It was as if the Lord stopped me there. I had never read those verses as I did that morning. I could not forget those words, and the Lord gave a little light on the meaning of that text. With fear in my heart, I prepared myself to deal with these issues. Although great caution was exercised in those days, time after time secret police agents visited the church to listen carefully to the sermons. But it was impossible to find another text for that Sunday morning. Fear of the enemy, prison and concentration camp fell away for a moment and the Lord granted me great pleasure in the meditation of that truth. The Lord showed me clearly the fulfilment of His divine justice in Christ, also against nations and persons who oppress God's people and who do not consider the Most High God.

We read in Psalm 58. 9-11: "Before your pots can feel the thorns, He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in His wrath. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Psalm 58 is a golden jewel of David. He sang this Psalm to the chief musician, Al-taschith. Some think that this was a motto that David used during the times of his soul distress when his enemies surrounded him. Al-taschith means: no destruction. You can imagine that David, when pursued as a wild bird on the mountains, continually cried out to God. David composed this Psalm while he was fleeing. What is now special about Psalm 58? The circumstances in which David found himself were the same as in Psalm 57, but his soul's condition was different. It is as if you heard him say here: The right hand of the Lord has changed, because in this Psalm, he is no longer filled with fear. He is filled with a holy feeling of indignation and wrath against the shameless and hardened anger of his enemies who had gathered together to judge and sentence him in an unjust way. The words call our attention to the fulfilment of the judgment by a righteous God: the fulfilment happened suddenly and dreadfully, the fulfilment brought happiness and deliverance for the church, and this fulfilment will be seen and acknowledged by the world.

That Sunday morning I was able to preach with much freedom and opening. God had also given clear signs the week before that He reigned and that He loosed the power of the mighty. Sicily had been liberated and Stalingrad had again come into the hands of the Russians. It had been published in the newspapers, so it was public knowledge for the whole world. I had only touched upon it in a few sentences, but what was the result? I was called to account for these words. Spies were among the large crowd that came week after week and had transcribed the sermon. The German police called our house on Tuesday afternoon, as I was ready to leave for Zeeland to serve some congregations. I had to give an account about some statements that I had said. Perhaps I should have cancelled my trip, but after much discussion, it was agreed that I would appear before the judges on the following Monday. I went on that trip as with lead in my shoes. I did not go on that trip by myself; the devil went along. It became very fearful in my heart. Several persons had already been imprisoned or shot to death by the Germans for making certain statements, which the Germans considered offensive.

I arrived in Terneuzen and placed my burden before God, that He might take it from me. However, my burden became heavier. Everything had transpired so quickly that Tuesday afternoon. None of the Rotterdam-South consistory members was aware of it. In my imagination, I was to be shot to death and then come under the righteous judgment of the Lord. What a terror! I was sighing to the Lord, but everything remained hidden from me. Where was my faith? I felt so far from God as if there was no faith in my heart. I wrote a letter to the consistory members and told them what had happened. I asked them and

all those who had learned to pray to God to remember me unto the Lord who is able to save when death draws nigh. I also wrote that I hoped the Lord in His mercy would remember the congregation with its office bearers and if I had to die, that they would not forget my wife and children.

I do not remember where I preached on Friday. I went to 's-Gravenpolder on Saturday to preach in that congregation on Sunday. I had thought about nothing else but death and that I could not approach nor bow before God. It seemed almost impossible to preach, but I did stay there that Sunday. I do not know what I preached about that Sunday morning. Whenever one is in such bands, no organised sermon can be delivered. The tenth Lord's day from the Heidelberg Catechism was to be explained in the afternoon service. Then the Lord took pity on me. We first sang Psalm 54. 1 (Psalter 147. 1):

“O save me by Thy name  
And judge me in Thy might:  
O God, now grant my urgent claim,  
Acceptance in Thy sight.”

After singing that, we read in the Catechism these words: “Since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.” Then the Lord, in His great goodness, took away all my concerns. What a divine power there was in those words for my soul! What is stated there has always been true, but if we are personally to benefit from it, it must become a living reality within our hearts. This God must apply through the Holy Ghost. God granted me a little faith. Faith is that which overcomes the world. I could hide with all my fears and trials in Him, not knowing what the results would be. Whatever God would do would be good. I had nothing more to say and that is a blessing. We reason and the devil makes us afraid; but to be able to stand on the side of God is best. The voices within me became silent. There was a rest in God through Christ. When I came from the pulpit, Elder L. Hoekman grasped my hand and said to me: “When you read those words this afternoon ‘since all creatures are so in His hand,’ then you lost your burden, did not you? I felt it in my heart.” Yes, that beloved, God-fearing man, whom I had known from my youth, had shared the burden with me and now could also share the joy that the Lord had granted my soul in these difficult circumstances.

Monday morning came, and I went by train to Rotterdam. I arrived at the headquarters of the German police and had to go upstairs where the officials were sitting. I climbed the stairs with a prayer that the Lord would support me. The encounter was not so friendly. With fierce eyes, they looked at me. First of all, they asked about my sermon. I think they thought I had written down every word of that sermon. I had written out

a couple of points and some thoughts but nothing more. They opened a drawer of a desk and ... there was the sermon! It was all written out! Then they started asking if I had said this or that. It was a critical moment. To avoid the issue would not work; it was either yes or no. I stood before the judges in a large room. What a fearful moment! Many thoughts filled my heart, but I must confess that God was at my side and supported me. I also became aware that there were people in the congregation praying to God for my deliverance. A number of them had gathered at our house. Later, I heard that an elder had sent up an urgent prayer to heaven. I had to answer truthfully to whatever I was asked. Then it started: We were no longer the Netherlands; the Germans were now our rulers; they could send me to a concentration camp. Yes, they had the authority to take my life. Everything was so cold-hearted and bold. The eyes of those people looked as if they were ready to tear me apart. It concerned life and death. I experienced that our lives are in God's hand. Pilate once said to the Lord Jesus: "Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee and have power to release Thee?" Jesus answered him: "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above."

I became convinced that day how deeply God had humbled our fatherland on account of our guilt and sins. I had continually to say: "God would be righteous if we would be trampled under the feet of our enemy." But when they said to me that they could do with my life as they pleased, that they could make a decision regarding my life and that they actually stood above God, the Lord gave me opening and freedom. Truly, I received great freedom. I forgot myself, my family, and my congregation. The Lord gave grace to testify about God who also rules on earth. God can allow much to happen, but He still stands above everything. When I think back on this time, I shake more now than at that moment. The Lord gives courage and strength to those who wait upon Him. There had been many thoughts in my heart beforehand regarding this meeting. The strife had been heavy. What is man? By nature we do not do anything else but fight for ourselves, and we risk everything to uphold ourselves. We must first lose ourselves to win the battle. Those are lessons that only God can teach us.

I was able to experience in front of those German judges what Christ at one time said to His disciples. When they were called to give account before kings and magistrates, they should not fear what they should say, for the Lord would grant them words in that hour. God is a Fulfiller of His Word and our unfaithfulness does not ever affect His faithfulness. We need that great Heavenly Advocate for everything! Time and again He places Himself in the breach for His people, for those who must always suffer shipwreck and disaster. O that our souls might

always speak well about God and evil of ourselves. God is found to be almighty and a help in trouble.

To be frank, I will say that during the hearing (which lasted about one hour) I experienced what it means to be strengthened and supported by God and to be surrounded by angels in a trying hour. God does not misuse His grace, but gives it when it is needed. It remains true for His church: "He rescued thee in time of need," and, "For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD" (Psa. 117. 2). It is wonderful to be carried on the wings of prayer. The Apostle Peter also experienced that when he was in prison because of the name and cause of the Lord. In following Christ, the blessed Shield of the church, everything is safe and good. His continual prayer at the right hand of the Father gives strength in need and in death. He lives to pray continually for His people. His praying is not imploring but a claim on the basis of His finished mediatorial work. Hear Him testify in John 11. 42: "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always."

What was so remarkable was this: one of the judges left the room. The other judge that remained became calmer, and with a warning that I should be more careful with my statements, sent me on my way. Once I was outside, it came in my heart what is written in Psalm 66 (Psalter 174. 1):

"O all ye peoples, bless our God,  
Aloud proclaim His praise,  
Who safely holds our soul in life,  
And steadfast makes our ways."

When I arrived home, I was able to call upon the Lord with our family and acknowledge Him for His wonderful protection. The soul may then raise up a monument, even if it is not as large a stone as Samuel raised up in 1 Samuel 7. 12, an Ebenezer: "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us." It is the desire of God's born-again people to return to the Lord everything that they received from Him, never again to mistrust God, whose work is perfect. Yet, concerning this matter, I was later on disappointed with myself. With bitter tears, I must continually admit in my life that I grieve the Lord so much by my sins and unrighteousness. But He will never forsake His people. No devil, world or sin will ever be able to break the bands that were formed in eternity. It is then applied to them what the poet sang in Psalm 105 (Psalter 425. 4):

"Ye seed from Abraham descended,  
To whom His favours were extended,  
And Jacob's children, whom the Lord  
Has chosen, hearken to His Word.  
He is the Lord, our Judge divine,  
In all the earth His glories shine."

O what will it be when we no longer will cause God more sorrow and we will be freed from ourselves and from sin forever! It is through Thee, through Thee alone because of Thy eternal good pleasure.

---

## THE CHURCH OF GOD

By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)

(Continued from page 26)

---

*The nature of the ministry.* First, it must be said that it is of a spiritual character, relating chiefly to God and the soul of man – things which are not seen; although it has its definite practical bearing upon the outward lives of the people. In this lies mainly the discerning nature of the true ministry, for “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). Natural religion is superficial (often artificial), and chiefly relates to outside things; it is not “in the hidden man of the heart,” but resides in the brain. A spiritual ministry deals with the conscience and will ever discover the sovereignty of Jehovah, for when the gospel is faithfully preached, it is either “the savour of life unto life” or “of death unto death” in all hearers, whoever they may be (2 Cor. 2. 15, 16). A very awe-inspiring truth for an exercised minister!

This character of the ministry is especially declared by the Lord in Jeremiah 15. 19: “If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth.” The “impudent and stiff hearted” are to have a “Thus saith the Lord” preached to them, whether they will hear or forbear. “But what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.” The “precious” are to be carefully conserved, tenderly shepherded, ministerially prepared for the heavenly garner.

Second, the nature or form of the ministry is *declarative* of the Being, character, and whole counsel of God, which includes:

1. The doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, with all the vast truths emanating therefrom.

2. God’s goodness and power in creation, and His righteousness and wisdom in ruling the universe.

3. The doctrine of sin and its solemn and awful and mysterious entrance – the casting down of Satan, the temptation and fall of man from his primitive innocence.

4. The doctrine of federation, whereby in Adam all human nature became totally depraved, and the whole human race involved in hopeless ruin. As a consequence, our very righteousness is unclean.

5. The inflexible justice of God in the unrelenting claims of His holy law, and man's undiminished accountability, notwithstanding his utter helplessness through sin.

6. God's rich, covenant grace in electing Christ a spiritual Head and determining to recover in and by Him a part of the human race from the ruin of the Fall; devising and effecting a means thereto which is not only not inconsistent with His holy and righteous character, but is declarative of His glorious grace, wisdom, love, mercy, power and faithfulness. The relative doctrines here are:

i. Substitution, wherein is fully secured the authority of the Lawgiver both in demand of perfect obedience and infliction of penal sentence.

ii. The doctrine of the Person of the Son of God, His incarnation, Suretyship, obedience, and death.

iii. The merit and acceptance of Christ's effectual work, manifested in His resurrection from the dead, having obtained eternal redemption for His elect.

iv. Christ's ascension and His continuing Priesthood in heaven, as the sinner's Advocate with the Father, the crowned Priest, King over His church, Son over His own house.

7. The ministry is declarative of Jehovah's unassailable sovereignty in choosing some persons of the human race to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, and in leaving the rest to perish in their sins.

8. Declarative of the purpose of God in establishing the throne of grace, that through Christ the penitent sinner may thereat "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"; that Christ possesses illimitable fulness of grace and blessing in which every believer has a covenant right to participate. "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Eph. 1. 6, 7; Acts 13. 38, 39). In approaching the throne of grace, the doctrine of the Trinity (named above) is experienced, according to Ephesians 2. 18: "For through Him" – Christ – "we both" – Jew and Gentile – "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." This experience invests a person with a capacity for "citizenship with the saints, and of the household of God" (verse 19).

Third, the character of the ministry is *hortative* [to give exhortation].

1. Exhorting convinced sinners unto prayer and confession, and unto faith on evidence of repentance of sin. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Phil. 4. 6;



1 Thess. 5. 17; Rom. 10. 13-15; Acts 14. 22; 16. 31; 20. 21; Luke 24. 47).

2. Exhorting unto love, patience, submission, humility, obedience and all good works as the fruit of grace, with the diligent discharge of every duty, religious, relative and civil, as becometh disciples of Christ, in the house of God, the church, the family, and before the world.

3. Exhorting unto steadfastness in believing in adversity, considering the purpose of God in adverse circumstances, with self examination, new repentance, and humble trust in the faithfulness and power of the Lord.

4. Dehorting from [exhorting against] all ungodliness of heart, lip and life; warning and persuading men (see Rom. 2. 16; 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11; Col. 1. 28; Acts 17. 31; etc.), embracing the doctrines of the resurrection of the just and the unjust, the judgment after death, and the final separation of the goats and the sheep, with the eternal punishment of the wicked, and the eternal holiness and blessedness of the righteous.

Fourth, the nature of the work of the ministry is that of service or stewardship, in which – though the excellency of the power is ever of God alone and not of us – yet the whole man must be given unto the discharge of the ministry: “Give thyself wholly to” these things; “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4. 15, 13). It is arduous work, the labour of which is not solely in the delivery of the pulpit message, but chiefly in *the obtaining* of it through secret exercise before the Lord.

*(To be continued)*

---

## THE WORD OF HIS GRACE

*By Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)*

---

1. God works by His Word of truth upon the hearts and consciences of His people, and this word the apostle calls here “the Word of His grace,” because it is *only in and by His Word* that the grace of God is either revealed or communicated to the soul. It is desirable to be clear upon this point, that we know nothing of God out of and apart from His Word. Sometimes we seem as if we would almost try to realise in our mind thoughts of God and to represent Him to our imagination in His abstract Being as filling all time and all space, seeking in fact to accomplish an impossibility to the finite mind of man, as Zophar well declares: “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer

than the earth, and broader than the sea” (Job 11. 7-9). But all these vain thoughts, for “vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt” (Job 11. 12) – all these vain thoughts fall back upon ourselves, and we find that immediately we get out of the domain of God’s Word, directly we seek to realise the existence of an internal, infinite, incomprehensible Being by the efforts of our own reasoning mind we are lost in confusion. We are like Noah’s dove, when first let loose from the ark. Wherever she looked, she could see nothing behind or before her but a wide waste of waters on which she could not rest the sole of her foot. She therefore flew back to the ark, and in that alone she found rest when Noah pulled her in. So we, when we have taken our wild, wandering imaginations into these excursions of thought, and feel ourselves utterly lost in the incomprehensibility of the divine Essence, are glad to come back and lodge our wearied, puzzled mind upon God’s Word, and especially upon “the Word of His grace”; for in that and in that alone can we find all the satisfaction we ever can have, not only as regards the very Being of God and the perfections of the Almighty, but what is beyond the reach of sense, reason, or imagination, what He is as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Again, sometimes we are exercised not so much about the Being and perfections of God as we are on account of *our sins and transgressions* against and before Him. We have views in our soul of His purity, holiness and terrible majesty. We see Him as a consuming fire, and our hearts sink at the very thought, crying out, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa. 33. 14). We are lost, as it were, in the blaze of Mount Sinai, or else are wrapped up in clouds of confusion through the smoke which ever darkens that fiery mount. Here, then, we need the Word of God’s grace to give us some relief from all this fear, bondage, darkness and confusion. When, therefore, we come in faith to the Word of His grace, or, to speak more correctly, when the Word of His grace begins to open itself up by the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit to our understanding, to our conscience, to our heart, and to our affections, and we can feelingly and experimentally believe what God has spoken there of Himself as the God of all grace, the very God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, as abundant in goodness and truth, then and only then do we find some satisfaction of soul, and then and only then some rest for our wandering feet. Never seek to be wise above what is written. Never seek to know more than God has revealed in the Word of His grace; for in that He has lodged all that instruction, all that heavenly wisdom, and all that revelation of His mind and will, and of His mercy and love in the face of His dear Son, which can be known or enjoyed in this life. But rather seek for the Word of His grace to be opened to your

understanding, to be revealed to your heart, to be applied to your conscience, and to come with warmth, life and feeling into your affections; and then indeed you will find it is the Word of His grace from the grace it manifests, unfolds and communicates to your soul.

3. Again, in the Word of His grace are *exceedingly great and precious promises* which seem to shine like so many stars in the midnight sky, studding chapter after chapter with their bright effulgence. It is upon these promises that the covenant of grace is established, as the apostle speaks: "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8. 6). All these promises are in "Christ Jesus," as we read, "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1. 20). By the belief of these promises and by receiving their rich contents into the soul we become, as Peter speaks, "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1. 4), that is, through the grace communicated by them there is a being renewed in the spirit of our mind, and a putting on of the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. In commending, then, the Ephesian elders to the Word of God's grace, the apostle would commend them to a realisation by faith of the promises contained in that Word. These promises are all based upon the faithfulness of God. And what firmer support can there be than the faithfulness of Him who cannot lie, and who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"?

4. Nor does the Word of His grace shine forth less conspicuously in the innumerable *invitations* which are addressed to the poor and the needy, the weary and the heavy laden, the hungry and the thirsty, and to God's afflicted and exercised family generally. How suitable are these invitations to the characters to whom they are addressed; and as they believe and receive them, grace is communicated by them. Thus into whatever trouble or difficulty the Ephesian elders might fall, they still might find some invitation in the Word of God's grace suitable to their case, which the Lord might bless to their souls.

5. The Word of His grace contains also *admonitions and warnings* to hold us back when we would otherwise stumble into some error or fall into some trap of the devil. These admonitions and solemn warnings are as necessary to our guidance in the strait and narrow path as the promises or invitations. Does not the apostle say in this very chapter, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears"? (Acts 20. 31). Thus we find this man of God could warn and admonish as well as instruct and comfort.

6. The Word of His grace also contains what I might almost call a standing code of *holy precepts* intended to regulate our conduct in our

families, in the world, and in the church of God. And not only so, but to reprove and rebuke us when we go astray, and, as applied by the blessed Spirit, to bring penitence, grief and sorrow into our heart when we have departed from them, and to lead us to honest confession of our sin and shame. In this way, therefore, the precepts of the gospel are often made use of for severe rebukes as well as godly instruction.

Thus in whatever light we view “the Word of God’s grace,” we shall find it holding forth precious truths, sweet promises, kind invitations, solemn warnings, holy precepts and keen rebukes, and all in infinite wisdom adapted to our state and condition, as surrounded by a host of perils and temptations, and yet upheld by the mighty power of God.

7. But when the apostle speaks of commending them to the Word of His grace, it is not, if I may use the expression, to the dead word but to *the living Word*, not to the letter but to the spirit, for it is this which especially makes it the Word of God’s grace. It was therefore in the prayerful hope and expectation that they might feel the power of that word upon their hearts – sometimes in the public ministry, as not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, but to come at every opportunity under the sound of a preached gospel, that the Word of His grace in the mouth of His servants might be made a blessing to their souls. In private also he would recommend a frequent and diligent reading and studying of the oracles of God, that the Word of His grace through secret meditation might open up to them continual sources of strength and consolation.

8. He would also commend them to the Word of God’s grace that it might come into their heart at unexpected moments, in dark and trying seasons, under the pressure of heavy weights and burdens, and thus be a word from the Lord, lifting up the standard of the Spirit when the enemy came in like a flood.

And do we need the Word of this grace less than the church at Ephesus? Have we no similar perils? Have you as a church no similar dangers? Are there no wolves howling round this little fold? May not even of your own selves men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them? And who and what will be your only safeguard but God and the Word of His grace, to which, brethren, in the spirit of the apostle I desire now to commend you?

---

---

Here lies the foundation of the church. The foundation of the whole old creation was laid in an act of absolute sovereign power. Hereby God “hanged the earth upon nothing.” But the foundation of the church is on this mysterious, immovable rock, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”; on the most intimate conjunction of the two natures, the divine and human, in themselves infinitely distant, in the same Person.

*John Owen*

## THE GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST 54TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Report of the Meeting held at Clifton Chapel, on Saturday afternoon,  
September 26th, 2020*

---

The Chairman, Mr. D.J. Christian, welcomed over fifty members and friends, including those attending remotely, to the meeting which commenced with hymn 1141. The Chairman then read Psalm 46 and Mr. D.J. Lawson sought the Lord's blessing. The Secretary then introduced the 2019 Annual Report and Financial Statements. First, he summarised the Trust's work in 2019. We had been involved in over thirty cases, including changes to trust deeds' administrative provisions, appointment of trustees and first registrations with the Land Registry. In addition to charitable funds held, we also have some responsibility for the maintenance of graveyards where chapels have been sold. Income included £86,736 from the sale of Hope Chapel, Rochdale, to be used initially for chapels in Lancashire which have outstanding debts.

He emphasised the need for trustees and those responsible for church administration to check their trust deeds and note the requirements for the appointment of new trustees. Difficulties have been experienced with the numbers required, and it was helpful to reduce this number by passing a trustees' resolution under the Charities Act 2011. Another point to note in the trust deed is power of appointment. Some trust deeds give power of appointment to male members only. If the church membership has been reduced to the extent that there are only ladies remaining, there is no power to appoint by the church. Therefore we recommend that the trustees change the power of appointment to the whole church. Again that can only be done whilst the trustee body is quorate. The Trust is always pleased to advise on these matters.

Security of trust deeds is important. Two recent cases had been complicated by wholly or partly lost or misplaced deeds. Trustees should know where the documents are kept for safekeeping. Electronic and paper copies should be retained. A transcript was recommended where the trust deed is too large to scan.

The continuing closure of chapels is very sad – in 2019 three chapels had been sold and the closures continue. The sale of Bethel Chapel, Rye, was completed in July 2020. Since 1976, the number of chapels on the *Gospel Standard* wrapper had decreased by about one hundred. At a chapel trustee meeting the day before, the local chairman had spoken briefly from Psalm 126. 4: "Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south." He referred to the dry, barren areas in the south of Israel which after heavy rain can overnight be turned into swollen streams, and vegetation springs up. So with the Spirit of the

Lord, He can work mightily and quickly as we have seen in revivals in this land in past generations.

Chapel sales brought considerable responsibility on the trustees to decide how to deal with the proceeds. Where necessary, the Charity Commission has been very helpful in giving power to distribute proceeds which would otherwise be permanent endowment. There can be much preparatory work by the trustees in assessing the needs of potential beneficiary chapels. Much use was being made of the Zoar Chapel, Reading and Providence Chapel, Croydon funds. In the case of Croydon, almost forty cases had been considered and grants approved so far of over £550,000. The majority of this is for chapel improvements and maintenance, but it also includes missions, education and book publishing. Much money is being spent on maintaining and renovating our chapels from the sales of closed chapels and we wonder if we shall see the Spirit of the Lord being poured out from on high (see Isa. 32. 15) so that we have a godly increase to fill these chapels.

No further information had been seen about the registration of churches' working funds with the Charity Commission from March 2021. The Trust did have a model constitution which we would hopefully be able to agree with the Charity Commission for use after March 2021 or whatever later date may be applicable. The membership had been advised about the Trust's new draft Articles of Association in the notice calling the meeting and the Trust's solicitors now have to obtain Charity Commission approval.

Turning to Publications, 2019 had been a very busy year. The wide range of books sold totalled 9,634 which was over 10% higher than in 2018. The three new books published in 2019 had been selling steadily. This year the coronavirus had affected the book publishing, with orders from bookshops being negligible and sales significantly down.

One new book published this year was *Human Rights and the Christian* by Dr. G. Charmley. It is hoped to publish two new books soon, being the next book in the *Faithful Footsteps* series, on Rahab, and *Glimpses of Grace*, being extracts from J.K. Popham. At a later date it is hoped to publish an *Exposition of the Last Words of David* by Martin Luther.

The Secretary expressed thanks to churches and Trust members for their continuing support. The Chairman thanked the Secretary for his report. There were no questions, and the Report and Financial Statements were received by the Trust subscribers present. The two members of the Executive Committee retiring in rotation, Messrs. A. Crowter and H. Sant, were re-elected. Mr. H. Mercer retired at the AGM and appreciation was expressed for the twenty-three years of valuable service he had given.

The Chairman expressed thanks to all involved, including the Publications Manager, Secretary and Mr. John Kingham for the work they do. He expressed thankfulness to the Lord for all His kindness through another year.

Hymn 1134 was then sung, following which Dr. G. Charmley gave an address entitled, "Human Rights and the Standard of God's Word." The address was not recorded and the following extracts come from a summary kindly provided by Dr. Charmley.

In our day there is little escaping the language of human rights as we interact with society and with the law. The United Kingdom has been a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights since 1949 (and played a key role in its inception), and these rights were formally incorporated into British law in the Human Rights Act of 1998. Is the concept of human rights supported by the Word of God? A search of the Scriptures reveals that the phrase "human rights," or even the earlier "rights of man" does not appear, but this is not enough – after all, the word "Trinity" does not appear in the pages of God's Word, but the Bible clearly teaches one God in three Persons. It is not enough to say that a word or phrase is not in Scripture – is the concept to be found there?

This leads us to the question of what is meant by human rights. Human rights are considered to be: universal, that is, applicable to all people everywhere, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, or any other status, and possessed by human beings simply upon the ground of being human. Furthermore, these rights are so important that they over-ride national law.

In 1940, as Britain and her Empire stood alone against Nazi Germany, and the U.S.A. waited on the brink, Britain and the United States adopted the language of human rights against Nazi claims that Britain fought only to preserve the dominant status of the Anglo-Saxon powers. Britain argued that she, seeking the aid of the U.S.A., was seeking nothing less than to uphold human rights against the depredations of the dictators.

Events during and after the war led to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations in 1948 and the European Convention on Human Rights in 1949. The framers of these, especially the latter were, for the most part, motivated by a broadly Christian world-view. René Cassin, a key figure in the formation of the Universal Declaration, stated that "the concept of human rights comes from the Bible, from the Old Testament, from the Ten Commandments."

At the base of the reasoning of the Declaration and the Convention lies the concept that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity; that all human beings are worthy of respect simply because they are

human beings, regardless of their age, nationality, religious creed or ability. This has been traced to the witness of the churches, and especially to the work of theologians between the world wars, who sought to defend the concept of humanity against denials from far left and far right. The human rights instruments of the late 1940s sought to entrench human dignity in the hope of preventing a repeat of the horrors of the holocaust and as a defence against Communism. They were an attempt to bend human politics to answer to the standard of God's Word.

However, human rights' language only became widespread in the culture in the late 1960s. The Christianity-infused politics of the drafters of the Declaration and Convention had been replaced by largely humanistic politics which increasingly viewed Biblical Christianity as a drag upon progress. Rather like in the beginning of the Book of Judges, after Joshua and his generation had passed away, "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel" (Judg. 2. 10). Where the "Christian human rights" of the Convention were based upon the standard of God's Word, the humanist rights of the late 1960s were based upon the desires of sinful men and women.

This may be seen when the question of what the rights of man are is asked; if looking to the standard of God's Word, then what man is determines what the rights of man are – if we look to the word of man, then those rights are endlessly malleable.

The Scriptures teach us that man, although fallen, is made in the image of God as male and female, and also that God created man for Himself. We are accountable to a Creator, who has revealed Himself in His Word; as Micah wrote to wandering Israel: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6. 8).

The Scriptures speak, not so much about our rights as things to be claimed, as our duty to our neighbours; by nature, fallen man is selfish, so that we require pointing to other people as "rights-bearers," made in the image of God. The second table of the law is summed up as, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19. 18), so that we each owe our neighbours a duty of love.

William Gadsby was driven by this truth when he spoke out against the Corn Laws, a system of import duties designed artificially to maintain the price of wheat. He saw the distress caused to the poor in Manchester, and, preaching from Proverbs 11. 26, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it," Gadsby proclaimed: "I consider the Corn Laws degrading to every principle of humanity, and insulting to God and man."\* It is

---

\* Quoted in *William Gadsby* by B.A. Ramsbottom (Harpندن, 2004), pp. 208-9.



important to note that Gadsby mentioned specifically the dignity of man as being insulted by the Corn Laws. The campaigners against the slave trade also worked on the principle of the common humanity of black and white – one recalls Wedgwood’s medallion of a black slave asking, “Am I not a man and a brother?”

In the Christian world-view which informed the setting up of the 1948 Universal Declaration and the 1949 European Convention, the concept of human rights, based upon the special dignity of man as created in the image of God, is a reminder that man does not have the last say as to what and who matters – it is God’s Word which does. People do not create human rights, but recognise existing rights – trace the development of human rights ideas in England, for example, and you will find that the rights outlined in the Magna Carta were said to be those which King John was violating. Man is, in the words of the United States Declaration of Independence, “created ... and endowed by his Creator with certain unalienable rights.” When the laws of man deny those rights, they may be challenged in the name of a higher law – the law of God. Parker T. Williamson, a godly American Presbyterian who marched with Martin Luther King, wrote of challenging the racist laws then in force in the Southern United States “...in obedience to a higher law – that divine moral law that Southern segregationists had abridged.”\*

In contrast, when human rights are viewed as man’s word to man, we find that the very concept of what they are is highly uncertain. The post-war human rights instruments named about two dozen human rights; today a country signed up to the United Nations and the Council of Europe would have to recognise over 1300. These include not only the familiar rights to life and liberty, but also the right to affordable broadband access.

George Bell, late Anglican Bishop of Chichester, aptly concluded in 1940, “We are now in such a parlous condition because we are godless; we do not believe in God. We have made the two great commandments read: Thou shalt deny the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, and with all thy heart, and thou shalt love *thyself* – thy race, thy class.”\*\*

As Gospel Standard Strict Baptists, we should be sensitive to the rights of dissenters, for our spiritual forebears knew what it was like to meet “with many a blow, from sinner and from saint” (see H. 287). To the person or organisation trying to say that religious rights should give way to human rights, our reply should be that religious rights, so-called, are human rights, protected in law. Here, Christians have history upon

---

\* Parker T. Williamson, *Broken Covenant: Signs of a Shattered Community* (Lenoir, NC, 2007), p. 1.

\*\* George Bell, *Christianity and World Order* (Harmondsworth, 1940), p. 104.

their side in addition to the law. Thanks to the efforts of past Christians, the Lord's people possess freedom of worship and witness.

So long as human rights' claims rest upon the standard of God's Word, they will be positive and lasting, for the Word of God shall not pass away, though heaven and earth shall pass away (see Matt. 24. 35). However, we must beware that sad and solemn change when the standard of God's Word is abandoned for the unstable standard of man's word: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. 11. 3). The modern concept of human rights arose from the belief that mankind possesses a special dignity due to being made in God's image. If we discard that, we shall soon find that the man-made rights we create shall be swept away. It is to God, the Maker of man, that we should look, and work in the light of His Word, respecting others, as humble subjects of the Lord the Lamb, never forgetting that our eternal life was bought by His resigning His rights to glory and life that guilty sinners might live.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Charmley for his most informative address. The meeting concluded with hymn 978 and the benediction. Appreciation was expressed to the friends at Clifton for making us so welcome.

For further reading, please see *Human Rights and the Christian* by Dr. G Charmley (£6.00) available from Gospel Standard Publications.

D.J. Playfoot

---

---

### WAYMARKS

*Call by grace of William Fay (1885-1965),  
Pastor at Norwich (1936-1964)*

---

Grace is not hereditary, yet what a blessing it is to have had godly parents, those who know and fear God and whose children are the subjects of their many prayers! One is reminded of the lines of the poet Cowper:

"My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthroned, or nobles of the earth;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,  
The son of parents passed into the skies."

My great-grandfather was a gracious man who built the chapel at Enford, Wiltshire, on what was then his own farm, and maintained it at his own expense. Mr. Daniel Smart married his daughter as his first wife, and held him in such high esteem that he travelled 120 miles to bury him. My grandfather, who lived to the age of eighty-eight, was not called by

grace and brought to a knowledge of the truth until he was nearly seventy, and was baptized when he was eighty. He died when I was quite young, but I remember him well. My two aunts used to take him to chapel in a Bath-chair, which he used to call his "carriage and pair." My father was born at Enford, and after he was called by grace used to walk four miles from his work once a week to attend the prayer meeting. He was baptized at the age of twenty-four in the open river which ran through Enford Farm. He was a humble, well-instructed man, and when he passed away in 1922 had been deacon for twelve years at Zoar Chapel, Reading.

I was born at Reading on April 19th, 1885, the eldest of a family of five. Both my parents were members of the church at Zoar, and we were all brought up under a godly home atmosphere and taught especially to reverence the Sabbath. From an early age, however, I was anxious to be free from restraint and to enjoy the pleasures of the world, which at that time I did not regard as sinful. I went to Sunday school and chapel only because my parents insisted. I do not remember having any very early religious impressions, except for one occasion when I was about twelve, when I was filled with such a fear of the consequences of my wrongdoing that I went upstairs and kneeling down tried to pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." At that time I did not know who God was, but felt there was a God who knew the secrets of my heart. I prayed that if there really was such a God, He would hear me, and for a few months after I tried to do better; but alas, this soon wore off! I left school two months after my twelfth birthday and commenced work, and for some years had more freedom to indulge in the many wicked practices that my carnal heart sought after. Almost every week I brought some fresh grief to my parents, till at last, to save my parents from disgrace, the police-court missionary was sent to my home to talk to me. Many, many times since then I have had to pray with the psalmist: "Remember not against me the sins of my youth." It is with shame I call these things to mind, and only mention them to show how far a poor sinner may go and yet be plucked as a brand from the burning. Before long I began staying out late at night, inventing some falsehood to deceive my parents. I even thought of running away from home, and should have done so I think, had I not been bound as an apprentice for seven years. I found some bad companions, and was never more happy than when with them playing cards or devising some mischief, and spent many an evening in the theatre or music hall.

In recalling this part of my life I am astonished that God did not cut me off in my sins as I deserved. But the appointed time was now drawing near when a just and most holy God was to deal with a poor, guilty, ruined sinner in His holy law. I had been a willing slave to Satan,

going my own way and bent upon pleasing myself and gratifying my evil inclinations. My dear father did not shut the door against me, but many times I have seen his grief over my waywardness.

I cannot recall any word that was especially used by way of conviction, but I do vividly remember the evening in January 1902, when God set before me my state as a sinner and my wretched, sinful way of living. That night soul trouble began which continued with little relief for about three-and-a-half years. My past life with all its sins confronted me, and I really thought there never had been such a sinner as I now saw myself to be. I went to bed early before my brother, that I should not be seen on my knees. No one can tell how frightened I was in approaching One who was then to me an unknown God. I wanted mercy but was afraid to ask for it. My outward practices were gradually broken off and I was separated from my companions, who soon detected the change and began mercilessly to ridicule and persecute me. Harder still did I feel the treatment I received from friends at the chapel, who seemed to shun me instead of giving me encouragement. I was compelled to tread this path alone and sometimes wondered if I should hold out; but my soul was at stake and I could not go back.

I went on in this way for about eighteen months. Guilt was on my conscience, and an increasing discovery of my depravity was always with me. I diligently read and searched my Bible, but turn where I would, it would condemn me, and the promises were not for me as I did not in any way, so far as I could see, answer to the characters to whom they were addressed. Many were the cries I put up for mercy. Sometimes I felt I could justify God in any way He might deal with me. I felt I would give all I possessed to know the pardon of my sins and to have a good hope that I was a child of God. I listened to sermons, all of which seemed to cut me off and aggravate my case. The time came when I could bear it no longer, and I began to attend various other places of worship, mostly free will, in the hope of getting relief. I tried to mend matters by close attention to good works and so-called Christian service, but could get no ease for my burdened conscience. I could not stay away from public worship, but all that drew me at last was the thought that, "perhaps this time the Lord may bless me."

My case appeared to be hopeless until one Lord's day evening I went to Zoar to hear Mr. Feazey, when I heard the voice of God through His servant which raised up the first glimmer of hope that I had ever received. The text was Isaiah 40 10. I do not remember any of the sermon, but the words, "I am thy God" dropped on my heart with such sacred power as I cannot describe. Thereafter I felt encouraged to plead with Him for the pardon of my sins through Jesus. I could ask Him now for faith to lay hold of the atonement. I still wandered about from chapel

to chapel, seeking rest but finding none. At almost all of them I was told to take God at His word; I had only to believe and all would be well. But this was what I could not do. I think it was the Plymouth Brethren, who seem to have an extensive knowledge of the Bible, who at last gave me up as hopeless and hardened. I did not know it then, but I was learning the utter folly of man's free will and supposed ability to believe, and to understand the Scripture: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." I found too that the carnal heart is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

At last I was obliged to return to the chapel where God had first raised up a hope in my soul. It was where I had been brought up and all knew me, which perhaps was the reason for my reluctance to show myself among them. I could see now that nothing but God's free, sovereign, electing grace, mercy and love could meet my case. The doctrines of predestination and election which had seemed so unreasonable and difficult to understand, now appeared to be quite in accordance with His mind and will in the plan of salvation. The ministry, once so trying to me, now gave me a little encouragement to press my case, and I did not for many years sink so low as before. I remained in this place for several months, sometimes cast down, at other times feeling there was hope for me, and daily learning more of my own helplessness. The services of God's house were now my delight, especially the prayer meetings. Many times I felt my heart softened and humbled as I listened to the dear old saints speaking with the Lord, and longed to be like them. Worldly things had now lost all their attraction for me, and my conscience was very tender just then.

About this time I formed an acquaintance with a young man attending the chapel who was more advanced in the ways of God than I was, and a union commenced between us that was only severed by his death some forty years later. Many were the walks and talks we had as we opened our hearts to one another respecting our exercises. My heart was knit to him as Jonathan's to David. But after a few months he was removed in providence to Bath, which was a sore trial to me. I felt my support was gone, though I can see now that it was God's purpose to take away my earthly prop and bring me off all creature help.

The time for my deliverance, however, was drawing near, as unexpected as it was sweet. One day early in 1905 I felt my spirit very much softened in reading and meditating on spiritual things, and especially at a service I attended in another chapel one week evening. During the singing of that beautiful hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross," I saw as clearly as I might have done with my natural eyes, the Lord Jesus, first in the Garden of Gethsemane, then before His persecutors in the judgment hall, and then hanging on the cross. All the

while I seemed to hear Him say, "All this was done for you." I could not discern His features, but O how my heart was drawn out to Him, to His dear Person! And then I thought I could see Him a risen, crucified Saviour, now in heaven pleading His atoning sacrifice for the sinners He loved. And still I heard the same words: "All this for you." I went out into the street: everything looked so different now. My burden and sadness were gone. I had been seeing things too sacred to be uttered, and never did the lines seem more appropriate than then:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

I walked at liberty. Jesus was in my heart and I loved Him. For a time all things connected with His house were my delight. There was nothing between God and my soul, and I found much freedom at the throne of grace.

A few months later I ventured to speak to the deacons at Zoar, and was then invited to come before the church. But when the evening arrived, my heart was sad and heavy. I had lost the joy and sweetness of my first love during the last few weeks since meeting the deacons, and was much tossed to and fro in my feelings. Was I right after all? While waiting in the vestry, I knelt down and begged the Lord to appear for me and help me to tell the people what I believed He had done for me, and to take away the fear of man. Blessed be His dear name, He did hear me! As I rose from my knees, I took up my Bible and let it fall open where it would, and the first words I saw were those in Psalm 37. 5. They stood out almost like letters of fire and came into my heart with power and comfort, as though spoken to me in an audible voice: "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." In the strength of these words, all fear was removed and I was enabled to speak freely before the people. I was baptized on Lord's day, May 5th, 1905, by Mr. Obed Mortimer of Broughton Gifford, Wiltshire.

After I had joined the church, I began to think and expect that my path would be more easy and that I should not be so troubled as before with sins and doubts and fears. It was not long, however, before I realised I was in an enemy's land, and often I had to beg and pray God would uphold me in the way, keep my soul alive, preserve me from the assaults of Satan and the deceitfulness of my own heart, and keep me from bringing reproach upon His name and people. My life has been one of many ups and downs, hopes and fears; but there have also been times when I have had His sensible presence, when faith being in lively exercise I could rest upon His promises and unchanging faithfulness; and

proving that He which hath begun a good work will carry it on and maintain it, has enabled me to say:

“Grace taught my soul to pray,  
And pardoning love to know;  
’Twas grace has kept me to this day,  
And will not let me go.”

---

---

## BOOK REVIEW

---

**Entering Through Much Tribulation; Life and Writings of John R. Broome (1931-2013);** 444 pages; hardback; illustrated; price £16 plus £4 postage and available from Ettrick Press, 98 The Brow, Brighton, BN2 6LN, tel: 01273 253842, email: ettrickpress@gmail.com, and local agents.

Those who knew and loved the Lord’s servant, the late John Broome will, with many others, heartily welcome this beautifully-produced biography. Containing an honest and heartfelt account of his very clear call by grace, subsequent trials, and his equally-clear call to the ministry, it is a book of gracious instruction, reproof and consolation to discerning readers.

Reading his life history and the sermons at the end of the book, one is impressed with two things: the fires through which he passed making him such “an able minister of the New Testament,” and his steadfast love for the truths he proclaimed.

Also included are one or two letters and some of his writings, historical and polemical – a tiny selection from many years of ministry in the field of publishing.

As was said at his memorable funeral service, John “held fast” to the doctrines which had been engraved in his heart, and was not ashamed to “hold forth” these truths, not only to those in our own circles, but to others, sometimes complete strangers.

Although John was never called formally to a pastorate, he nevertheless had a pastor’s heart, carrying a burden for souls and for those who like himself are called to pass through “much tribulation.” In many respects he was called to be a “Barnabas; a son of consolation,” and being of a sensitive disposition himself, he had a special ability to enter into and understand those who pass “through the valley of Baca.” In this respect he had a large “parish”!

The biography demonstrates the particular burden John had for young people, some of whom were his scholars at Trowbridge Grammar School, the Lord’s servant Michael Ridout being one of these. He has written a feeling and fitting foreword as “a son in the faith” of John.

The book recounts how John’s contacts also expanded into longstanding and fruitful friendships with Gurkha soldiers. He had a special gift of speaking with young people; a gift which crossed the North Sea to many contacts in Holland where the Lord opened doors for him to preach several times.

This book is highly commended, for its quality of production, and more so for the spiritual profit in its many pages. It can truly be said that “he being dead yet speaketh.”

## PRAYER OF THE DESTITUTE

---

My land lies fallow; Master, till me!  
 My heart lies empty; Master, fill me!  
 It plays the traitor; Master, win me!  
 It faints, it dies; Put new life in me!  
 It goes astray; Good Shepherd, lead me!  
 It sighs for hunger; Come and feed me!  
 It is so poor; Give riches to me!  
 It is corrupt; O Lord, renew me!  
 So ignorant; O wilt Thou teach me!  
 Has wandered far; But Thou canst reach me!  
 Is so diseased; Physician, heal me!  
 Exposed to danger; O conceal me!  
 It trembles! In Thine arms, O fold me!  
 Begins to sink! O Saviour, hold me!  
 Is sinking fast; Lord, look upon me!  
 Is cold and dark; O shine upon me!  
 A poor, lost sinner; Come and find me!  
 A rebel! May Thy love now bind me!  
 A beggar! O wilt Thou relieve me?  
 A prodigal! Wilt Thou receive me?  
 A backslider! Wilt Thou restore me?  
 Unholy! May Thy presence awe me!  
 Unfit to die! O God, prepare me!  
 So weak! On eagles wings, O bear me!  
 So comfortless! Lord Jesus, cheer me!  
 So lonely! God of love, draw near me!  
 By sin accused! Good Lord, acquit me!  
 Unfit for heaven's pure service! Fit me!  
 Unfit for work on earth! But use me!  
 A suppliant! Do not Thou refuse me!

William Grant

---

## NOTICE OF DEATH

---

**Michael Trevor Pickett** loved pastor at Old Paths Chapel, Choteau, Montana, United States of America, passed to his eternal rest on January 11th, 2020, aged 77. "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

---



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
**MARCH 2021**

---

---

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

---

---

**NEHEMIAH THE KING'S CUPBEARER**

“For I was the king’s cupbearer” (Neh. 1. 11).

In the sovereign providence of Almighty God, it has pleased Him to raise up in high places, godly men and women who, like Esther the queen, “come to the kingdom for such a time as this.” This was especially true during the seventy years of Babylonish captivity. Among these so appointed by God was Nehemiah, the king’s cupbearer.

It is probable that he had been born whilst his parents were in captivity, as the impression given of his activities bespeak of a man yet in good health and strength. Thus, probably his only memories were of Babylon and not of Jerusalem. Despite the undoubted idolatry that must have surrounded him, we would believe that his parents held fast to the truth and brought up their son to revere the God of Jacob, and in His time He blessed their son with that most precious of blessings: “the fear of the LORD,” which is “the beginning of wisdom,” and “a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” On one outstanding occasion when in Jerusalem, we hear him reproving the ungracious practices of those who profaned the Sabbath, and on another reproving the rich who took advantage of the poor, saying, “So did not I, because of the fear of God” (Neh. 5. 15).

At the time the Holy Ghost records his history, we find Nehemiah in one of the most trusted positions in the court of Artaxerxes. As the king’s cupbearer, he was responsible for ensuring that the food and drink put before the king was not poisonous. He would have tasted the food himself before presenting it to the king. The office no doubt brought him into close contact with the court and with the king himself. He was evidently a man whom the king greatly trusted and no doubt was a close confidante.

But the Lord God of Israel had a more important work for him to do than waiting on Artaxerxes. Although Nehemiah was a loyal servant of the king, in so doing he was serving the higher King of kings. All true believers should remember that they are subject not just to the powers that be, which God has ordained, but that they only serve the inferior powers aright, if they serve “as unto the Lord.” This is “the salt of the earth” which our Lord warns us must not lose its savour. The world watches the believer, and while the conscientious man is approved, it is

very quick to notice an inconsistent walk, often making that an excuse for their unbelief. King David's behaviour caused the enemies of God to blaspheme. How we need to be kept!

What work had God ordained for Nehemiah? It was to oversee the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, both literally, and also to re-establish godly practice in the church and nation. We read that God had put it in his heart (see Neh. 2. 12). When God puts a work in the heart, He prepares this instrument to obey and by His good hand overrules all the events that appertain to that work as we read in Psalm 138. 8: "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands." The work ordained of God for Nehemiah to be engaged in was the work of His hands, Nehemiah being God's honoured instrument. So, we read more than once of the good hand of God being upon Nehemiah. Nehemiah found that God moved the heart of Artaxerxes, and the hearts of many in Jerusalem who were made willing to rebuild the walls amidst much opposition and reproach from those who had "neither part nor lot in this matter."

When God works, He makes the way, but often permits Satan to oppose, to make it all the more apparent in the end of the matter, that the Lord God omnipotent reigns and not the powers of darkness.

But before Nehemiah could venture in this work, God moved in his heart the humbling work of confession of sin. God uses humbled men and knows how to keep them humble as they are engaged in His work. He knows how to "hide pride from man."

The appalling state of Jerusalem's walls, the low estate of many of the Jews who had already returned with Ezra the scribe, was in God's hand a cause of great grief to Nehemiah. He knew the just hand of God had permitted the reproach of the captivity, his own personal sins and those of Israel were the cause of God's frown.

Although he was evidently in personal, great prosperity in Babylon, yet because the cause of God and of truth lay deep in his heart, he could not rest in his spirit. His spirit stirred up by God, Nehemiah determined that he should go and seek the welfare of the Lord's people in Jerusalem and rebuild the ruined walls. But for this he would need the permission of the king to be absent, and his authority to rebuild the walls of what had been a scene of rebellion before the captivity.

So as the king's cupbearer, he saw an opportunity God had given him to present his case. He knew, however, that Artaxerxes was an erratic and sometimes irrational king. Unless the Lord went before him, he would meet with a flat refusal as Moses did with Pharaoh, generations before.

He besieged the throne of grace with prayer before he went in to the king with those words, "And prosper Thy servant this day." The burden

upon his spirit was so great that he could not hide the grief he felt about Jerusalem's ruined walls which were a reproach on the name of the Lord God of Israel. Yet in the king's presence, it was considered an insult to him if anyone appeared to be sad or discontented. It could have resulted in death, especially if the king were in one of his erratic moods.

Immediately, however, the king noticed Nehemiah's distress and questioned about it. "This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." Nehemiah realised that his life was in jeopardy at this critical moment. He honestly confessed the reason for his deep grief. Whereupon the king said, "For what dost thou make request?" It was then that Nehemiah did what has remained a blessed example to the church of Christ ever since. "So I prayed to the God of heaven."

Before he opened his mouth, he prayed to the God who holds all men's hearts in His hand, even that of the mighty king in whose presence he served. He looked higher, and no doubt directed by God "in that hour," asked the king for that which God was pleased to move his heart to bestow. It is significant to notice that the Scriptures tell us that the queen was sitting by the king. Some have surmised that this would have been Queen Esther. If so, Nehemiah had a friend in court!

God's people have a Friend in court in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Advocate with the Father.

Authority was given for Nehemiah to have the required time, and the needful resources. It is amazing to record that despite the vehement and scornful opposition he met with in Jerusalem, the walls were rebuilt in fifty-two days! An amazing feat which puts many of our civil engineering projects to shame!

What lessons does this history give us?

1. Nehemiah was a man greatly trusted by the king.
2. Despite his affluence in Babylon, the state of Jerusalem's walls was of more concern to him than to maintain his status and lifestyle in Babylon.
3. Even though Nehemiah was not part of the generation which was primarily rebuked by God for their backsliding, he was willing to share not just Jerusalem's guilt, but its restoration.
4. His prayerful concern was accompanied by practical fruits.
5. When a matter proceeds from the Lord, God gives His servants no rest until it is brought to fruition, and God Himself does not rest until He has done what He said.
6. When a matter proceeds from the Lord, we must expect opposition. Satan has ready agents in Sanballat, Geshem and Tobiah, as well as, sadly, the nobles who "put not their necks to the work." There will be those who are grieved that anyone should seek the welfare of God's people and His cause.

7. They that honour God, He will honour. God is in no man's debt, and those who like Nehemiah are willing to go the "second mile" in His service will find they lack nothing.

8. Eventually Nehemiah returned to Babylon, having fulfilled his commission.

But then there is a wonderful parallel of which Nehemiah is but a faint example, in the work the dear Saviour came to fulfil.

1. The cause of the church lay deep on the heart of the Triune God from eternity.

2. Where was God to find a suitable Person to fulfil that work of love?

3. God the Father entrusted the work of bringing the many sons to glory to His only-begotten, dearly-beloved Son. He had full and complete confidence that He would accomplish this stupendous work.

4. Even though the Son had laid on His Father's bosom from everlasting, when He saw His church ruined in the Fall of Adam, He was willing to leave His radiant throne and stoop to the low estate of His people to redeem them. "Was ever love like this?"

5. The dear Saviour came to restore that which He took not away. His people's guilt was imputed to Him, that He might take it away and bring a lasting peace between God and man.

6. Whilst here below, He did not rest until the work was finished on the cross at Calvary.

7. The profane and professing world, with Satan, did all they could to oppose the Saviour's mission. But the gates of hell could not prevail against Him.

8. When our Lord bowed His head and gave up the Ghost, His holy soul returned to His heavenly Father, having finished the work His Father had given Him to do.

9. Our Lord was His Father's cupbearer, as one brought up with Him, daily His delight.

---

God looks not at the elegance of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded or rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly. The true mother would not have the child divided. God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so He loathes a divided heart. God neither loves halting nor halving.

*Thomas Brooks*

## THE GOOD CHEER OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

*Sermon preached by J.G. Pavlik at Salem Chapel, Carshalton on  
Lord's day, November 23rd, 1980*

---

**Text:** “And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matt. 9. 2).

What simplicity there is in this narrative, which tells us how the Lord, having entered into a ship, passed over the sea and came to His own city. There was a purpose in it, a purpose divine, that He must go back to His own city. He did not perform many miracles there, but there was one character there, and there was the appointed time when he must be blessed. That appointed time had come for this poor man, stricken with palsy, to be healed. But there was more than that, my friends. It went farther than the healing of the body; there was a divine purpose of grace to that sinner. How comfortable were the words that the Lord Jesus spoke to him: “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.”

But before we go any farther, let us consider the character. This is very needful as I may have said to you before. One should like to speak of that which is so discriminating on the one hand, and on the other so blessedly describing the case of the people of God; for if you have a case which the Lord has given you, you want it rehearsed from the Scriptures. You want to find in the Scriptures that which is suitable for you; you want to prove it inwardly, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that there is a case that suits you.

Now this poor man was sick of the palsy. In simple language, he was a helpless man. He laid on a bed, his limbs were useless; he could not move. He could not do for himself, he needed attendance, he needed help continuously. He had good friends who loved him, and who with faith came and brought him to the Lord Jesus; and they brought him lying on a bed. You know, this describes the spiritual case of the people of God; not just naturally, but spiritually a child of God is found a helpless sinner. Sin, that awful malady, has made him so; as we would say, it has paralysed him and made him helpless. Other men who never feel it, never know what it is to be helpless, can carry on in their own way in natural life and sin. Yet this man had something in his soul. The child of God feels the malady, feels he is spiritually impotent, spiritually helpless. He knows that whatever he does, however he tries to better himself or exercise himself in religion, he can never do anything to save his soul. All is lost because of sin, and he feels in his heart the solemn burden of guilt. That spiritual case is harder, more bitter, more heavy than the natural case. I am persuaded that this man whom they brought to the Lord Jesus was such a one who knew what it was to feel the plague

of sin and felt in his soul that he could not save himself. It was because of that the Lord Jesus, instead of attending to his bodily needs first, attends to his soul first. We men generally put the body first. How much care we bestow upon our bodies, our natural things! But the Lord Jesus puts the soul first when He deals with His people. He will put the soul first.

Now you know, my dear younger people, and also you older ones, there is a point here. Has the Lord made the things of eternity, the salvation of your souls, a matter that has the pre-eminence with you? If so, it stands before every other concern in your life, and will be attended by exercise of soul. Or do you say, "Well, I push these things behind me. I will please myself. I will do this or that and look after natural things"? I am sure the Lord will not have it so with His children. He uses various means to bring us to our senses, to make us feel our want and need of His mercy and pardon through the Lord Jesus; so that we cry, "Give me Christ, or else I die." And so He gives us painfully to feel our need of His salvation, that we cannot work it ourselves; that we cannot work for it, and that we cannot keep the holy law either; and thus He brings us guilty to the cross.

"Who but the soul that's led to know  
How just and holy is the law,  
Will to the cross of Christ repair,  
And seek salvation only there?" (H. 113)

By divine dealings we are weaned from natural things, weaned from the world, weaned from sin and self, our own goodness, and also from the law, all to one purpose:

"Jesus, my soul's compelled to flee  
From all its wrath and curse to Thee;  
Though oft, through pride, my stubborn will  
To Sinai feels a cleaving still." (H. 113)

Thus the sinner has to part with the law; he will know that it can only curse him and it only shows his helplessness and his misery. There is no other who can save but Christ. Now these exercises, when they are in a sinner's heart, are there for a gracious purpose, because the Lord, in His own time and way, will bring deliverance. Here we have the way in which the Lord has dealt with this poor man in providence and grace, and He put his soul's concerns first. He said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." He did not say to him, Thou art a stranger. He did not say to him, Thou art one of My people. He did not say, Because thou art one whom I have known for some time. He addressed him in this way: Son. We do not know how old this character was, but taking it in the natural way and line of things, palsy

generally comes later in life. So he was one whom I believe was much too old to be called son, as people would speak to a younger person. Here is a word which comes from the lips of the Redeemer to those whom He loves: Son, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." I am sure this is a part of the dealings of God, because His people have to go through tribulation. One of our hymnwriters takes it up, and says for their encouragement:

"Sons of God, in tribulation,  
Let your eyes the Saviour view;  
He's the Rock of our salvation,  
He was tried and tempted too;  
All to succour  
Every tempted, burdened son." (H. 758)

Now the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, the Son of God from all eternity, speaks here to a poor, finite sinner in this world: Son. There is nothing strange in it because we have in the Gospel of John this truth at the opening of the Book: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." And again, the Epistle of the Apostle John takes it up and says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." Son. But in what way is the manifestation of being sons of God, made with those favoured sinners whom the Lord calls His own? How are they manifested? Well, they are begotten of Him, they are begotten of the Spirit. They are wrought upon, quickened by the Spirit. Eternal life is given unto them, as the beloved of the Son of God. They are sons by adoption, sons because the Spirit of Truth whispers to their spirit that they are born of God. In the Epistle to the Romans Paul touches upon it and says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Holy Spirit comes to them, quickens them into newness of life, and conveys the blessing into their soul, whereby they know whom they have believed.

Now here the Lord Jesus speaks to this poor man: Son. The man may well have thought, "Well, I am a poor, undone, helpless creature; how can I be a son?" And yet the wonder of it, the mercy and the love, is that it is of grace. It is an unmerited favour that he is manifested as such, for here the Lord plainly says, "Be of good cheer." "Be of good cheer." Why, he has everything to cast him down. He might have said, "With my affliction, everything is against me; how can I be cheerful? I am such a helpless creature, dependant on others, how can I be of good cheer?" Yes, be of good cheer. Perhaps you have noticed, as we have read the chapter through, with the woman who had been diseased with an issue of blood for twelve years, she was encouraged by the Lord Jesus in

the same way. The Lord said to her, "Daughter." "Daughter, be of good comfort." Now this is spoken to the people of God, sons and daughters of the Almighty, the favourites of heaven. The Lord of life and glory takes up their case and deals with it. He speaks comfortingly and encouragingly to them: "Son, be of good cheer"; "Daughter, be of good comfort."

Naturally, as we have already observed, everything was contrary, everything was against it; but if the Lord says so, then there is a good, solid ground. Poor sinner, lift up thine eyes and see it. He is the Saviour of the lost. Almighty power is moving on their behalf, and the end of it is most blessed. But before the Lord healed this man sick of the palsy, He spoke to him those words that reached his case, the case of his soul: "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He was a sinner, and no doubt struggled with sin, no doubt felt the burden of it in his heart. It was heavier than all his affliction, more heavy than all that.

I do not like to speak of myself, but perhaps I might be permitted to say this. As a young man, when the Lord first laid His hand upon me and my poor back started to get crooked, I had to go to hospital and was for a long time on a frame. Before that, the Lord showed me what a great sinner I was, and as I lay upon the frame all my sins laid heavy on my soul. What a burden, what trouble! With the distress of my soul I was brought very, very low. The natural thing, to have a crooked body, was bad enough; but to have a crooked heart and my wretched guilt, my sins, was much worse and made me worse. How could I meet God? But blessed be God, He heard my poor cry and He caused His word to come with unction and power into my heart. I felt forgiveness and mercy and was then delivered from condemnation; and that brought a change in my own case. I do not want to go into the circumstances of it, but what a sweet time it was; sweet pardon and mercy. "I ... saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee ... Live; yea, I said unto thee ... Live." And I knew I was going to recover. I felt the pardon of my sins and the power of Jesus' blood. I felt something of that forgiveness, and what a sweet time that was. "Thy sins be forgiven thee." I can enter into the exercise, into the case of this poor man when the Lord spoke to him those words: "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

That was my case, that was the case of this poor man, but what of thine own case? What of thine own soul? What of thy sins? Do you feel the burden of them? Do they make you so helpless and wretched? Do you feel that your sins have brought you to that place, where you cannot extricate yourself, where you are languishing, where you are perishing? There is only One who can speak peace to you, only One who can command deliverance, only One who can save you to the uttermost. Blessed be His name, He still speaks forgiveness. It is a sweet sound to



malefactors doomed to die. Sweet indeed, if you feel guilt, to be released from it. Sweet when you feel your bondage gone, the fetters falling off your hands and feet, to be brought into the liberty of the children of God, into true gospel liberty.

Now, on what ground did the Lord Jesus speak these words to the man stricken with palsy? He did speak them on the ground of His own merits, His own work which He had come to do; for without the shedding of blood there is no remission. There is no forgiveness, no mercy, no escape from condemnation, no deliverance apart from that precious atonement made on Calvary's cross. The Lord Jesus had come to do the Father's will, and that entailed that He should not only be manifested as a real Man, not only that He should do good to the people, not only that He should preach, that He should heal and do those many miracles; but that He should fulfil the law, every demand of it, that He should make the law which we have broken, honourable, restore it to its honour, to its rightful place, and that He should pay for our sins; all the demands of the law. The law says that the soul that sinneth shall surely die, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission. So He goes to Gethsemane and He goes to Golgotha. Say, my soul, hast thou ever been led to follow the Lord of life and glory into the garden? Hast thou ever seen Him in His labour of love, in His agony, running to and fro? "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." O what a bitter cup that was! You and I can never drink of it. It was condemnation, it was wrath, the bitterness of it. But He would drink it. "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done."

And so He is brought into the judgment hall, He is brought before Pilate, He is spat upon, stripped, and clothed with a purple robe; and they made a crown of thorns, plaited, and put it on His head. O how they have misused Him, the spotless, holy Lamb of God. Then He must needs go to Golgotha, be brought there to hang betwixt heaven and earth, exposed to shame, to die that ignominious death. For whom? Can you say, For me? All your sins and mine, my friends, they must either go before us to judgment, or they will follow us. That is the question. Have my sins, have your sins, gone before us to judgment? If so, they were charged on the spotless, holy Lamb of God. O tremble my soul, if they were not imputed to Him, if they were not atoned for! They shall then be charged to you, and then how shalt thou face the Judge of the whole earth?

The Lord Jesus was going to atone for the sins of this poor man stricken with palsy. On the ground of His work which He had seen already accomplished, He spoke those comfortable words to him: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Those sins, black as hell, are washed away in that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, the

fountain opened in the heart of Immanuel. Say, my soul, wouldest thou go to that fountain? I am sure that is the only hope for the children of God. That is where they would go to wash their sins away. They want the Lord to assure them that it is open for them, for their sins; they want Him to assure them of blood-bought pardon, of their interest in the finished work of Christ, and of their interest in His redeeming love and blood. You can be of good cheer, then, my soul, if the Lord speaks forgiveness to you, if those sins of yours were laid upon Him, if they are washed away in His blood, for you will be in heaven with Him. O happy eternity! What bliss, what joy, what glory expects a poor sinner whose sins are blotted out and who has received the pardon of them.

Well can the psalmist speak of it in the thirty-second Psalm. Well can it be taken up again by the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews. David says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Well, David did know forgiveness; he knew mercy. But how did he come to it? When he kept silence, when his heart was bottled up within him he could not enjoy anything. He was the man that said, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." He felt the burden of his guilt. Then the Lord helped him to acknowledge his sins, to pour it out, pour out his heart before the Lord. He could not hide his iniquity, no, he had to pour it out. What a blessed grace repentance is! How the sinner then can tell the Lord all his troubles and all his griefs. The crowning of it was this: not only has the Lord helped him to tell his case, but "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." He says: "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found."

This is not just David's experience. O it is the experience of the Lord's people through the ages. How did Hezekiah come to know mercy and forgiveness? He was brought into trouble. O what sickness there was. The sentence of death was pronounced upon him, and how he did chatter before the Lord! "I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will He break all my bones; from day even to night wilt Thou make an end of me. 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." Then this comes out of his breast: "Undertake for me." Have you ever groaned that before the Lord? I am persuaded those whom the Lord helps like He did Hezekiah, groan. But they shall find mercy. He will speak pardon and forgiveness. A character like that will know what Hezekiah felt: "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness." He had no peace, then. He had bitter thoughts in his heart, hard thoughts. But then the Lord broke in. We do not know what the thoughts of the poor man with the palsy may have been, or how exercised he was; but the Lord came in the same

way: "But Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption." It is out of His love and His mercy, coming from His warm heart to poor, undone wretches. Why, we have come the same way, done nothing to deserve it. O, we sinned against Him, we have done wicked things, we have gone against Him, we have gone away from Him. But He, in His mercy, forgives for His mercy's sake. "But Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption."

"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Sweet forgiveness! When the Lord speaks it there is power with it, attending it, and the soul that receives it lives. That soul has life eternal. That soul has God on his side, for the Lord is for him, and if the Lord be for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from His love in Christ Jesus? "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

I must leave it here. I cannot speak these words to you, but if the Lord will, you will be a favoured soul. It will mean heaven in the end, glory in His presence. And you will put the crown on the right head, on the head of Him who is worthy to wear it; Christ and Him crucified. Yea, then you will sing songs of praise to the Trinity, knowing it is all of grace. Amen.

---

### WHOLESOME ADVICE TO A YOUNG MINISTER

*Extract from a letter from James Kidwell Popham to  
John Hervey Gosden*

*Mr. Popham was both a pastor and father to Mr. Gosden and exercised a watchful care over him as to his ministry, being able through his own long experience in the work to instruct and advise his son in the faith and in the ministry. He lived almost opposite to his pastor, and no doubt they often conferred together on these matters. The following extract from a letter evidently written by Mr. Popham to him in May 1918 will give some idea of the fatherly instruction which he received from that source:*

In your present life you need much grace, but not more than a *full* Christ can give, not more that a *willing* Christ will give, not more than an *ever-present* Christ does give; present, if not always perceived: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He will be with you in a double sense: for your own salvation, sanctification, enlargement in knowledge, in experience of justification, of His own most mysterious, wonderful, glorious Person, and of His Word; then for the great and solemn work to which He has ordained and called you. You will find in this work the truth of Luther's words: "Temptation, meditation and

prayer make a minister.” O it is heavy! Yet it is blessed beyond all words. You may often be in bondage, but will prove that “the Word of God is not bound.” You will grow in a trying sense of insufficiency, but that will be to make room for a sweet experience that your sufficiency is of God. You may sometimes think you were almost a lunatic to have ever entertained a single thought of being a minister of the gospel; then you will have a discovery of the glory of God in choosing the foolish, the weak, the base things, “yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” (see 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28).

May you be made more anxious to preach the gospel than to preach sermons. May a single eye be given you, that your whole body may be full of light (see Matt. 6. 22). There is no occupation so honourable as that of the minister. There is no height so giddy, so precipitous, as the pulpit. “Study to shew thyself *approved unto God*, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2. 15). This is an arduous matter, very difficult. Aim at testimonies from God in your own soul. If you live on anything short you will die. Preach Christ; warn every man, that you may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. So to preach, you will have to show the state of men *out* of Christ, and contend for a *revelation* of Christ; and this will arouse the enmity of mere professors. But in all your godly labour you will have profit – profit in these things: the smile of God in your conscience, souls for your hire, seals to your ministry. O rich man!

You are not forgotten at dear Galeed, nor in secret, nor by your affectionate pastor, J.K. Popham.

---

---

## THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

*By Obadiah Grew (1607-1689)*

---

*Obadiah Grew graduated from Balliol College, Oxford, in 1629. He co-pastored a church with the renowned Richard Vines, but resigned his position in 1662 because of the Act of Uniformity. Grew's non-conformity kept him from pastoring, but not from teaching. He taught young men personally and trained them for the gospel ministry. By 1682 he had become blind, and spent six months in prison for continuing to preach. While in jail, he dictated a sermon every week to be read in churches.*

“And this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23. 6).

The name “Jeremiah,” when interpreted, means “he shall exalt the Lord.” And indeed, in the text he highly exalts the free and rich grace of

God in Christ to sinners. It is observable that, in his prophecies, Jeremiah mixes in frequent promises of the Jews' blessed state to come under the Messiah, as all, or most, of the other prophets do. And indeed, the firmament of the Old Testament is as thickly bespangled and beset with shining promises of the Messiah, and the blessed state of the church under His government, as the heavens are with glistening stars on a clear night.

These precious and glorious promises of Christ were the church's cordials in those times, in their troubles and fainting conditions. Thus we see that when the Lord would give King Ahaz and His people the Jews an encouraging sign of their safety, notwithstanding the fact that the kings of Israel and Syria were in a confederacy against them, this was the sign: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" – God with us. This promise of Christ to come (though His coming was at a great distance) was sign enough to satisfy them in their present preservation; for herein He propounded to their view a greater salvation to come.

Truly, this may be a standing rule for God's people in all ages, to make promises of future great things to be cordials to keep the heart from fainting under present evils. So the assurance that Scripture gives us of Christ's coming again fully and eternally to save us should help our unbelief, and encourage our faith in His care of us in all our interim troubles.

In the text and context we have a famous promise of Christ, wherein the prophet hints at both His natures, and expresses one of His gracious and glorious titles or names, and therein His office between His Father and us. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch." Here He hints at Christ's human nature. He was to be the Seed and Son of David, a branch of that stock. "And this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" – Jehovah Tsidkenu, which imports His divine nature, "Jehovah" being the proper name of God.

Then He expresses one of His gracious and glorious titles as to us: "Jehovah Tsidkenu, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

In Genesis 22. 14 we read of Jehovah Jireh, "the Lord will see," or "provide." We read of Jehovah Ropheka, "the Lord healing thee"; of Jehovah Nissi, "the Lord my banner"; of Jehovah Shalom, "the Lord send peace"; and of Jehovah Shamma, "the Lord is there." In Isaiah 7. 14 He is called Immanuel, "God with us." And Isaiah 9. 6 gives Him five high and mighty titles together: "And His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"; and in our text, Jehovah Tsidkenu, "THE LORD OUR

RIGHTEOUSNESS.” By all these we may see, and should see, how very much the Lord Jesus Christ is made unto us in His undertaking for us. As He “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,” Christ is made everything to us that we should be to God.

Now whereas this name of Christ in the text is given also to the church in this prophesy – “And this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the LORD our Righteousness” (Jer. 33. 16) – it is no wonder that the wife or spouse should be called by her husband’s name. And we find the church called Christ: “So also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12. 12), or the church in union with Christ.

I know expositors take great pains in sifting out the meaning of this text, and do not settle on one. But we may spare ourselves these pains if we think it not too much to give the church of Christ this honour, to call her by her Husband’s name, “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” And this is the name whereby she shall be called, not from herself, but from Him who is made by God righteousness unto her, and as she is made the righteousness of God in Him. And so we find she is to profess that she has her righteousness from Him, and that she is to glory in it also. “Surely, shall one say, In the LORD have I righteousness ... in the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

Now the doctrine from the words, which will be the subject of the ensuing discourse, is this:

*Doctrine: The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord our Righteousness.* The righteousness of a sinner is Christ made righteousness to him. It is the righteousness of Christ made his in God’s accounting and his own; both must be agreed on it. For if God does not account it so, it is not so. “Who of God is made unto us ... righteousness.” And if we do not account it so, if we do not submit to this way of being righteous before God, this righteousness is nothing to us. This was the doleful case of the Jews: “Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith,” as the Apostle Paul said, but, as it were, by the works of the law; they sought to be righteous in a legal, not a gospel way. Paul charged them with the same error: “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” And here was fulfilled that prophetic prayer, “And let them not come unto Thy righteousness” (Psa. 69. 27).

And here we see sufficiently already that this righteousness of ours, that is, whereby we are righteous, or made righteous before God, is not legal, but evangelical. Man’s first righteousness was legal, but that is not the case now. There is no such thing in being between God and us as

legal righteousness; once there was, but now it is cast out in the bondwoman and her son. The law is not able to justify a sinner. Therefore the apostle said, "If there had been a law given which could have given life," that is, unto justification of life (as in Rom. 5. 18), "verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture," that is, the law, "hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." It is true, Christ's righteousness, as in Himself, was legal, being the satisfaction of the law and justice of God in our behalf; but as this righteousness is imputed to us, so it is evangelical righteousness, because it is not righteousness in us, but righteousness accounted to us: "Abraham believed, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." So that there is now another way to justification, and so to life and glory, than once there was, which the Epistle to the Hebrews calls "a new way." And this is the righteousness of Christ made ours, or Christ the Lord our righteousness.

Now in order to open and handle this great and grand doctrine of the gospel, we are, as a preface, to consider what it was that made way for Christ to be made and called "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," or for us to be made righteousness by Him. And it was this, the holy apostle tells us, that made the way: Christ was made sin for us so that He might be made righteousness to us. "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."

*Question:* But if Christ knew no sin, that is, had no sin, how could He be made sin for us?

*Answer:* It is certain that He did not have the least taint of sin in Himself, and therefore challenged His malicious enemies in this case: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8. 46). He defied the devil himself in this point also, as well as the Jews: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me," no sin to lay to My charge. The devil missed finding that sin in Job, hypocrisy, which he thought to have done. Aye, but he could find no sin at all in Christ, though reputedly He was "numbered with the transgressors," and by imputation was the greatest sinner in the world, since the Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all.

So here is the answer to the question how Christ, who had no sin, could be made sin for us? He was so not by having any sin in Him, but by having all sin imputed to Him. As Christ's righteousness by which we are made righteous is in Himself (it is not in us, but imputed to us), so our sins are in ourselves and not in Christ, but are imputed to Him and laid upon Him, as the errors of the offenders were laid upon sacrifices in the law. Thus the Apostle Peter speaks expressly, "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." That is, He carried all our sins upon Him to His cross. He would not bear His cross, therefore they compelled a man of Cyrene to carry it. It was a custom of the Romans,

as Plutarch observes, that the condemned person should bear that cross which soon would bear him. Now though Christ could not bear His cross Himself, nature was so spent in Him, yet He could bear all our sins. The Lord would not ease Him of these, though the Jews did of this cross: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

*Question:* But how did Christ bear our sins in His own body? And how did the Lord lay the iniquities of us all on Him?

*Answer:* There are three things to be considered in sin: the pollution, the guilt and the punishment.

1. The pollution and filth of sin. Christ did not meddle with it. He could not meddle with sin this way, so that in this way He knew no sin. He could not be an idolater, an adulterer, a blasphemer, an unbeliever, or whatever you call a sinner. Neither practically nor seminally was He such, neither was He inclined to be such. He was not, as the high priest under the law, a sinner as well as other men, subject to the like passions as we are, as the Apostle James said Elijah was. The high priest himself in the law was compassed with infirmities, and so offered sacrifices for his own sins as well as the people's. But of Christ, the writer of Hebrews said, He was such a high priest as was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

2. As for the guilt of sin, there are two things to be considered in it: the merit and desert of it, and the obligation to receive punishment for it.

The former of these Christ did not take on Himself, neither was He capable of taking the merit and desert that is in sin. Christ, as for Himself, did not deserve the punishment of sin which He suffered. Therefore Peter said that when He suffered, it was "the Just for the unjust."

But He did take the obligation to receive punishment for the sins of others; this He voluntarily took upon Him, and this was done with His own consent. And in this sense only was He made sin for us. He was willing to have our sins imputed to Him, to be transmitted from us to Him, so as to be obliged to bear the punishment of them, even that wrath and curse which otherwise we should have borne. The sinfulness of our natures, the sins of our lives, our sins past, present and to come, the sins of all that have, or do, or shall do, are imputed to Him when we believe in Him with a sufficient faith. Christ was willing to have all this sin imputed to Him, and put to His account to satisfy for, as Paul would have Onesimus' wrongs imputed to himself. And in this sense Christ was the greatest sinner that ever was by the imputation of God and in the reputation of men; for "He was numbered with the transgressors."

3. As for the punishment, though He was but a reputed sinner, yet He was a real sufferer for sin. He suffered penal hell, though not local



hell; and the death He died for the sins of those who believe in Him was, in nature and proportion, the same which was due to us for our sins, and for the satisfaction of divine justice.

Yet we must distinguish between the essential and the substantial, between the circumstantial and the accidental parts of punishment for sin.

The essential or substantial punishment for sin to satisfy the justice of God lies in the punishment of sense and loss; and Christ suffered both of these. He suffered the punishment of sense, which made Him say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He suffered the punishment of loss, which made Him cry out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The circumstantial or accidental parts of the punishment of sin are these: total and final separation from God, which the apostle calls, "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," and total and final despair, "the worm that never dieth," the place of hell, and duration there for ever. "The wicked shall be turned into hell," and, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

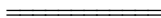
Now these are, or are not, according to the disposition of the patients under the punishment for sin. In the imprisonment of debtors, imprisonment is of the essence of the punishment, but duration in prison is after the disposition of the debtor, according to his ability to pay, or to pay in time. He who is able to pay the debt may be quickly released; he who is not abides by it in prison. Such is the difference between Christ's suffering for sin and the damned's, as to duration under punishment. Christ was under the pains of hell as well as they; but He, being able quickly to pay the debt for which He was in, by reason of the transcendent and infinite worth of His Person, therefore had quick release. But the damned are not able to make such speedy pay and satisfaction, therefore they abide for ever under the wrath of God, even till they have "paid the uttermost farthing."

The same may be said of all accidental and circumstantial parts of punishment for sin: they are or are not necessary, according to the disposition of the patient's suffering. Christ was not capable of blaspheming, or of total and final desperation in His hell, as the damned are in theirs; nor was it needful that He should abide there for ever, as they shall, being a person of such worth that He was able to make quick payment of the debt He took upon Him.

Now these things show us what great mystery there is in both the justice and the mercy of God: in the justice of God, that He would and could punish the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins; in the mercy of God, that He would transfer our sins and sufferings for sin to Christ, who could bear that which we could not, and could satisfy for that in a little time which we could not for all eternity. See also what great mystery there is

in the love of Christ for us, in the sense we have mentioned, that He would bear all the substance of our hell.

Further, this should teach us to go to Christ in the terrors of our souls and consciences. He has had experience of hell, what it is to be under the wrath of God and the curse of the law for all our sins; and He made a present escape out of the same. Surely, then, He is able to pull our consciences from under wrath as well as His own; as the apostle said of His being tempted: "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2. 18).



## A RECOLLECTION OF THE LORD'S GRACIOUS DEALINGS

---

Dear Mr. Dickinson,

Thank you for your letter. May your prayerful desire be granted. I do not seek for the inclusion of my name, but on the other hand, I have no objection, if it is the wish of the churches. My great desire regarding my name is expressed in hymn number 4 verse 8 ["In Thy fair book of life and grace, O may I find my name"].

In accordance with 1 Peter 3. 15, I will endeavour as helped, to give an account, praying that it may be done "with meekness and fear."

As a child I remember a number of occasions when I realised I was a sinner, and resolved to amend my life. That these were not of God was proved, for I soon returned "to my wallowing in the mire," filthy conversation being my particular sin. O the grief it still causes as these things still come to the mind. Like the hymnwriter, my mind "can folly still retain."

But the appointed time came, when at school on June 20th, 1941, I said a foolish thing to another schoolboy, and I felt like an arrow to the heart, convicted of my sin (far different from my former guilt) and I feared lest I had sinned the unpardonable sin. The agony of mind I suffered only the Lord and those with similar experience know. In the following days many remarked, "What is wrong with you?" but I could not speak – "The heart knoweth his own bitterness." Many were the places where I had to humble my mouth in the dust, if so be there might be hope. Yet in all this condemnation I felt I must justify God. Those lines expressed my very soul's feeling:

"Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,  
I must pronounce Thee just in death;  
And if my soul were sent to hell,  
Thy righteous law approves it well." (H. 761)

One Lord's day morning in July 1941, before rising from my bed, but praying for forgiveness, these words were spoken to my soul, with a sweetness I cannot express: "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." I rose from my bed and falling on my knees wept for joy. But temptations and doubts soon returned, and I asked the Lord for another confirmation. The following week again before rising, these words came with sweetness: "I, Jesus, died to redeem thee, walk in the way." Again I fell to my knees thanking the Lord for this merciful confirmation.

As for "walking in the way," I had not at that time even spoken to my parents of my spiritual concern (although I believe they knew what was taking place). It was only little by little that I was able to speak to my parents on spiritual matters and years before I could converse with the Lord's people, although I loved to hear them speaking of the Lord's dealings with them.

By 1959 (eighteen years after my call by grace – I write it with shame, I have been such a slow walker), I felt increasingly concerned regarding the ordinances of His house. I wanted a word spoken with power to my soul, commanding me to keep His ordinances. This I did not have. (I think Mr. Philpot said, to the effect that the Lord does not move along tramlines laid down by a man.) But I was brought to this state, that if I should hold my peace, the "stones would ... cry out."

Accordingly a church meeting was arranged at Oakington and I gave my testimony, subsequently being baptized by Mr. J. Green on June 5th, 1959.

On October 19th, 1960, one week evening Mr. Harwood preached from the first chapter of Jeremiah, concerning Jeremiah and his felt unfitness to speak: "For I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces."

As he spoke, I felt that the time would come when I would be sent to preach. This was the last time I heard Mr. Harwood preach; he was obviously ill that evening, and although I motored him home, to my grief now I said nothing to him and shortly afterwards he went to glory.

But O the unfitness I felt. "I am not eloquent" (Exod. 4. 10). And again like Peter, "What shall this man do?" (thinking of another as much more able).

The exercise continued for ten years, until finally Mr. D. Wiffin preached from, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. 3. 8). Although he did not speak concerning the ministry, the word went home. The time had come for me to speak to Mr. Green, who after Mr. Harwood's death had the oversight at Oakington.

A church meeting was arranged (November 27th, 1970) and as we were a small church in numbers, Mr. J. Green, Mr. J.O. Pack, the late

Mr. Middleditch, deacon of Edmonton, who attended Oakington, and others were present. I preached before the church from Luke 9. 60 [“Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God”]. It was felt to be of the Lord and I was unanimously sent forth.

Five years have since passed; the burden of the Word of the Lord does not get less, but despite one’s fears and the temptation of Satan, I believe I can say, “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.” Often in much weakness and felt insufficiency, may the Lord guide and keep me, for I cannot keep myself, and may the word spoken bring forth fruit.

Brethren pray for us.

Yours sincerely,

R.C.T. Warboys

Oakington, Cambridge, November 26th, 1975

---

---

### PRAYER IN TROUBLED TIMES

*By Edmund Calamy (1600-1666)*

---

*Edmund Calamy was one of the ministers ejected from the Church of England on August 24th, 1662. At that time over two thousand ministers were lost to the established church, and forbidden to preach. Calamy continued to attend the church from which he was ejected and on December 28th, when the preacher failed to appear, was persuaded to fill his place. He preached a remarkable sermon on “Trembling for the Ark of God.” (This appeared in the Gospel Standard 1965, page 65). The following is Calamy’s prayer on that occasion.*

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

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

It is a miracle of free grace Thou hast not taken Thy gospel from us ere this time, but Thou art a merciful God, and though we cannot please

Thee, yet mercy pleases Thee; and we have no argument to bring along with us to beg Thy favour but Thy mercy in Jesus Christ. We pray Thee that Thou wilt glorify Thy sovereignty in being gracious to us, and pardon our many and great transgressions.

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

Bless these nations of England, Scotland and Ireland, and find out yet a way to save us. Pour down Thy blessing upon the head and heart of our sovereign, Charles, by Thy grace, king of Great Britain. Bless him in his royal consort, in his royal relations, in his council; bless the magistrates and ministers of this realm.

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

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

---

---

### **GOD'S ACCEPTED TIME**

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

---

“For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6. 2).

Everyone who is acquainted with the Bible ought to know that these words in the former part of the verse are taken from the writings of the prophet Isaiah 49. 8, where the prophet under the Holy Ghost is representing God the Father speaking to God the Son, in covenant promises, to help Him on and carry Him through in His mediatorial character, in the accomplishment of redemption. See also a further account of this, Psalm 89. 19-37.

What the Holy Ghost hath added in this scripture by Paul, is an affectionate application of the blessed doctrine of Christ's redemption

being now finished; that the church may know that what was then predicted by the prophet hath been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore the present time-state of the church is the accepted time, and the day of salvation for gathering in the Lord's people.

The *now*, both of the accepted time and the day of salvation, means the whole day of life, in the instance of every child of God. And that, and that only, strictly and properly speaking, becomes so when the Lord makes His people "willing in the day of His power" (see Psa. 110. 3). And so far is this from being limited as the yea and nay men would have it, that if refused today, may not be offered tomorrow, that it never can be said to begin in effect until grace begins as the cause in the heart. The labourers of the eleventh hour were never sent before. The dying thief on the cross was never called by sovereign grace until dying. And till God calls, all the wooings and winnings of human entreaty will leave the sinner just where it found him. It is God alone who can persuade Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem (see Gen. 9. 27).

And whenever the Lord manifests this sovereign act of His grace, be the day of life what it may, this is, in the truest sense of the apostle's words, the accepted time, and the day of salvation. How very awful must it be then in man to limit the Holy One of Israel! How solemn a delusion, to make a yea and nay gospel, in leaving things at a peradventure, which the Lord hath not made so. O the blessedness of all these promises in Christ Jesus, which are all yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us (see 2 Cor. 1. 20).

---

---

## DIVINE ELECTION TO SALVATION

*From the Gospel Magazine, 1775*

---

The decree of election renders no man incapable of performing spiritual worship, or of believing and obeying, or of repentance and salvation. It is original and actual sin, man's native enmity and hatred of God and all goodness, that renders men of themselves utterly incapable to perform these truly; and whereas to know in this world who is not elected, is a secret in the bosom of God only, as God has never made it known to any prophet or apostle or minister or any Christian whatsoever that we read of, much less can He be supposed to make it known to any reprobate out of hell. Therefore no man can warrantably say of himself or of any other individual person, that he is not elected, or that God is resolved not to give him or her an heart to believe, repent and to be saved; because we know God saves sinners, even the chief of them, by electing love and grace (see 1 Tim. 1. 15).

The divine decree of election to salvation never did or could damn any. God is the alone Author of election and of salvation from sin, hell

and wrath; reprobation is the alone consequence of sin, which would take place if God had elected none, as naturally as effect follows cause. The justice of God required that all who actually sinned, or their Surety, must suffer the penalty.

Election was in Christ to salvation, grace and glory, before the foundation of the world (see Eph. 1. 4). Reprobation or damnation would never be heard of if sin had not entered into the world. Election of man to salvation cannot possibly in itself be of any bad consequence to any creature, any more than the election of Christ or the election of angels is. The Arminians may with as much truth and propriety deny the election of Christ and of angels, as the election of men to salvation (see Isa. 42. 1; Matt. 12. 18; Psal. 89. 3; 1 Pet. 2. 4, 6; 1 Tim. 5. 21; Jude 6).

The doctrine of election is a soul-comforting doctrine to God's children, and hath no tendency in its own nature to distress the mind of any man. The dark conclusions which the Arminians draw do not belong to the doctrine. The divine Father's loving the elect with the same love wherewith He loved His Son, and choosing them in Christ to be holy and without blame before Him in love, must be a comfortable doctrine (see John 17. 21-24; Eph. 1. 4). What ensures holiness must ensure glory; election doth so, and glory must follow (see Isa. 45. 17; 2 Tim. 2. 10).

As there is no salvation for any that have actually sinned, if a perfect atonement and satisfaction are not actually made to the law and justice of God for those sins by Christ; Christ, the elect's Surety, hath actually made an atonement and given full satisfaction to law and justice in the room and stead of His elect, their sins being laid on Him, imputed to Him, borne by Him in His own body on the tree (Isa. 42. 21; 53. 6; 40. 1, 2; 1 Pet. 2. 24). Therefore Christ demands their deliverance. He saves them from sin as well as from hell (see Job 33. 23, 24; Heb. 7. 25; John 17. 24; Matt. 1. 21).

No other doctrine but election can justify, and no other persons but the elect in Christ Jesus are delivered from all charges and from all condemnation (see Rom. 8. 1, 33, 34). Therefore it is a soul-comforting doctrine. Moreover, Christ prayed for them, and ever lives to make intercession for them, and will raise them up at the last day to be for ever with Him in glory (see John 17 throughout; Rom. 8. 32; Heb. 7. 25; John 6. 39; Col. 3. 4; 1 Thess. 4. 17).

As there never was or will be any final or eternal salvation but as the alone effect of God's love, so there never was or will be any reprobation or final eternal condemnation but as the alone effect of sin and of God's hatred to it.

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37).

## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 49)*

*The call to the ministry.* The above points of doctrine are, as will be seen, only a very brief enumeration, and not intended to be exhaustive. An indispensable pre-requisite to the warrantable susception and the proper discharge of this most weighty and difficult work of the ministry, is the authority of a divine call: for (as was said in another case, Exod. 18. 23) only “if ... God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure.” As of the Aaronic priesthood, so of the New Testament ministry, “No man” – rightly – “taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God,” even as the great High Priest of our profession, the Son of God Himself, “glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee” (Heb. 5. 4, 5). It is a work for which every natural human talent and power proves too short, for which indeed common saving grace is not of itself sufficient. The ordination of the Lord Himself, with continual fresh supplies of the gracious and especial anointing of the Holy Ghost, are absolutely essential. He who ordains, anoints and equips, must maintain every true minister. Love is the unfailing motive, but this can only be kept alive under all the chilling disappointments, the damping oppositions, and the withering sense of unprofitableness, by the warm beams of the Sun of righteousness.

Much secret labour requires the maintenance of a soul vigour which depends on fresh communications of truth from the God of truth. Temptations to moderate the solemn message to please men can only be successfully combatted and overcome by new views and consequently fresh love and admiration of the truth as the truth is in Jesus. Effectual exhortations – made effectual by the Spirit’s power in the heart – are one means by which the Master of His house energises and encourages His servants. Such, for instance, as “Neglect not the gift that is in thee”; “I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee”; “Say unto Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it”; “I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season”; “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God”; “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (1 Tim. 4. 14; 2 Tim. 1. 6; 4. 1, 2; Col. 4. 17; Luke 9. 62; Rev. 2. 10). Such words as the above partake, in the hands of the Spirit, of the nature of reproofs, encouragements and confirming testimonies to the exercised servant of God.



What the heavenly call to the work of the ministry really is, may not be easy expressly to state. But it certainly is a solemn, humbling apprehension of the will of the Lord in the matter, sufficiently clear and weighty to overcome for the time being all the backwardness and shrinking usually felt, and to produce a humble, dependent willingness to “go in the strength of the Lord GOD, to make mention of His righteousness, even of His only” (see Psa. 71. 16). Moses went on the strength of a divine promise of God’s presence (Exod. 3. 12). Likewise Isaiah when a live coal touched his lips and his iniquity was purged, said, “Here am I, send me,” in response to the question, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” although he had previously felt the woe of being a polluted sinner in the sight of the King, the Lord of Hosts (chapter 6).

So Jeremiah, encouraged by promises of divine help (not, be it noted, of unobstructed progress or universal approval – he was warned of strong opposition and cautioned against fearfulness) was made a “fenced brasen wall” against all the enmity of the people, and boldly declared to them their sins, and exhorted the convicted unto repentance and confession (Jer. 1. 17-19; 15. 19-21; etc.). Peter – sincere and impulsive, but after his solemn fall and restoration, tender and much subdued, much less self-reliant, but no less sincere – Peter could appeal to his dear Lord and Master, “Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee”; and he received a divine indication how he was to employ that love: “Feed My sheep; feed My lambs.” And how boldly he preached Christ to His murderers! “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (John 21. 15-18; Acts 2. 36).

Saul of Tarsus, after his conversion, increased in strength, boldly preached Christ that He is the Son of God, confounding the Jews (see Acts 9. 20-22). Paul’s strength to endure his many trials was not unrelated to the divine testimony he had received and which he appears to have frequently called to mind: “I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness ... to the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me” (Acts 26. 16-18). But his first testimony and call to the work of the ministry did not make him independent of God’s continued help. His perseverance he graciously attributes to constant, divine supplies and support: “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day”; “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.... Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me”; “My grace is sufficient for thee” (Acts 26. 22; 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17; 2 Cor. 12. 9).

Although “visions and revelations” such as Paul received have ceased, we suppose that most true ministers have felt at times that nothing but the persuasion and remembrance – or at least the hope – of being called and ordained to the work by the Lord Himself, with the promise and experience of all-sufficient grace to support and help, could keep them ploughing and sowing, and warning, and teaching; or preserve them from falling into the snare of the flatterer to live on the approval of men; or prevent them from turning back in the day of battle (see Acts 27. 23-25; Gal. 1. 10; 2 Cor. 9; 10; 11; 12 throughout, etc.). One renewed, “I have chosen thee, and ordained thee,” is for the present enough. “I will be with thee; I will not fail thee,” will suffice for every exigency. “The testimony of the LORD is sure,” and when newly received, is reassuring in face of all discouragements; while at the same time reviving a sense of the accountability of our stewardship. Nor will those who have genuine reasons to trust they have been set watchmen on the walls of Zion, be unconcerned as to results.

But while a heavenly, inward call is the chief credential, and indispensably necessary, for which there is no substitute, and to run without this is to be guilty of presumption, against which warnings are abundant, yet a second requisite is an outward call from providence (see Acts 14. 23; Tit. 1, 5; 2 Tim. 2, 2; 1 Tim. 1. 18; Acts 13. 42; 15. 40; 28. 28-31, etc.). Scripture countenances no-one who, determining to preach, must needs force himself upon the people. Although Paul “conferred not with flesh and blood,” when called by Jehovah to the ministry of the Word, notwithstanding he encountered much opposition even unto bonds, yet divine providence and the authority of a primary divine call in his heart concurred to set before him an open door – which no man could shut – to preach the kingdom of God to the Gentiles, after being rejected by the Jews. Not a naked, providential call is sufficient, but the coincidence of the inward spiritual and the outward providential call.

A difficult point is estimating the degree of success; for after all, the final proof of being called to the work of the ministry will lie in what God does in His people’s souls through a minister. We do not say, in what the minister *knows* of what is done, but in what is actually done. It would indeed be miraculous for a poor minister to maintain his confidence in a divine commission to preach, did he never know of any spiritual fruit of his ministry in the souls of his hearers. As the ministry is in the nature of stewardship or service, faithfulness and success would appear to have some relation to each other. It is commonly said, “Faithfulness is ours, events are the Lord’s”; which, rightly interpreted, is not without truth; ever bearing in mind that to be preserved faithful to the Word entrusted to us, is itself a blessing of grace. The Scripture abounds with directions unto and encouragement of diligence. The guilt

of sloth is ours. Success was promised Joshua (see Zech. 6. 15) upon his diligent obedience. So to the son of Nun (see Josh. 1. 8). So Solomon (see 1 Kings 2. 3).

The *labourer*, not the idle talker, is worthy of his reward (see 1 Tim. 5. 18); although the latter may be more esteemed for his volubility by the carnal professor. Attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, meditation, giving oneself wholly to these things; care of being an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; to exercise all longsuffering while reproving, rebuking, exhorting; to insist on sound doctrine, sound experience, sound godly practice – who has not felt the deep shame of coming exceedingly short, and therefore the great suitability, need and use of the prayer, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults”? One says, “I know what Christians ought to be”; and one may say, “I know what a minister ought to be, but alas! as for me, I am an unprofitable servant.” Acknowledgment must be freely made that lack of success is not in any measure due to God’s provision being inadequate; for His Word is able throughly to furnish the man of God unto all good works (see 2 Tim. 3. 17).

Neither is the Holy Spirit less efficient than in former days, days of the church’s greatest prosperity, when mighty power was manifested in the ministry. Straitness is not the work of the Spirit but the effect of our own fault. All-embracing divine sovereignty must not be made a palliative for consciences guilty of neglect. Such may be awakened by such a terrible denunciation as Jeremiah 48. 10: “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully” (negligently, margin). A merciful remedy is by confession and earnest prayer and watchfulness, seeking with renewed diligence the return of the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ’s gracious pledge is a wonderful encouragement to prayer in every time of need, even under a sense of guilt: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

Though we feel our solemn lacks and our deep needs, and may be even fearful lest our indiligence amounts to unfaithfulness, a certain precursor of better days would be a humble waiting on the God of all grace with mourning and confession, and prayer for pardon, and renewed unction, strength, grace, wisdom, experience, love, faith, patience, ability and every ministerial supply requisite for the discharge of the trust laid upon us. Well is it when, fearing he has largely laboured in vain and spent his strength for nought, a minister receives into his conscience a divine testimony that his judgment is surely with the Lord (see Isa. 49. 4). For the consideration that a God-appointed minister, watching for souls, must give account, either with joy or with grief, is solemn for himself and for his hearers (see Heb. 13. 17).

A steward must be at the entire disposal of his Lord, as in other matters, so in the sphere of his labour. Nothing can really substitute a Spirit-wrought confidence of being called and placed by the great Head of the church. In difficult times, such an assurance together with some “signs following” is strongly consoling. The equipoise between fainting and presuming is maintained by a wholesome apprehension of the tremendous solemnity of standing between the living and the dead, to speak to dying mortals in the holy name of God, and the deeply-humbling yet emboldening assurance, “Have not I commanded thee?”

A satisfying assurance of the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus prompted the psalmist to say, “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory,” for he adds – as out of a sacred contemplation on the preciousness of Christ, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee” (Psa. 73. 24, 25). Unreserved submission, complete surrender to the disposal of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ is one of the sweetest frames a poor minister can know; and to realise that the government is on His shoulder is an infallible source of strength for a weakling, encouraging him cheerfully to shoulder the burden laid upon him. Rutherford speaks of the Christian and his load being carried by the Lord. “Not by constraint, but willingly; ... but of a ready mind” (1 Pet. 5. 2) is the reverent, humble, loving confidence of faith, not the effect of self-sufficiency.

*(To be continued)*

---

---

## A PRISON BLESSING

*By J.G. Pavlik*

---

*J.G. Pavlik will be remembered by our older readers as a respected minister of the gospel. He was born in Czechoslovakia where the Lord began a work of grace. He had in his heart a desire to get to England but had to escape from his homeland as the Russian Army was beginning to exert full control. Miraculously he escaped across the border into Austria, but was arrested for being without a passport. He subsequently spent two weeks in prison from where he related this blessing.*

Whilst in the prison I experienced some things which I shall never forget, as I was put into a cell with two very bad characters. One was there for larceny and assault, and the other for robbery with violence. They not only told their experiences, but also planned and schemed further exploits. This was a terrible situation for me as I had never known what bad company was. I was scorned and told that I would get

used to prison, it was not so bad, and that this was only the beginning; I would be a prisoner for the rest of my life. I cannot tell how upset I was; mixing with such characters was dreadful. As I lay one night on the canvas bed which was alive with vermin, I could not but groan and sigh unto the Lord and beg for deliverance. The Lord granted it in a most wonderful way, giving me faith's view of the Lord Jesus crucified between two thieves; the holy, just and spotless Lamb of God; He who did no sin; in whose mouth was found no guile; in such company, not only imprisoned, but crucified on the cross. What came over my soul I cannot tell, but the sense of blood-bought pardon, the sense that He did this for me, melted away all rebellion, and made me to acknowledge with the thief: "We indeed justly ... but this Man hath done nothing amiss." That prison cell, with all the darkness and wretchedness in it, was suddenly a place visited from on high, and I felt like Paul and Silas, I could sing the praises of Him who is "yesterday, and to day, and for ever," a faithful, covenant-keeping, merciful God.

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

**Encouraging the Fearful Heart** – An account of Benjamin Hunt, his family and his friends; 198 pages; paperback, £6.94 plus postage. **Brotherly Love** – Memoirs of Daniel Combridge and John Marshall; 294 pages; paperback; £9.95 plus postage. Obtainable from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) or the Christian Bookshop, Ossett – [www.christianbookshopossett.co.uk](http://www.christianbookshopossett.co.uk).

These two books, both edited and published by Dr. M.J. Hyde, pastor of Galeed Chapel, Brighton, give biographical accounts mainly of three former deacons at the chapel, all of whom passed away over a century ago. *Encouraging the Fearful Heart* contains the diary for one year (1891) of Benjamin Hunt (deacon 1904-1910) which gives a gracious account of his exercises and particularly his spiritual concern for a young butcher's boy, Arthur Smeed, of whom more details are added separately. Also included are accounts of Benjamin's parents, wife and a few other friends. *Brotherly Love* gives a fairly long autobiographical account of Daniel Combridge and a much shorter one of his friend John Marshall who were bound together in Christian love, and were fellow deacons and founders of Galeed Chapel. John Marshall as a builder was responsible for the construction of the chapel in 1868. In addition, the book also contains a reproduction of an interesting photographic album mostly of ministers who preached at Galeed in its early days, and their wives; and also some account of the last illness and death of Henry White, the first pastor for a short time after the chapel was built. Both books are well illustrated.

By their very nature, these books are old accounts and jottings gathered together, printed principally for the congregation at Galeed today, but we found both of them in varying degrees both interesting and profitable. We trust others

will enjoy reading them too, and find encouragement from the testimonies of other godly men and women who have walked the pathway of tribulation before them.

John A. Kingham, Luton

---

---

## OBITUARY

---

**Maurice William Short**, beloved deacon of the church at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, passed suddenly to his eternal rest on November 23rd, 2020, aged 75.

Our friend Maurice Short was the youngest of the family of the late Joseph and Nancy Short. He was brought up in a home where prayer and the Word of God were central to the home life. On his own confession this did not make Maurice a believer. When coming before the church at Old Baptist Chapel, he confessed with shame that the first part of his life had been in accordance with the description of the children of wrath in Ephesians 2. 1-3. He more than once said: "A Christian is not the work of persuasion but of majesty." This he experienced in the Lord's sovereign way of "changing his heart and renewing his will and turning his feet to Zion's hill."

It was not until his late teenage years that the Lord began to deal effectually with him. On more than one occasion he escaped death in so-called accidents. On another occasion whilst travelling to work on his motorbike on a very dark winter's morning, a voice from heaven called, "STOP!" Mercifully, he obeyed the voice, for just in front of him was a large tree which had fallen across the road. Had he proceeded at the speed he was going, it would have meant certain death. These events began to make him consider his ways, in a manner in which he had never done before. At the same time a close school friend was killed on a motorbike and thus one was taken but another left.

The first time he was arrested by the Word of God was one Good Friday when he went with his parents to hear the late Jesse Moody preach two sermons at Mount Zion Chapel, Bournemouth. The afternoon text was Isaiah 43. 2. Under this sermon he realised that he needed the presence of the Lord to walk safely through this world. In the evening sermon he felt favoured to sit down under the Lord's shadow as the Lord's servant preached from Song of Solomon 2. 3.

This experience brought him to ponder his ways and to seek to know whether what he was passing through was the work of the Holy Spirit or not. It was under the ministry of the late John Broome at Zion Chapel, Calne, one Lord's day afternoon, that he received a gracious confir-

mation. The Lord's servant took for his text: "He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder" (Psa. 107. 14).

It was about this time that the present pastorate began at Old Baptist Chapel, and it was evident that Maurice was one who wanted to hear for himself.

After a period of time while the work of grace was making itself more and more evident, Maurice became exercised about following in the commandments of the Lord Jesus. It was under a sermon preached by his father on 1 Corinthians 11. 25: "This do ... in remembrance of Me," that his bonds were loosed. The time of love which he experienced was overwhelming for a few days.

However, after having approached the pastor for application to the church, he was severely tempted to withdraw. Standing on the pastor's doorstep, he came with the intention of so doing. However, after being reminded that as John Bunyan said: "There is no armour for the back," he was enabled to hold on his way and go forward in humble faith.

From the time of his baptism and receiving into the church at Old Baptist Chapel, Maurice was a faithful and loyal member, and later as a deacon for over thirty years, he was diligent in both spiritual and practical matters of the church. The cause of God at Chippenham lay dear to his heart both in public and private worship.

He was brought down to his end rather quickly, within ten days. During this short spell of time, he suffered greatly in his body and at times his mind wandered, but on spiritual things he remained clear. Though unable to read the Scriptures for himself, he was able to engage in prayer right to the last. His last audible prayer was for his family, church and pastor.

He was heard to say when suffering greatly: "Did Christ my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?" On another occasion he was heard to quote: "Fear not, I am with thee." On another occasion he asked for hymn 302 to be read. He felt to be particularly in the words: "And when, through fear, I only creep, or dare not move a single step, yet Thou canst come to me."

On his last Lord's day, the day before he was taken, he found help from the morning sermon on the words, "Yet will I not forget thee." But he received special help it appears from the evening sermon on Psalm 142. 7: "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name." This prayer was answered very suddenly the next morning at 6.15 a.m., when his soul suddenly fled, and we believe that he joined "the spirits of just men made perfect." His soul had been finally brought out of prison.

As in hymn 302, "Yet passing through a thousand woes, *he got* securely home."

His prayers, loyalty, also his hearty tenor voice in singing the Lord's praises, will be greatly missed.

He was laid to rest not far from where his godly parents are buried, in the presence of his sorrowing widow, family and friends in the Chippenham cemetery, to await the resurrection morning. The words spoken at the funeral service seemed to be fulfilled: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

---

---

**"THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST"**

*(1 Cor. 10. 4).*

---

When Israel's tribes were parched with thirst,  
Forth from the Rock the waters burst;  
And all their future journey through,  
Yielded them drink and gospel too!

In Moses' rod, a type they saw,  
Of his severe and fiery law;  
The smitten rock prefigured Him,  
From whose pierced side all blessings stream.

But ah! the types were all too faint,  
His sorrows or His worth to paint;  
Slight was the stroke of Moses' rod,  
But He endured the wrath of God.

Their outward rock could feel no pain,  
But ours was wounded, torn and slain;  
The rock gave but a watery flood,  
But Jesus poured forth streams of blood.

The earth is like their wilderness,  
A land of drought and sore distress;  
Without one stream from pole to pole,  
To satisfy a thirsty soul.

But let the Saviour's praise resound!  
In Him refreshing streams are found;  
Which pardon, strength and comfort give,  
And thirsty sinners drink and live.

John Newton (1725-1807)

---

---

You will never trust Christ any farther than you know Him; therefore the knowledge of Him is the principal thing in Christianity.

*Samuel Eyles Pierce*



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
APRIL 2021

---

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

---

**A LILY AMONG THORNS**  
**The Faith of the Little Captive Maid**

---

There are some characters in the Word of God, who are only very briefly mentioned once or twice, who nonetheless have left a sweet savour behind them. To mention one or two: Jabez who was more honourable than all his brethren; the lad with five loaves and two fishes; Abijah, the godly son of ungodly Jeroboam and his wife.

The little captive maid mentioned in just three verses in 2 Kings 5 stands among this little band of witnesses.

The background is well known. Naaman, the mighty soldier, who under God had gained many victories, and no doubt one of the most important men in the land of Syria, had caught the dread disease of leprosy, for which there was no known human cure in his day. All his victories, and success in his career, were overshadowed by this evident sentence of death in his body. "But he was a leper." A powerful type of the much more serious disease of sin, that plague, which if uncured, ushers millions into deserved misery at the end of a life of sin.

In the secret purposes of God, Naaman was to be numbered among the true Israel of God and was to be a subject for the Lord Jesus Christ to preach about in His first recorded sermon in Luke 3. But how was Naaman to know the true God? This leprosy was to be the means in God's hand of accomplishing this greatest of all blessings: to be a pardoned sheep in the fold of God.

The Syrians often raided Israel and carried away captives, whom they sold as slaves to wealthy buyers. Among those taken captive was this little maid, who as she stood in the slave market of Damascus, came to the notice of Naaman's wife. So soon she is maid-in-waiting to the wife of leprous Naaman. No doubt the young girl did not realise yet the mystery of God's overruling providence which brought her into captivity and ordered her steps to this home, where it seems the false god, Rimmon, was worshipped.

Now like a lily among thorns the simple faith of this little maid stands out so clearly.

We notice five outstanding features of her faith, childlike as it was. It was a *continuing* faith.

Although now many miles away from her home country, where the God of Israel was worshipped, this little maid did not leave her faith

behind. It is very evident that the God of Israel was as real to her in Syria as in Israel. How many professing people have left their religion behind them when it suited them or was inconvenient for their flesh to display it. Such are as the chameleon whose coat changes according to its surroundings. This little maid was not such an one. Like Daniel of old, who continued through four reigns of ungodly kings in Babylon never changing his adherence to the God he loved, so it was with this little maid.

It was a *contented* faith.

Like the Apostle Paul, who had learned in whatsoever state he was found, therewith to be content, so this little maid. There is no record of resentment at the loss of her liberty and loved ones. But rather it seems, taught from an early age by God that He makes no mistakes, she is content to be where He would have her at this time. Paul says that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." But we must take heed that contentment without godliness is great loss! How many have been content with what this life offers, having no regard for the life to come, who have found to their eternal loss that a Christless life will end in a Christless eternity.

It was a *confessing* faith.

One with such a faith waits for opportunity to show whose they are and whom they serve. So this little maid, seeing the fruitless and vain worship of Rimmon of which she must have been aware, points Naaman's wife and then Naaman to the worship of the one and only true God. She had heard of what God had wrought through His servant Elisha, and though his ministry was largely confined to the people of Israel, yet she felt that Israel's God could and would deal with any who came with a real need and faith in Him, even as our Lord many years later dealt kindly with the woman of Syrophenecia. In this she was heaping coals of fire on the heads of those who had held her captive. 1 Corinthians 13 was lived out by this little maid, centuries before Paul exhorted the church members at Corinth to live according to the gospel in that chapter.

It was a *confident* faith.

With the childlike simplicity of one who implicitly trusts a father, so this little maid had an unshaken confidence in both the ability and willingness of God to work through Elisha. How attractive is such faith, when God bestows it, and how comfortable is the soul when it can rest so unreservedly in God.

It was a *confirmed* faith.

When Naaman's flesh was restored as clean as a little child's, it was a confirmation of the faith of this little maid. The wondrous miracle wrought living faith in Naaman's heart. This little maid had been in Naaman's house "for such a time as this." The first sermon of the Lord's

recorded in Luke mentions this divine sovereignty of God's dealings with sinners. How God's ways are to us so often past finding out, but as seen in retrospect are always perfect. Truly "He hath done all things well!"

---

---

## CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

*Sermon preached by B.A. Ramsbottom at Bethel Chapel, Luton,  
on Lord's day morning, September 3rd, 2006*

---

**Text:** "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11. 25, 26).

For over three hundred years in England it has been the custom both in church and in chapel to begin every funeral with these glorious, triumphant words, the victory of the eternal Son of God over sin, death, hell and the grave. "I am the resurrection and the life." O what a comfort these words have been made to many a mourner at an open grave!

These words really were the answer of the Lord Jesus to what Martha had said. It seemed she had some kind of belief in life after death, some kind of belief in a resurrection at the end of time. But with what authority, divine authority, did the Lord Jesus say, Martha, it is not just that one day there will be a resurrection. It is not just that if I were to pray to God there would be a resurrection now. I Myself am the living God and Saviour. I Myself am the One to whom the issues of life belong. I Myself am the One who will rise triumphant from the grave taking the sting from death and the victory from the grave. I Myself, Martha, am the One who in the last day will speak and all the graves will give up their dead. Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Of course, beloved friends, this is one of the *I AMs* of Christ. This is a vast subject and we cannot really touch on it this morning, but they are very, very beautiful, the *I AMs* of Christ. You remember, *I AM* was the great, incommunicable name of God, the eternal God, by which He revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. "I AM THAT I AM." And the Lord Jesus takes this name and claims it for Himself. "I AM." I think you will notice this: there is such a beautiful suitability to you and me as poor, lost, ruined sinners in the *I AMs* of Christ. For instance, "I am the good Shepherd." And we are like sheep, prone to go astray, weak, helpless, needing watching, needing guiding, needing care. "*I am the good Shepherd.*" And, "*I am the true Vine*" – ourselves in our weakness, barrenness, O but clinging, cleaving, united to Jesus the Vine, deriving all our hope, our strength, our salvation, everything from Him, seeking to bring forth fruit to eternal life. "*I am the true Vine.*" Just to

mention another: “*I am the Bread of life.*” If our religion is real, O what hungerings of soul there will be after forgiveness, cleansing, salvation, and here is the One who completely satisfies. “*I am the Bread of life.*” Not to go into this subject, though it is such a beautiful one, such an attractive one.

But here, “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” What a suitable word for dying sinners! “What shall the dying sinner do, that seeks relief for all his woe?” Each one in this chapel right down to the youngest, we are dying sinners, and some of us have been brought to know it and to feel it, and the only hope and the only remedy is in this glorious Saviour who says, “*I am the resurrection and the life.*”

So what does the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ really mean when He says, “*I am the resurrection*”? And why is it needful for Him also to add, “*And the life*”? “*The resurrection, and the life.*” Well, it is an important question and there are two or three important answers to it. First of all, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ died. He died a cruel death. He died on the cross. He died to atone for sin. He died to save His people with an everlasting salvation.

“Thine was a bitter death indeed,  
Thou harmless, suffering Lamb of God!  
Thou hast from hell Thy people freed,  
And drowned destruction in Thy blood.” (H. 844)

But, “*Jesus said, I am the resurrection.*” The third day He rose again. It was impossible the grave could hold Him. By His own divine, almighty power He rose. Did He not say, “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”? “*Jesus said ... I am the resurrection.*” And so the third day He rose triumphant from the dead to die no more. He rose; He ascended into heaven. His resurrection is the pledge of His people’s resurrection in the last great day. His resurrection is the open evidence that He is what He ever claimed to be: the eternal Son of God. “Declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead.” His resurrection is the evidence of His people’s justification. He died to atone for their sins. If their sins were not atoned for, He would never have risen. But He rose triumphant and that is the pledge to His people that all their sins are put away.

Let me be very clear, the resurrection did not atone for sin; the resurrection did not justify – that was the death of Christ – but the resurrection was the proof, the evidence of it. Let me put it very, very simply. If you owed a terrible debt and you were sentenced to prison, and another person kindly, willingly undertook to bear that prison sentence for you, well, it would be his time in prison that would be paying your debt, but when would it be that you would really rejoice?

When you saw the prison doors open, when you saw him come forth, you would know the debt was paid and justice was satisfied. Now you are free. That is what Scripture means when it says He “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

“Jesus said ... I am the resurrection.” But not only the resurrection. “Jesus said ... I am the resurrection, *and the life*.” The resurrection was the *fact*. It was once for all; it happened; it took place the third day; it can never be repeated. But then right through the epistles we read of that endless life of the risen, exalted Saviour at God’s right hand. And beloved friends, if the resurrection means a lot to us, so does the life. “He ever lives to carry on His people’s cause above.” “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*” – “I am the resurrection, and the life” – “He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Is there one sinner present here this morning who finds an attraction in this:

“Yes, the very worst of sinners,  
Who upon His grace rely,  
Shall of endless bliss be winners;  
And shall sing, beyond the sky,  
Songs of praises  
To the Lamb that once did die?” (H. 593)

“Jesus said ... I am the resurrection *and the life*.” And He lives, and as He lives, “With heaven and earth at His command, He waits to answer prayer.” He lives, and as He lives He presents the merit of His atonement before the throne for sinners’ acceptance. He lives as the one Mediator, the only way to God. He lives, and what a word that is: “Because I live, ye shall live also.” O it is a wonderful thing that our hope is built on a once-crucified but now risen, living, exalted Saviour. He lives and He lives eternally. He lives and He lives no more to die.

“Jesus said ... I am the resurrection, and the life.” But now, beloved friends, to go on and to take another view of this subject, in the experience of all God’s people, Jesus is the resurrection and Jesus is their life. By nature we are dead in trespasses and in sins, but it is not a passive death; it is a living death, a death of enmity against God. Our carnal minds are enmity against God, and we need a resurrection. Sometimes in the Word of God it is spoken of as the new birth. “Ye must be born again.” There must be life instead of death. Often it is spoken of as a quickening. “You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” There must be life instead of death. And sometimes it is spoken of as a resurrection, being risen again with Christ. It is life instead of death. You and I do not deserve it, and you and I cannot do it, but Jesus says, “I am the resurrection.” And so the Holy Spirit

comes in all the power of Christ's resurrection into our hearts and so our souls live that were dead before.

Where there is life there is always movement, always. Now to keep to the figure and the analogy of this chapter, Lazarus was dead; Lazarus was in the grave. "Jesus said ... I am the resurrection," and He cried, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes." As soon as there was life, there was movement. There were two things in it really. Lazarus was coming out of his grave. It was a cave, and he could not stay there any longer now that he was alive. He still had the graveclothes on. His steps must have been stumbling and faltering. He had a napkin over his head, so could not see very well, but now quickened into life, he could not stay in the grave. If Christ is the resurrection to you and you are quickened into newness of life, you will be coming away from the world; you will be coming away from your past life; you will be coming out of your unconcern.

But what was the second thing? Every stumbling, faltering step was towards the Saviour, towards Christ, towards Him who is the resurrection and the life. It will be that with you. "I must have Christ as All in all" – this is the language of a newborn soul – "I must have Christ as All in all, or sink in ruin, guilt and thrall." There will be that stumbling and that faltering after Christ, and that is what the Saviour meant when immediately afterward He said, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." You say, What, that stumbling after Christ is believing? That it is. "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." That is the glory of the gospel. Those sinners Jesus will receive, however faltering and stumbling their steps. But there will be a going after Him, however much they have the graveclothes on.

But you will not be satisfied. There is life there, but not the liberty. You will not be satisfied until the Saviour says, "Loose him, and let him go." Unless I am mistaken, quite a number of you here are like Lazarus. You have known the power of the resurrection quickening you into life; you cannot deny it. You know you are not what you once were, though you sadly feel you are not what you would like to be. But you know you cannot remain in that grave of your past life, that grave of the world, and you are going after Christ, however weakly, however tremblingly. You have the life, but you have not got the liberty. What you need is this: "Loose him, and let him go"; the same Jesus, He who is the resurrection and the life, He who first quickened you, to bring you into the sweet liberty of the gospel.

"I am the resurrection, and the life." So personally and experimentally Jesus is the resurrection. That is the beginning of that work of grace in your heart. "*And the life.*" It is not just that the Lord quickens you into life at the beginning and then He leaves you and you have to

manage it yourself. John Newton says, "And often since our life had failed, had it not been in Thee." Another hymnwriter says, "He that first made me still keeps me alive." It is the power of the resurrection and it is the power of that life. It is the life of a risen Christ. It is eternal life. Eternal life does not begin when a sinner steps into heaven. Eternal life begins here and now when He who is the resurrection and the life brings you into the experience of these vital things. It is Christ who is our life. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

"Jesus said ... I am the resurrection, and the life." Now I want to take another view of it, a third view of it: the last great day, the end of all things, when this same Jesus shall descend from heaven in glory and there He will speak, and there will be a glorious resurrection as the graves shall give up their dead, and body and soul shall be united for ever and ever, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." "I am the resurrection," the third day; "I am the resurrection," quickening the sinner into life; "I am the resurrection" in that last great day. "*And the life.*" That eternal life, no more sin, no more sorrow, no more suffering, enjoyed eternally in heaven.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." By nature we are dead in trespasses and sins. When the power of Christ's resurrection is made known, we live and then we believe, and we cannot believe until we live. "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth" – in that order – "liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." I do not know whether you have noticed, beloved friends, but in the gospel according to John it has always seemed to me there are so many differences from the other gospels. Just to mention one or two, the Lord's supper is not mentioned in the gospel according to John. The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is not mentioned in the gospel according to John. There is so much emphasis in the gospel according to John on who the Lord Jesus is – true, almighty God. That is why it does not begin with Bethlehem. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And then: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

But relating to this subject this morning, two things especially. There is so much about *eternal life* in the gospel according to John, and never forget that eternal life comes to sinners through the Saviour's death. But when the Lord spoke to Nicodemus, how He spoke about *eternal life*, and then in the next chapter the woman of Samaria, how He

spoke of *eternal life*, and all the way through. And the second thing, the other thing: the Lord Jesus spoke so much about believing. He always joined the two together. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Now only He who made the world can make a believer. Surely I do not need to warn you against this false believing, this empty believing, this easy believing. I have warned you against it so much, people taking it for granted they are the children of God; people thinking it is enough just to say, Well, I know that Jesus lived and died and rose again.

I wonder why in our chapels an expression has come in, a *true believer*. Strictly speaking we should not need to say that, but we have seen so many false believers that we say, a *true* believer. Now the essence of a true believer is this: it is not just that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God. He does; of course he does. It is not just that he believes Jesus died and rose again, that He is the resurrection and the life. With a true believer the vital element is that of trust, trusting in the risen Saviour as enabled by the Spirit of God, looking to Him, venturing on Him in prayer, asking Him to help you, praying to Him to save you, resting completely on Him. You cannot rest on yourself, or anything else, or any form, or any ceremony, or anything you have done or will do. You cannot rest on your repentance. You cannot rest on your faith. To be sweetly enabled to rest completely on a once-crucified but now risen and exalted Christ – that is believing and that is eternal life and that is salvation.

We have all got a lot of Naaman the Syrian about us, expecting something dramatic. He said, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?” Perhaps they are, Naaman, but that is not the point. “Go and wash in Jordan seven times.” That is God’s appointed way and that is the only way, and Naaman, it avails, and if you neglect it, it is to your peril and you continue in your leprosy. And encouraged by his faithful servants, he went and he washed and came up, and his flesh was like the flesh of a little child. You know what that is: older people have plenty of spots and wrinkles. O the flesh of a little child! That is what that beautiful word means, that Christ will present His church “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” The best of the Lord’s people, if they do not have spots, they have wrinkles. He will present you “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Do you know what it is? “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

But it is this believing. It is resting on what Christ has done. We have the Naaman about us. We long to have some wonderful experience. We long to have some amazing thing like the Apostle Paul. I was brought up at chapel. I had heard ministers and people and I thought, Well, it is going to be this and that and something else with me. Well,



humanly speaking it all started the opposite with me. An old, freewill Arminian got hold of me in the street one night. I walked away angry. I thought, "That man does not know anything; he is unsound; he is an Arminian." But the arrow was there. Nothing but the blood of Christ could heal it. Didn't Huntington say, "Never chalk down two lines and bid the Lord walk between"!

Beloved friends, I do not want to deceive any of you. We have to die, and it is a solemn thing to die, and, "Who, except Jesus smiles within, can look the monster in the face?" We cannot take these things for granted. The standard of the Word of God is to be a true believer on the Son of God.

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." I like that beautiful example of what a believer is, what faith is, in the Old Testament, where that Israelite, feeling his guilt, was permitted to go to the priest. He had to take a lamb with him. Do you know what it is to go to a holy God and take a lamb with you? And there that lamb was slain, and he saw that innocent lamb bleeding, dying, the innocent for the guilty, he instead of me. He saw he was the one who deserved to die. This innocent lamb was dying and he was to lay his hand on the head of the lamb – identification. He had to confess his sin. Ceremonially he had to lay all his sin, everything, on the head of that lamb. He had to rest there; he had to lean there. That is believing, beloved friends. That is living faith, to rest on the dear Lamb of God, He who is the resurrection and the life. And we read, "And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." Now that is a believer.

"My faith would lay her hand  
On that dear head of Thine;  
While like a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin." (H. 125)

We need to confess our sin before we die and we need to have our sin put away by the blood of Christ before we die. If we die with one sin unforgiven, then hell must be our eternal portion.

"Believest thou this?" "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead" – resting on the merit of Christ, resting on His great atonement, resting on His glorious Person – "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth" – quickened into life, "I am the resurrection" – "whosoever liveth and believeth in Me *shall never die.*"

Have you ever witnessed the death of a believer? Our hymnwriter says, "Lord, if Thou Thy presence give, *'Tis no longer death to die.*" You say, But every child of God, like the world, must die. Well, one thing I have noticed very particularly, that we read in the gospels about

the death of Christ, that cruel death, that awful death. But then you come to the Acts of the Apostles and the first one you read of dying there, Stephen, and it was a terrible death Stephen died, but it does not say he died. “When he had said this, he fell asleep.” You go on, and after the death of Christ you do not read of a child of God dying; you do not read of a believer dying; you read of them falling asleep. You trace that out. “He fell asleep.” “Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep! from which none ever wakes to weep.” And so in that beautiful passage: “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” “If we believe that Jesus *died* and rose again, even so them also *which sleep in Jesus* will God bring with Him.” And if words mean anything at all, the implication is this: that Jesus died, and He died that His people might sleep in Jesus.

“Thine was a bitter death indeed,  
Thou harmless, suffering Lamb of God!  
Thou hast from hell Thy people freed,  
And drowned destruction in Thy blood.” (H. 844)

“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus” – you see, it is not death to die – “them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” And that is what the Saviour meant when He said, “Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall *never die*.” It is life eternal, life everlasting. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” And the Lord Jesus lays it home very personally: “*Believest thou this?*”

---

## THE CONFIRMATION OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE

*By Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)*

---

Consider that the covenant of grace is *confirmed and made sure by the blood of Jesus Christ*, which is called “the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13. 20). Christ, by His irrevocable death, hath made sure the covenant to us (see Heb. 9. 16, 17). The covenant of grace is to be considered under the notion of a testament; and Christ, as the Testator of this will and testament.\* Now look, as a man’s will and testament is irrevocably confirmed by the testator’s death – “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth” – these two verses are added as a proof of the necessity of Christ’s manner of confirming the new testament as He

---

\* The main point which the apostle intended, by setting down the inviolableness of men’s last wills after their death, is to prove that Christ’s death was very requisite for ratifying of the New Testament: consult the scriptures: Matthew 16. 21; Luke 24. 26; Heb. 2. 10, 17.

did, namely, by His death. The argument is taken from the common use and equity of confirming testaments, which is by the death of the testator. A testament is only and wholly at his pleasure that maketh it, so that he may alter it, or disannul it while he liveth, as he seeth good, but when he is dead, he not remaining to alter it, none else can do it. In the seventeenth verse, the apostle declareth the inviolableness of a man's last will, being ratified as before by the testator's death. This he sheweth two ways:

1. Affirmatively, in these words: "A testament is of force after men are dead."

2. Negatively, in these words: "Otherwise it is of no strength." Now from the affirmative and the negative, it plainly appears that a testament is made inviolable by the testator's death; so Jesus Christ hath unalterably confirmed this will and testament – viz., the new covenant, by His blood and death, "that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9. 15). Christ died to purchase an eternal inheritance, and on this ground eternal life is called an eternal inheritance; for we come to it as heirs, through the good will, grace and favour of this Purchaser thereof, manifested by the last will and testament.

Hence you read, "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28). Again, "This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22. 20; 1 Cor. 11. 25). The covenant is called both a covenant and a testament, because His covenant and testament is founded, established, ratified and immutably sealed up, in and by His blood. Christ is the faithful and true Witness, yea, truth itself; His Word shall not pass away (see Rev. 3. 14; John 14. 6; Mark 13. 31). If the word of Christ be sure, if His promise be sure, if His covenant be sure, then surely His last will and testament, which is ratified and confirmed by His death, must needs be very sure. Christ's blood is too precious a thing to be spilt in vain; but in vain is it spilt if His testament, His covenant, ratified thereby, be altered. If the covenant of grace be not a sure covenant, then Christ died in vain, and our preaching is in vain, and your hearing, and receiving, and believing is all in vain (see 1 Cor. 15. 14). Christ's death is a declaration and evidence of the eternal counsel of His Father, which is most stable and immutable in itself. But how much more it is so when it is ratified by the death of His dearest Son, in whom all the promises are yea and amen (see 2 Cor. 1. 20); that is, in Christ they are made, performed and ratified.

By all this we may safely conclude that the covenant of grace is a most sure covenant. There can be no addition to it, detraction from it, or alteration of it, unless the death of Jesus Christ, whereby it is confirmed,

be frustrated and overthrown. Certainly the covenant is as sure as Christ's death is sure. The sureness and certainty of the covenant is the ground and bottom of bottoms for our faith, hope, joy, patience, peace, &c. Take this corner, this foundation stone away, and all will tumble. Were the covenant uncertain, a Christian could never have a good day all his days; his whole life would be filled up with tears, doubts, disputes, distractions, &c., and he would be still a-crying out, Oh, I can never be sure that God will be mine, or that Christ will be mine, or that mercy will be mine, or that pardon of sin will be mine, or that heaven will be mine! Oh, I can never be sure that I shall escape the great damnation, the worm that never dies, the fire that never goes out, or an eternal separation "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1. 9). The great glory of the covenant is the certainty of the covenant, and this is the top of God's glory, and of a Christian's comfort, that all the mercies that are in the covenant of grace are "the sure mercies of David," and that all the grace that is in the covenant is sure grace, and that all the glory that is in the covenant is sure glory, and that all the external, internal and eternal blessings of the covenant are sure blessings.

I might further argue the sureness of the covenant of grace from all the attributes of God, which are deeply engaged to make it good, as His wisdom, love, power, justice, holiness, faithfulness, righteousness, &c., and I might further argue the certainty of the covenant of grace from the seals which God hath annexed to it. You know what was sealed by the king's ring could not be altered (see Esth. 8. 8). God hath set His seals to this covenant: His broad seal in the sacraments, and His privy seal in the witness of his Spirit, and therefore the covenant of grace is sure, and can never be reversed.

---

---

## **GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY NOT A HINDRANCE TO A COMING SINNER**

*By John Kershaw (1792-1870)*

---

On another occasion, preaching at Halifax, I was led to speak of the "sheet knit at the four corners," let down from heaven to Peter, when in a trance upon the housetop (Acts 10. 11), as being typical of the covenant of grace and salvation in which are all God's people, both Jews and Gentiles, as set forth by "all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air," and alluding to God's elect in their unregenerate state. Here I particularly noticed that all who were let down in the sheet were taken up again; none were put in, nor any taken out. So with God's elect. They were all safe in the covenant; neither men, sin nor devils can pull one out, nor universal

charity put one into God's covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure, with all the blessings it contains for all the spiritual seed.

A lady who heard this sermon felt much discouraged. She was persuaded of the truth, but feared she was not in the sheet. When she returned home, Satan, the great adversary, harassed her mind by saying, "True enough, all are safe who are God's, but you are not one of them. It is of no use to pray, to read, or go either to church or chapel; for if you are not already in the sheet, all your prayers, tears or good deeds can never put you in the covenant of grace and salvation. This is true, and you know it. Give it all up. You are nothing but a castaway; and there remains nothing for you but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Thus she was tossed all that night. Sleep departed from her, and the following day a gloom was on her countenance visible to all the family, who wondered what could have happened to distress her. The second night, too, was passed without sleep, in sighs and groans, until her husband entreated her to tell him the cause; but she could not, though she assured him affectionately that it arose neither from him nor any connected with them. The second day was spent in the same distressed state as the former.

The third night she retired in the same or greater distress than before, body and mind quite worn down almost at the last extremity; when she was led to reason thus: "What am I and what have I been all the days of my life but a guilty, sinful, polluted wretch? What demand have I upon the Lord to save and bless me? My conscience testifies that had He marked my iniquity, and dealt with me according to my sins, I must have been cut down long ago, as a cumberer of the ground. If I am saved it must be of the Lord's mercy, irrespective of anything in me or done by me. I will give myself up into the Lord's hands, and if I perish I will perish at His feet." (How true it is that the Valley of Achor is for a door of hope. See Hos. 2. 14-16.)

She was now led to look to the free, sovereign mercy and love of God which flowed sweetly into her soul. The blessed Spirit bore witness with her spirit that she was an object of the everlasting electing love of God, and that she was in the sheet knit at the four corners. Her mourning was turned into gladness. She wept for joy until, nature being exhausted, she fell asleep. She awoke in the morning with the same joy in her feelings, and she went downstairs with a cheerful countenance. Like Moses when he had been communing with the Lord, her face shone, so that the change was visible to all the family. She went about her household affairs singing psalms and hymns, making melody in her heart to the Lord. The next time I went to Halifax, I was invited to her house to tea, when she related to me the above things, still rejoicing with David in the well-ordered covenant of grace and salvation.

## A TESTIMONY TO THE SWEETNESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

*By John Kershaw (1792-1870)*

---

It will be seen from the following narration that when I first heard of election I was upon old covenant ground. One Sunday evening I went with my father and my mother's brother to the Independent meeting in Rochdale to hear Mr. Roby, of Manchester. As we returned home, these two old pilgrims were wonderfully pleased with the sermon, saying that he had preached election very clearly and strongly. Election was evidently the joy and rejoicing of their souls; sweeter to their taste than honey or the honeycomb. I wondered what this election could be that they were so delighted with. I could not at that time make free to ask what it meant; but the next day I went to the house of a cousin who had formerly lived with my father, and was a member of the Baptist church at Rochdale under the pastoral care of Mr. Littlewood, for the purpose of enquiring as to this important subject.

When I got to his house, he was just taking down his basket to go to the market, and I went with him. As we were walking towards the town, I said, "Last night you heard Mr. Roby." "Yes," he replied, "and a very good sermon he preached." As we were going home, I then said, "Your father and mine were well pleased that he had been, as they termed it, exceedingly strong and firm upon the doctrine of election, and I am come on purpose to ask you what this election means." He said, "Do you not recollect that in the New Testament you read of the elect; that no flesh shall be saved, 'but for the elect's sake'? And, 'If it were possible,' the false Christs and prophets would 'deceive the very elect'? 'And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?' 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father'; 'That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth'; 'Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace'; 'But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded'; 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God'; 'And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other'?" "Yes," I said, "I have read all these texts many times; but I did not know what they meant, and I wish you would explain them."

He answered, "The elect are God's people that He hath loved and chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and ordained them unto eternal life and salvation through Christ; and He has done this according to His good will and sovereign pleasure, as He has said to

Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.' 'So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.' Thus you see, it is those whom He has loved and chosen and ordained to eternal life that will be saved, and none else; as Paul says in Romans 11. 7: 'But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.'"

As I looked at the doctrine as thus laid down, I shall never forget the hatred and indignation that rose up in my carnal heart against it. I said within myself, "It is the most unjust, unreasonable doctrine that ever could be broached. I may read and pray, and go to the chapel and do all the good I can, and if I am not elected be lost after all. It does not even give a man a chance to be saved. I neither can nor will believe this election." Just as I was about to open my mouth against it, and utter with my lips the horrid feelings of my heart, this thought came into my mind: "There must be something in this election that I do not yet understand; for if there be two good men in this country, living to God and for another world, it is my father and my uncle, and they glory in it. Mr. Roby is a good minister of Jesus Christ, and highly esteemed, and he believes it, and preaches it too. I will saying nothing against it till I know more about the matter." Thus I was mercifully prevented from lifting up my voice against the God-glorifying, soul-humbling, and heart-enlarging doctrine of election.

There is no branch of divine truth left upon record, that has been so bitter and galling to my mind as God's election; yet I can truly say that there is no doctrine recorded in all the Bible that has been so sweet and blest to my soul. But more of this anon.

My cousin saw that I was much confounded and perplexed in my mind about it, and spoke very kindly to me, saying he was sorry I did not hear Mr. Gadsby the other day at Manchester, as he opened it up so clearly, and proved it from the Word of God that there were thousands of God's elect unborn, that lay in the loins of their ancestors, that must be brought into existence, called by grace, and landed safe in glory; and that when the Lord had gathered in the number of His elect, the world would be at an end. There appeared something so solemn in this statement that it rather tended to fill my mind with awe. He told me if I would go again to his house he would lend me a book which would more fully and clearly explain these things, and he wished me to read it carefully over, and make it a matter of prayer to the Lord to guide and direct me into the truth. He moreover exhorted me in reading to have my Bible by me, and examine by it the proofs that the author brought forward.

I had no rest in my spirit until the book was in my possession. It was Elisha Coles on *God's Sovereignty*. I began to read, and prayed to

be guided right, referring to the proofs in the Word of God, and such light shone into my mind that I was astonished. I saw that election shone like a sunbeam from Genesis to Revelation, and many were the hours that I spent in this manner. Like the noble Bereans, I searched the Scriptures daily, and found that election was the solemn truth of God, and can never be overthrown, either by men or devils. And one strong proof of its divine authenticity is, the carnal, proud heart of fallen sinful man hates it, and fights against it, as mine did.

Finding that election was the truth of God, the question then with me was: "Am I one of them that the Lord hath loved with an everlasting and electing love, one that Christ has redeemed from amongst men by His blood?" I could not, however, find that evidence within me, that I was one of God's chosen people, which my soul longed for. One night I went into the wood to pray that I might know my election of God. My mind was dark, hard, miserable and wretched. I feared lest I should be a reprobate. My carnal, wicked heart boiled with enmity and rebellion against God that ever He gave me a being; blasphemous thoughts against Him were working in my mind as I was kneeling before Him. I shuddered at what I felt, and as I went home that night the enmity of my carnal heart was so stirred up that I had even to lay my hand over my lips to keep these vile thoughts from breaking out in words. O how my spirit sank! I was ready to call myself a thousand bad names, that ever I should have such feelings against the God in whose hand my breath is, and against whom I have sinned and done evil in His sight, even as I could. Strange as this may appear, it was to teach me that God had neither loved nor chosen me because of my goodness, but for His great love wherewith He loved me, even when dead in trespasses and sins.

The Apostle Peter says, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." I was, however, led to see that if I could prove my effectual calling by grace, it was true evidence of my election. I was therefore led to look unto the rock from whence I was hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence I was digged. I knew that it was not my own will nor power that had brought me out of the world of the ungodly, for instead of putting a helping hand to the work, I had long fought against Him.

Another question arose in my mind: "Why was it that the Lord singled me out from the rest of my father's house, and from amongst my sinful companions?" It could not be because I was either better or more deserving than they, for I was one of the worst; but it was "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush" that I should be effectually called and formed for Himself to show forth His praise. I was led to ask myself what obligation had I laid the Lord under to save me and have mercy upon me – what demand I had upon Him for His mercy and favour. I felt



in my inmost soul that I had no demand upon the Lord, that should the Lord mark my iniquities I could not stand before Him. I knew that He had not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities, and that it was of His mercies that I was not consumed, and because His compassions fail not. Thus I found that He would be just and righteous in my condemnation. My mouth was stopped, and I could say with Dr. Watts:

“Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,  
I must pronounce Thee just in death :  
And if my soul were sent to hell,  
Thy righteous law approves it well.” (H. 761)

I felt that if I was saved it must be by grace, through faith, and that not of myself; it is the gift of God. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Since this period the Lord has been graciously pleased at sundry times to shed His electing love abroad in my soul, as I shall state hereafter; and it has filled me with holy wonder that ever He should have thoughts of love and mercy toward such a vile wretch as myself. Many times, with sweet and solemn pleasure and tears of joy, have I united with the dear people of God at the Lord’s supper in singing the following lines:

“While all our hearts and all our songs  
Join to admire the feast,  
Each of us cry, with thankful tongues,  
‘Lord, why was I a guest?’  
“Why was I made to hear Thy voice,  
And enter while there’s room;  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?”  
“’Twas the same love that spread the feast  
That sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin.” (H. 440)

For many years past, when we have had an addition to our number, I have given out the hymn that contains the above verses. When the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, says to the poor sinner, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee,” it draws him from sin to holiness; it enlarges his heart, and his feet run with a sweet and solemn pleasure in the way of His commandments. I am a witness for God that election made known to a poor sinner will never lead him to sin, but to love, honour and obey the Lord in the precepts and exhortations of His Word.

As it respects election not giving a man a chance to be saved, I have proved that had it been left to chance, as they call it, upon the ground of my own free will, I should have been lost for ever. My free will as a depraved sinner would have led me on in the broad and downward road that leads to destruction, and so would it have been with all Adam's fallen race. Not one soul would ever have been saved. It is the eternal purpose of God in our election, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, that inevitably secures the salvation of countless millions of Adam's fallen race: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8. 29, 30). This scripture has with great propriety been called the golden chain of salvation, and is so firmly put together by our Triune Jehovah that one link of it can never be broken, either by men or devils, the world or sin, death or hell. Paul exults in this saying: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8. 37-39).

---

### **A BROTHER OFFENDED**

*By Charles Bridges (1794-1869)*

---

"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Prov. 18. 19).

Adverting to the ceasing of contentions, how affecting is this case of special difficulty! "A brother" – not an enemy – "is harder to be won than a strong city"; as if the nearer the relation, the wider the breach. The thread once snapped, is not easily joined.

What a view does it give us of our corruption, that the natural love implanted in us should degenerate into Satanic hatred. Such was the *contention* of Cain with Abel (see Gen. 4. 5-8), of Joseph's brethren with himself (see Gen. 37. 3-5, 18-27); of Absalom and Amnon (see 2 Sam. 13. 22-32); the civil wars between Benjamin and his brethren (see Judg. 20); in later times between Judah and Israel (see 2 Chron. 13. 16, 17); in our own country, the long-continued and ruinous *contentions* between the Houses of York and Lancaster. Cities in olden times were strongly fortified with bars of iron against a siege (see Isa. 45. 2). What a long

siege did Esau's *strong city* stand, before it was *won* by the power of love, and *the bars of his castle* opened their avenues for conciliation! (see Gen. 27. 41-45, 33. 5-11). The rooted enmity of the nation seems to render doubtful the cordiality of the reconciliation (see Num. 20. 14-21; Ezek. 35. 5; Obad. 10-14).

Nowhere is concord so important as in the church. Never can she prosper – except she maintain the form of Jerusalem – “a city that is compact together” (Psa. 122. 3). Begotten as we are by the same word, living on the same food, animated by the same life, ought we not, with all our lesser differences – to hold “the unity of the Spirit”? If ties so close cannot unite us, at least let our common welfare, and common danger, quench this unholy fire; just as the fear of the enemy without, might allay mutual misunderstanding within. But how painfully did *the contentions* between Luther and Calvin (not to mention others of more recent date in the church) show the fearful difficulty of *winning a brother offended* (see Luke 17. 3-5).

Yet the extreme difficulty does not diminish the obligation. Let it not therefore paralyse the effort. Nothing can be more plain and decisive than the gospel rule. Yet so repugnant is it to flesh and blood, to all nature's pride, feelings and high notions, that we cry with the disciples of old, “Lord, increase our faith.” Call in this only principle, that can constrain the heart, and the Christian victory is ensured. Grace reigns triumphant.

---

---

## MOVED WITH FEAR

---

My dear Alfred,

Thank you for sending me the newspaper; the account of the cholera is terrific. What reason have we to expect to be spared? It is of the Lord's mercy we are still in the land of the living. Does this cause in us deep searching of heart, to find a clear interest in Christ Jesus, that we may not be deceived, should the summons come to us? Certainly it is a great scourge on the land, and as a clergyman preached last Sunday in a village nine miles from us, where seventy-five persons were buried in one day, from these words, “Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” It therefore concerns us deeply, who are a part of the nation, not to spend our time as they did of old, who were “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the flood came and carried them all away.” Surely this is left on record that we may watch and be sober, and not seek to be at home in the body while the judgments of God are following us. There is not a case of cholera in this place nor in Birmingham, yet I have been lying awake from three o'clock both

yesterday and today, much impressed, and seeking mercy for myself and family; for I must say with David, "I am afraid of Thy judgments." I hear of two cases of death of those who truly feared God, in this public calamity. The children of Israel were told to put off their ornaments and see what the Lord would do unto them; and God complains that when He called for fasting, there was eating and dancing. I do pray that this visitation may be sanctified to us all, and we may follow the example of Noah, who, "being moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." May the same fear so guide every one of us, until we are safely sheltered in the dying love of the Lord Jesus.

From your anxious and affectionate mother,

Margaret Bourne

Sutton Coldfield,  
September 14th, 1849

---

---

### **THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST**

*Extract from a sermon by John S. Green*

---

One feast that those who are blessed with a gracious knowledge of Christ being their sacrifice will want to keep, will be the ordinances of God's house. What a privilege to be favoured to sit round the Lord's table, to show forth His death till He come! Some of you, I know, cannot yet keep this feast. The Lord has not yet constrained you to follow Him in the ordinances of His house. I hope some of you have a gracious exercise regarding this. Some of you may fear the day will never come when such a poor, guilty, weak, helpless worm as you feel yourself to be, will ever be favoured to follow the Lord. Would you love to follow Him? If tonight you felt you had more grace, some little sweet assurance of faith, would you walk in the way of His commandment? Would you yield obedience to His gracious laws? Would it give you more joy and happiness than all other things, to feel you had that love in your heart to follow the Lord Jesus? My dear friends, we must not speak or think of having real love to the Lord if there is no gracious obedience. I am sure that if our love is real, it will constrain us to take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus. It will be a very solemn matter with us, and we shall desire to keep the feast.

And God's people do not keep it by merely sitting down to the table, and taking that piece of bread and that sip of wine. That is only the outward part. There is something much deeper; and I trust that many of us when we meet together desire to keep the feast in faith. We do want some fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus. It is a very solemn thing for a professor never to keep the feast in faith, never to feel any

love therein to the Lord Jesus Christ. But O what a blessed thing when the Holy Ghost implants a little real love in the heart, and we feel we have been enabled to keep the feast in faith. Something like poor Yeddie, when he sat down to the Lord's supper; he said, "Mine eyes have seen yon lovely Man." That is keeping the feast, you know – keeping it in love, keeping it in faith, having a heart drawn to the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus. I believe that is what is meant here: "Therefore let us keep the feast."

To keep the feast in the way I have very feebly and briefly described to you is to enjoy a sweet foretaste of heaven. There, my friends, there will be uninterrupted communion with the Father, Son and Spirit. But O how sacred on earth to have had just a few moments when the Lord is so before you! You have kept the feast, and you have rejoiced in hope and believed that, more sweetly, you will soon keep the feast in heaven. I believe there have been a few times when my unworthy soul has been favoured to keep the feast, when heaven has been sweetly real to me, when I believe the Holy Ghost has given me to taste a little of that worship. Many we have known and loved on earth enjoy this now to the full. One puts it thus:

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
Which before the cross I spend." (H. 158)

When I view the Lord Jesus, when I feel that real love to Him, then I am enabled to keep the feast.

---

## THE PLAGUE OF LEPROSY

*By Henry Law (1797-1884)*

"The leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean" (Lev. 13. 45).

The mercy of mercies is a Saviour given. But a Saviour given is a Saviour scorned, until deep need is felt. Hence mercy superadds a gracious work. It paints a man's malady in hideous tints. It drags the lurking monster to clear light. The conscious sufferer thus sees his plague, and hastens to the healing fount. The leprosy subserved this end.

They err, then, who see nought but judgment in this foul disease. Keen was its woe. No cup of misery held more bitter drops. But still its voice allured to peace. It showed, in a long train of emblem, the complex loathsomeness of sin, that hence the evil might be more abhorred. Thus when the time was come for Israel's sons to gain new insight of redemption's scheme, this malady appeared, as admonition of soul-sense.

Thus, too, when the great Healer trod our earth, the frequent leper received aid. The outward misery taught a deeper plague, while ready cure cast light on saving grace.

This malady crept on with stealthy step. It was not easily discerned. Here human skill was blind. The art most conversant in signs of sickness, traced not these symptoms. Wisdom from on high was needed. The sanctuary must be sought. The anointed priest must search. His mind alone could ascertain. His lips alone could manifest the case.

Reader, turn now to that deep evil – sin. Its poison lurks within the veins. Its deadly venom spreads throughout the frame. Its deathful work is running on. But nature feels it not. The world has no detecting eye. Poor reason views it with no shuddering glance. The self-pleased fancy boasts of fancied health. Death is begun, when all seems life. The plague devours, but ignorance sees not.

The dream must last, until a power beyond man's shall rouse the sleeper. This is the Spirit's sole prerogative. He only can convince of sin. He only can reveal the inborn and defiling sore. He works this knowledge mainly by the Word. In sanctuary hours, or in the stillness of retired thought, He sets the soul before the mirror of God's law. He tears away the blinding scales. He opens sightless eyes. What follows? The sinner starts. A frightful spectacle appears. It is the hideousness of polluted self. Soundness is fled. Health and fresh beauty lie, as a withered leaf. He stands revealed one noisome mass of widespread misery. The light from heaven shows leprosy throughout. The unsuspected filth is no more hid. Thus when God's voice is heard within, the conscience answers, I am vile. Was it not so with Job? He plumed himself on moral rectitude and upright walk. By outward hearing he had some surface-notions of his God, and therefore only surface-notions of himself. But when his opened eye beheld heaven's truth, he quickly saw the loathsomeness of self. His leprosy was clear. His piteous cry confessed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42. 6). Isaiah's case bears further witness. In soul he was a leper, but he knew it not, till revelations met him from above. The brightness of the Lord shone forth. The blackness of poor man was the dark contrast. Hear the contrition of his humbled spirit: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts" (Isa. 6. 5).

Through many years Paul boasted of his blameless life. He felt no conscience pains. He seemed some lovely tree, whose branches bowed with golden fruit. He thus portrays himself: "I was alive without the law once." I knew not my leprous state. But the Priest searched me with a penetrating eye. "The commandment came." It probed me to the soul. Then "sin revived." The malady, which slept, started to giant life, "and

I died." He felt the leprosy's entwining grasp. In agony he sighs, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7. 24).

Reader, it may be that self-ignorance locks you in its dark cell. Listen, I pray you, to this warning voice. O perish not self-murdered! Reject the opiate of fancied soundness. Sleep not to death on popped pillows of false health. Think of the multitudes who knew not that the plague had seized them till they awoke in dungeons, where cure never comes. Bring heart and thoughts and ways and life to the true standard of the Word. Sit down beneath its all-revealing beams. Consult not the world's counsel. Take not its faulty measure. Call in the faithful witness, which neither errs nor leads astray. View self in Scripture-mirror. What, though the sight shall humble you to dust? Go on. Shrink not. Self-knowledge is a step towards Christ. The malady perceived leads to the malady relieved. Sin, when thus felt, extorts the cry, "Heal me, and I shall be healed."

The sufferer hears the priest's condemning voice. He is pronounced unclean. He goes forth. He tastes no more the joy of social scenes. Shunning and shunned, he hides himself in gloom. His aspect, his whole mien, proclaim the misery of his downcast heart. Earth cannot find a picture of more woeful woe. His clothes are rent. His head is bare. A covering hides his upper lip. And when the hollow voice must speak, it sounds the plaintive knell, "Unclean, unclean."

These marks write fearfully the wretchedness of sin. The clothes are rent. This meaning is distinct. It is the signal of the bitterest grief. The Scripture-page gives many proofs. Jacob beholds the blood-stained coat of Joseph. His son, his much-beloved son, is surely slain. Did ever heart so bleed? All comfort fails. In token of his live-long woe, he rends his clothes.

It was a mournful day when David and his subjects followed Abner's bier. The public sorrow must be publicly displayed. The king's command was, "Rend your clothes" (2 Sam. 3. 31).

Message on message followed fast to Job, and each was burdened with a heavier note. His goods are a wild wreck, his sons all slain. Deep waters overflow his soul, and a rent mantle proves a heart forlorn (see Job. 1. 20). Thus where sorrow's wounds were deep, the tattered robe proclaimed the inward state.

Reader, should not he grieve, who feels the burden of his guilt? What sorrow is like his? The loss of righteousness is more than loss of property and friends. There is no ruin like the frown of God. Shall not his eyes then weep, who hates himself, who dares not look to God, who has no resting-place on earth, no resting-place beyond? There is no leprosy like sin. There is no leper like the sinner. Shall the leprosy be clad in tattered garments, and shall not sin sit mourning in the dust?

The head must bend uncovered. This was the attitude of lowly shame. Job felt abasement and bewailed, "He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head" (Job. 19. 9). The bereaved Aaron may show no sign of degradation. Therefore the command is, "Uncover not your heads" (Lev. 10. 6).

In the poor leper thus despoiled, we see how sin inflicts an ignominious brand. Should not shame's home be on the sinner's brow? Hear Ezra's piteous wail, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up myself to Thee, my God." But why this shame? "Our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens" (Ezra 9. 6).

Is there disgrace in folly, in rebellion, in ingratitude, in disobedience to a tender Father's rule? These lines all centre in the sinner's heart. His life is one mistake. Is not that folly? His rebel hands are raised against the King of kings. His hardness hates a blessing God. His impious feet tread down a loving Father's will. Thus sin and shame are linked. Our guilty parents haste to hide themselves, and Paul's bold challenge is, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" (Rom. 6. 21).

A covering hides his upper lip. The muffled mouth is sign that silence is enjoined. The sorrowing and the shame-stricken find their utterance choked. This marked the prophets, from whom God withdrew. "Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God" (Mic. 3. 7). Sin should be mute. While faithful lips abound in prayer, and send forth songs of praise, and tell in gladsome strains the wonders of redeeming grace, what are the sinner's sounds? His throat is an open sepulchre. Let, then, that sepulchre be closed. His words sow seeds of evil. Let, then, those words be checked.

But if some passing steps draw near, a piteous warning must be heard. A doleful mutter sounds the repelling note, "Unclean, unclean." Approach not. There is pollution here, "Unclean, unclean."

Reader, close not your eyes to sin's intense malignity. It is unutterable filth. See the priest Joshua before iniquity passed from him. He stood filth-soiled before the Angel (see Zech. 3. 3). A true word paints our nature state, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64. 6). The heart is every foul bird's cage – the spring of every impure desire. The waters which flow forth are rank pollution. The hands touch but to soil, the feet leave impress of defilement. The sinner speaks, and noxious blight flies round. His words, his looks, his ways, his life, bear one black stamp: "Unclean, unclean."

The leper is cast out from social life. No home may welcome him. No friendly hearth may cheer. His dwelling is far off from men. In



solitary loneliness he pines. No station gains exemption. A Miriam must be shut out (see Numb. 12. 14). Kingly Uzziah must dwell apart (see 2 Kings 15. 5). Ah! sin, what hast thou done? Let sinning angels, driven from heaven's light, reply. Let multitudes, who know not the ecstasy of close communion with their God, who walk not in sweet company with Zion's sons, whose hearts ascend not on the wing of social praise, who share not the holy fellowship of common prayer, who kneel not delighted at the consecrated board: let these sad exiles from the heaven-bound flock, tell the lone miseries of their desert life.

But is this all? Death is at hand. Eternity is near; a gulf will then for ever part the filthy sinner from salvation's blessed throng. God is afar off: He cannot be reached. Jesus is high above. There is no longer access to His arms. Heaven's gates are barred. The saved are all within – within for ever. The lost are all without – without for ever. Thus the leper stands an emblem of sin's deathful plague.

Reader, why are these frightful colours laid? Why is the sight thus brought before your eyes? Is it that hopeless horror may affright? Is it to sink you in despair's abyss? Far otherwise. Mercy here scares you; but it is to mercy's arms. The great High Priest is near. He comes to earth with "healing in His wings." He cries to every weary, heavy-laden soul, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." You need not be an outcast from His flock. He bids you nestle in His wounded side. He gives His blood to purify each taint. His remedy is ready and is sure. Take it. O take it, and be whole! Turn not from His outstretched hand. Hark to His cry, I will make you clean. Rest not, till adoring lips reply, Great Lord, Thy touch has touched me, and my plague is stayed.

---

---

## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 92)*

---

*The object and ultimate end of the ministry*

1. The glory and worship of the eternal God.
2. The salvation and edification of the church, the elect.

That these objects are not inconsistent with each other, that they are indeed inseparable, is the effect of glorious grace. It is to the praise of the glory of God's grace for Jehovah to communicate to sinful men the spiritual blessings of the covenant, through the hearing of the Word of truth (Eph. 1. 6, 13). Said the Redeemer to the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we *worship*, for *salvation* is of the Jews" (John 4. 22). One of the most amazing discoveries lies in

a perception that God's glory and worship, and the salvation of hell-deserving sinners are not incompatible. The glory of God is thus "in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3. 21). For where He is known – as He is in Zion's palaces – there He is glorified: "That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1. 11, 12). For the full manifestation of this glory, those who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body (see Rom. 8. 23).

Reverently, we would say that this glory includes the mutual satisfaction of Christ Jesus and His unworthy but highly-favoured people, when it shall be completely fulfilled (see Isa. 53. 11), "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." This means perfect holiness for the Lamb's wife, the church, which Christ loved and gave Himself for: "that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5. 26, 27). Then every holy, therefore happy, saint will realise Psalm 17. 15: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." The blessed Redeemer, God's own Son in our nature, who was not spared but delivered up for us all, will then enjoy complete realisation of His desire and prayer, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us ... I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one. ... Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me" (John 17. 21, 23, 24).

Then, too, will be fully known Revelation 21 and 22: "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.... The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." At the prospect of this joy the dear Redeemer "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12. 1, 2). And the hope of eternally participating in the same "joy unspeakable and full of glory" is proposed to the people of God and His servants, as an incentive to the exercise of faith and patience in the mortal race; the holy Saviour and great Forerunner having, as it were, left a sacred fragrance in the way He Himself went. Even now, He grants an occasional little glimpse of Himself through the lattices of the Word and ordinances, by

which minister and people are refreshed when weary with the roughness of the pilgrim way.

Brethren, can greater honour be put upon a sinful mortal than grace to preach Christ's gospel to perishing fellow-sinners? ministerially to lead the dear, redeemed people of God to the place (Christ and heaven) He has made? "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (Exod. 15. 17). Though ministers have not dominion over the faith of their hearers, they are favoured to be helpers of their joy (2 Cor. 1. 24). And their children in the faith are to be to ministers their "crown of rejoicing ... in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming" (1 Thess. 2. 19). Can a heavier responsibility, a more awful charge, lie upon any man than to be commissioned to preach the Word, to speak in the awful name of God? Be it given us to discharge the solemn work under a sense of dependence upon the Lord the Spirit, and in constant watchfulness and fervent prayer for the furtherance of the gospel among men.

But the glory of God is also to be revealed in the perdition of the ungodly who live and die in their sins. A most painful consideration for a minister, that some who have heard and despised the gospel he has feebly preached "as of the ability which God giveth," will prove it less tolerable in the day of judgment than had they never heard it (see 2 Pet. 2. 21; Rom. 9. 22; 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16; Rev. 19. 1 8; Luke 10. 1 16, etc.) When Babylon is judged, Israel is redeemed. When Judah enters into her strong city whose walls are salvation, the lofty city is laid low. When the Lord's jewels are "made up," the oven is prepared for the wicked. What is a glorious hope to the people of God, will be wailing to others. When the Spirit of judgment and of burning has destroyed root and branch the ungodly, the escaped shall be written among the living in Jerusalem. When the wheat is garnered, the chaff is cast away to be burned with unquenchable fire. Electing love, redeeming blood, effectual, saving grace of the Holy Spirit (the grace of repentance and faith toward God, frequently communicated through preaching), alone making the eternal difference (see Isa. 4. 2-4; 26. 1-6; Jer. 51; Mal. 3. 16; 4. 1; Tit. 2. 13; Rev. 1. 7; Matt. 3. 12; 1 Cor. 1. 21; Rom. 10. 17).

Of necessity one repeats, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Well, O well indeed is it for those favoured ministers of God whose sufficiency in the solemn work is proved to be of God, entailing though it does a continual sense of painful insufficiency in self; that God may thereby receive all the glory and all the praise of the blessings of salvation communicated through their ministry. And what grave need exists to remember Paul's word, with prayer for grace to walk in his

steps, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9. 27). It was this apostle, so severely tried yet so greatly owned by his Lord and Master, who wrote by divine inspiration what is perhaps the clearest and most concise definition extant of the institution, nature, object and ultimate end of the gospel ministry: "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom. 16. 25-27).

*(To be continued)*

---

### JOHN WarBURTON OF TROWBRIDGE'S WIFE

---

*John Warburton and his wife had recently lost a child, who was especially dear to John. Out of this trial, in which at first John experienced much rebellion, came a time of great personal blessing, to which he refers, and also the call by grace of his wife.*

O the blessings that broke through these clouds that I had so much dreaded! I never can tell a thousandth part of them, for there broke forth a blessing that I had prayed for for nearly twenty years; I mean the salvation of my dear wife. When the dear Lord first set my soul at happy liberty, how her soul was laid upon my mind! O the wrestling that I had with the Lord that He would be pleased to open her eyes, and sometimes I received such blessed testimonies from His dear Word that my poor prayer was heard, and that the Lord would answer my request, that my soul rejoiced in the blessing, believing I should live to see it, and prove my God to be a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering Jehovah. But, again, at other times it all appeared completely overturned, and fear would arise that she was a vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction. I wanted her to go and hear the preaching when she had an opportunity, but sometimes she would answer me very crossly, that I went after preaching and prayer meetings enough for twenty people, and she thought if people would mind their families, and do their duty, and trust to the mercy of God, it was quite enough.

O how these speeches used to enter my heart like a dagger! Then my soul would go out again with such wrestlings that I felt as if I could sooner die than be denied the blessing. One day in particular, which I

think I shall never forget, before I began to preach, we were in sore trials in providence, as she had a child at the breast and had been a long time without anything to eat. I had taken my work home, and been to the shop to get some provisions, and while they were getting ready she dropped down in a very severe fit, and for a long time I expected every moment she would be gone. O how I staggered and reeled to and fro, and was at my wits' end! I cannot tell the feelings I had. But at length she came to herself and revived again, but for several days she was much affected by it.

O the dreadful shakings I now had of soul! For here the devil set me hard and fast. "Look at your situation," says he, "with five small children, you yourself over head and ears in debt, and your wife will never be able to do for them any more. God will take away her senses and the use of her limbs, and you will be brought to the workhouse, and die in black despair." O the bitter agonies of soul that I passed through for three or four nights and days no tongue can tell, nor pen describe. But a little hope sprang up again that the Lord was able to cure her, and that He could prevent her having any more fits. And now I began to pray nearly from morning till night that the Lord would grant that she might have no more fits; but in a few days she fell down in another very severe one indeed.

Now, all hope seemed to be gone, and it appeared to me to be of no use to pray any more, for I thought God would never hear me. What I passed through between two or three months, as nearly as I can recollect, God only knows, for she had sometimes one and sometimes two fits in a week. Sometimes I thought I could perceive, as I thought, her faculties much injured. O what scenes there were pictured before my eyes! Sometimes I thought I should see her deprived of her senses and of the use of her limbs; and then the devil roared again, "Where is your God? Where are your prayers? Now what do you think of her being a vessel of mercy? Where is your good hope now that you have talked about? The Word of God saith, 'Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart,' but you are ashamed of your hope." O how I sank down into the very pit of despair, and could only whisper, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." And now the devil began to threaten that a thousand worse things should befall me if I dared either to mutter, groan, sigh, or even think Godward; but this I could not comply with, for groan I must, and I told him plainly that groan I must, if I was damned for my groans; for groaning was in my heart, and I could not silence it or the devil either.

So on I was obliged to groan, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me," till one night when I had been to the prayer meeting, which I then attended as often as I could, and as I was coming home through the

fields, my poor wife's case respecting her affliction was so powerfully brought to my soul and came with such weight upon my poor heart, that I felt it impossible for me to carry it any longer. I got, therefore, into a large field, and went into the middle of it as nearly as I thought, and it being a very dark night, I thought none could see nor hear me but God. Here I fell upon the ground with such a burden that I felt as if I could neither stir hand nor foot; and here I lay sighing, crying and wrestling with the Lord. I told Him and begged He would not be angry with me, but I assured Him I could not, I must not, I would not rise up from that place till He had answered my request. I told Him that I must either have my request or die on the spot, when these words came to my mind as I lay wrestling with Him, "Let Me alone, for the day breaketh," but my soul cried out, and my mouth, too, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Here I lay quite passive in His hands for either life or death, and I said to Him, if it be more for His honour to deny me my request, and take my poor weighted, burdened, distressed, afflicted soul out of the body, His will be done. But by and by He came with such glory and with such majesty, that my poor soul was quite overwhelmed with joy as He spoke the words, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

For a few moments I could neither speak nor stir, for His glory overshadowed me with such a weight of it, that for a few minutes I was quite lost. But He spoke again, and with the words, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," there came light and strength so that I could answer it. And O how my poor soul answered Him with such humility, "Lord, my request is that my dear wife shall have no more fits; this is my request; be not angry with me, but in tender mercy answer my petition." He answered me with such a smile, "It is done as thou hast requested." O what confidence I felt that God had heard and answered my cries! My body and soul leaped up like a giant refreshed with new wine. Not one devil was to be found, nor even heard to whisper, for the sun had risen upon my poor soul, and they had all gathered themselves together into their dens, and my delighted soul went to her work of praise and love to my dear God and Saviour, for I was like a bird let loose from the snare; the snare was broken, and I was escaped.

When I arrived home it was very late, and I found my wife in great fear and distress lest something had happened to me, but I told her that all was well and right. I could not help exclaiming, "Dear soul, you will never have another fit, for God has answered my prayers." Poor thing, she exclaimed, "I wish you may tell true." My heart and my mouth answered, "Blessed be my God! it is done, and the Lord hath told me so."

It is now between thirty and forty years ago, and she has never had one fit since. O the loving kindness of a covenant God and Father! How many times have I sung and enjoyed a few verses of Psalm 116: "I love

the LORD because He hath heard my voice and my supplication. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee." Now I felt again sweet liberty in praying that He would open her eyes and bring her out of darkness into His marvellous light. And here I was crying that the Lord would save her soul; and as He had been kind enough to hear my poor prayers for her body, that He would hear me for her soul.

O the many times for the space of twenty years that my soul has believed that I should have the blessing! yea, and have thanked and blessed His dear name for it many years before I saw it manifested. Sometimes I thought it was nothing but flesh and blood, and that all my tears and prayers arose from nothing but natural affections; but, blessed be God, I have lived to prove that they were prayers that were indited by the Holy Ghost, and I have had them blessedly answered to my soul's satisfaction.

*(To be concluded)*

---

## BOOK REVIEW

**The Priesthood of Christ**, by Peter MacBride; 93 pages; price £7.95; published by The Scottish Highlands Reformed Book Trust and available through their website: [www.shrbt.org](http://www.shrbt.org)

This excellent book is a reprint of a series of sermons on the Priesthood of Christ preached by Peter MacBride (1797-1846), an eminent Scottish minister in his day. They were first published in 1848 among other of his works after his death. Based on Hebrews 4 verse 14, they present a faithful exposition of this precious and important subject as the following extract illustrates:

"He is able to save to the uttermost extent of guilt and depravity all that come to God by Him. 'O,' says one, 'my sins are so great, so peculiar.' But know this day that Jesus Christ can save to the uttermost. No matter then how great your sins may be, come, and He will save. 'O,' says another, 'my heart is so hard, so cold, so unbelieving.' No matter, Jesus Christ can save to the uttermost. So, come and put all your case into His hand; He healeth all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. In short, He is a perfect Saviour. And if He can save sinners who come, so also, He surely can save believers. O what is your case then O child of God? Perhaps such that you can scarce if at all venture to hope that the blessed Saviour will look on you. But to you I may say, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt that Jesus Christ is surely able to save you....

“Thus, then, is Christ able to save. Why so? Just because of all that He is, all He has done, and all He has purchased. ‘Wherefore,’ says the apostle, ‘He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.’ O seek that you may thus come, while we are considering what He has done for poor sinners.”

Our discerning readers will find much that is profitable in this book.

---

---

### THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR

---

The sufferings of Jesus, ah, who can explore?  
 We can but in wonderment gaze and adore.  
 To see Him descending our nature to take,  
 To hear God’s just vengeance, and all for our sake.

How must He have suffered, surrounded by sin,  
 Since He was quite perfect, and holy within;  
 To see man’s transgression, how grieved was His soul,  
 Yet He was determined His own to make whole.

The wilderness witnessed temptation severe,  
 The tempter assailed Him with enmity there,  
 By wild beasts surrounded for forty long days  
 He proved Satan’s malice in numerous ways.

He came to His own, they rejected His claim,  
 He only did good, yet they slandered His name,  
 His closest disciples forsook Him and fled,  
 Adversity’s path He ordained thus to tread.

The worst of all sorrows, the heaviest load  
 He felt when His soul was forsaken of God,  
 Sin’s guilt was upon Him, God could not condone,  
 He felt the dread curse, and He bore it alone.

O, help me, dear Jesus, to weep o’er Thy woe,  
 Lead me, by Thy Spirit, Thy sufferings to know,  
 I’d view them, and would I a little partake  
 Those griefs, which in love Thou didst bear for my sake.

Elizabeth Jempson, September 1960

---

---

When the Athenian ladies were boasting to Phocion’s wife of their jewels, she told them, My jewels are my husband Phocion. When Alexander was asked where his treasure was, he showed them his friends. Such a treasure is Jesus Christ in the esteem of His spouse, His friends; Christ is All in all.

*George Swinnoek*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
MAY 2021

---

---

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

---

---

THE DOORPOST AND DOOR OF SALVATION

---

The wise man Solomon speaks in Proverbs 8. 34 of the blessedness of the man that watcheth daily at *wisdom's* gates, waiting at the posts of *wisdom's* doors. The wisdom spoken of is Christ Jesus, who is made wisdom unto His people. In His ministry while on earth, Christ set before His hearers both the post and the door of which Solomon speaks.

In John 6. 37 the post of the door is set before us in the words: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Here is the post on which the door of salvation hangs. Until the last vessel of mercy is brought to the door of salvation, this sacred promise will keep the door open. When the Bridegroom cometh to call His church in to the marriage supper, then the "door will be shut" (see Matt. 25. 10).

The door, or gate, is "him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." It is through this door the sinner enters. He comes with no good thing in himself, not feeling to be one of the elect, but on the ground of mercy alone he ventures. The words "no wise" are his warrant as a coming sinner. The secret drawings of the Spirit, as sent by the Father through the Son, enable him, yea compel him to come, because he has nowhere else to take his guilt and misery. This door is marked with the word MERCY written on its lintel. This is the door the publican and the dying thief knocked at and found it opened to their cry.

"Convinced as a sinner to Jesus I come,  
Informed by the gospel for such there is room;  
O'erwhelmed with sorrow for sin I will cry;  
'Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.'" (H. 1104)

His reception is ensured, because the foundation doctrines that established both the door and its post are enshrined in the everlasting covenant.

But the sinner who rightly ventures, has many questions that exercise his mind. Satan may say, "You are not among the elect, and therefore have no warrant to come." But it says, "in no wise," meaning not under any circumstances will this sinner be turned back. But what about his innumerable sins and guilt? "Surely," unbelief suggests, "a holy God who hates sins cannot receive you as a sinner?" But look closely at the doorposts and lintels of this door. You will see that they

are sprinkled with blood. Just as the blood applied to the doorposts and lintels of the Israelites' homes proved their providential deliverance on the Passover night, so the blood of Christ secures the salvation of the soul of the coming sinner. With His own blood He has entered the holiest of all, opening, yea and keeping open the door of mercy to every coming sinner. This was wonderfully signified when Christ's dying cry, "It is finished," rent the veil of the temple, as His blood at last made an open door into the holiest of all. None of the high priests over the long period of the Levitical dispensation could accomplish such an access. The blood of bulls and goats could never answer the claims of divine justice against the sinner. But,

"For Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,  
Mercy, eternal mercy, cries." (H. 96)

In the eternal covenant, God the Father gave to His Son the innumerable company of sinners who would glorify His name in an endless eternity. This gift of the church to Christ, and of Christ to the church, is that which secures the opened door of mercy to sinners. Not only were sinners given to Christ in the eternal covenant by decree, but in the experience of each sinner they are given to Christ as they come pleading the promise "in no wise cast out." These are called "Immanuel's offspring" by one poet.

John Bunyan, in his well-known sermon, "Come and Welcome," speaks of one called "Shall Come" who in the sovereign time and purpose of God, goes to fetch each one given by the Father to Christ. In a manner peculiar to each "brought sinner," circumstances both providential and spiritual intervene savingly and effectually in the heart and life of the hitherto-lost sinner. In this way "Shall Come" effectually works in the life of the drawn sinner so that he comes to Christ as one needing a Saviour, and one who is not content until He is known by the coming sinner to be his. So, the Canaanite woman's grievously-afflicted daughter was the way in which the Lord brought her to Himself. Zacchaeus was found by the Lord in the sycamore tree, where sovereign grace released him from his idols and brought him to the feet of Jesus.

It is a matter of wonder to the sinner that he should be so drawn, when before grace came, there was no desire or inclination towards Christ, and when he sees others left to perish in ignorance and sin.

"Why was I made to hear Thy voice  
And enter while there's room;  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?" (H. 440)

It was such a wonder that made Paul declare: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to

save sinners; of whom, I am chief” (1 Tim. 1. 15). Such will be the language of every sinner drawn by grace to, and brought through the blood-sprinkled door of mercy. “Yet there is room” will be so, until the last elect vessel of mercy is called by grace and brought through these sacred portals, and then the door will be shut. Until then the encouraging words will still remain for needy sinners, “In no wise cast out.”

---

## WHAT I DO THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW

*Sermon preached by Mr. Gary TenBroeke to the Australian churches  
on Lord’s day morning, September 20th, 2020*

---

**Text:** “Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter” (John 13. 7).

While, indeed, this word was spoken to Peter, we might believe it is a word that has an application and fulfilment for those who fear and seek the Lord in every age. They all come to places, come into those things, those straits, where this will be the great point: they do not know what the Lord is doing. But He will make it known. The promise that He speaks here is, “Thou shalt know hereafter.” O what a wonderful thing that the Lord gives unto His people that sweet hope; the things which they are passing through, the trials, difficulties, troubles, they will be made to know hereafter – the purpose for them, the needs be for them, and what God will do in them.

Perhaps the words of Job in the Old Testament seem to explain this very well on behalf of a poor sinner, when the dear man said, “He knoweth the way that I take.” Job was as much as saying, “I do not know the way I take – I do not know the way the Lord is taking with me – but, ‘He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.’” There will be that knowledge, then, that God’s way is perfect, and so it is for us even in our day. O in everything that we are passing through, things around the world, things personally in our own heart, our soul, in our homes, in our family, all the different things – the many things – for which we cannot yet perceive the purpose of God. “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”

In the previous chapter, we find it spoken of His disciples, “These things understood not the disciples at the first.” O, dear friends, it is such a description of those who seek and follow the Lord; there are so many things that they do not understand at the first. When the soul is first awakened, he feels such strange things, strange desires, things he never knew before, that he finds his heart going out unto God. “These

things understood not the disciples at the first.” But after Jesus was glorified, when He was taken up from them, “then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that these things were done unto Him.” So it is in our own time and in our path. There is something of that truth that is to be unfolded and expounded unto us as well. Likewise, in the following chapter, chapter 14, we find again that the Lord makes it clear, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” And I believe, dear friends, that this is still needed today, for the Holy Ghost to bring all things to our remembrance, those things that the Lord has spoken. We so soon forget. “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

It was not just the disciples at this time, but the Lord’s people in every age have gone through something of this experience. Perhaps one of the most striking examples was the case of Jeremiah. You remember, the dear man had a visitor; the Lord had told him that the visitor was going to come. It was his uncle’s son. In the thirty-second chapter of his own prophecy, Jeremiah tells how the Lord had spoken to him, “Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it.” And Jeremiah goes on to say how that uncle’s son came to him with those very words. Jeremiah was shut up in the prison, and yet he is told to buy this land. Everything seemed to be so wrong. Jeremiah had been telling the people that they were going to be carried away out of the land; they were going to be taken captive, and yet he was to “buy the field.” Perhaps, if this had been known, that he was told to buy, or that he did buy the field, then the accusation would have come that he had told everybody that they were going into captivity, and yet he is buying land! He is deceiving the people to get gain for himself. You can imagine the charges that would come against him; the fingers that would be pointed. “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

And so Jeremiah did as the Lord commanded; he bought that field, it was witnessed, and he paid the price. A little bit later in that chapter, we find that the mounts came into the city to take it, and the city was given into the hand of the Chaldeans that fought against it with the sword. And Jeremiah began to reason with the Lord, “Lord, the enemy is come now and they have taken captive; Thou hast said, ‘Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.’” The poor man was so overcome with confusion. But his Lord came back with a word. “Then came the Word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there

any thing too hard for Me?" And the Lord told Jeremiah that the day would come when, once again, there would be purchases in the land, and there would be those who would settle in the land. What Jeremiah had been told to do was for a witness to all the people that they would return again to the land. O the poor man could not understand it, and God's ways are often so deep, and so profound, that we cannot understand why the Lord leads in this way, why He commands this word at such a time. See, dear friends, these things are written for our instruction, "that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15. 4).

Another man who had things revealed to him, and he could not understand them, was dear Daniel. We find it recorded of him in the twelfth chapter of his prophecy, "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" Here Daniel was given to see that God's ways are so mysterious, and he was called to write these things and to prophesy of those blessings that would come upon the people of God. Yet, everything was so contrary to it. "I understood not," he says. He was so confused and disturbed in his mind. He goes to the Lord with it, and the Lord's answer to Daniel was so striking! The Lord said, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." That man who waits will come through the troubles, the trials, the temptations, and the persecutions. The Lord says to Daniel, "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt ... stand in thy lot at the end of the days." O these things of God, how deep they are!

Well, the disciples had just witnessed a scene that they would never forget. Their Lord put aside His garment, and girded Himself with a towel. He took that basin of water and began to stoop low to wash their feet. I should think that on the day when He ascended up on high, and they beheld him go, they must have remembered how low He had stooped. But it was not His stooping that was so amazing, nor that He should wash their feet, wonderful as that was; He would stoop lower still. No man can grasp how low He stooped to bear their sin away; to remove it completely, so it should never return, never be seen again. O how low the Saviour stooped! May it be that today we might be helped to remember something of that. "What I do thou knowest not now." So, they could not understand the step that He took here, nor all that was yet ahead, when they would see Him prostrate on the ground; when they would behold Him bound with chains; when they would see Him brought into the judgment hall; when they would hear the condemnation pronounced against Him. They could not yet grasp what it was all for. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

You see, this action that the Lord took in washing their feet was an action that they could see. It was the *design* that they could not understand. Sometimes, dear friends, there are those things that come to us, that come into the church of God, things that we can see but we cannot understand. O what help we need; what grace to learn, as the disciples had to learn here, that what He was doing was all right. It was perfect; it was for their good; it would be for their blessing; it would be for His glory. This is something that we are so slow to see, and we are so hard of heart to understand.

Well, as the Lord may help us, let us look a little now into something of this word, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” I am sure, dear friends, that perhaps some of you have heard this text many times. Maybe you have meditated on it, and you have quoted it. Well, I want, as God may help this morning, to speak of four different things.

1. First of all, I want to speak of the things that *He will not do*. “What I do.” Well, there are things He will *not* do. I trust, as we consider them, that they might be for our help, our strength, and our instruction.

2. Secondly, to consider some of the things *He must do*. He must!

3. Thirdly, to consider some of the things that *they must do*.

4. And then lastly, as God may help us, to consider the end of it all. “*His end*,” what He has in view, His purpose.

1. So, first of all, those things He will *not* do. And these things are fundamental; they are vital; they are the foundations; they will be the support of all His dear people, of His church, and of those souls that rely on Him and wait for Him. O how they will need to have these things brought down into their hearts, for so often they feel just the opposite.

Well, first of all, what will He *not* do? He will not *fail* them. Let us come in a personal way – He will not fail *you*, poor sinner. O you think sometimes that He will. You feel at times that the blessing you have sought, the help you have prayed for, will never come to you. Satan would also have you to believe it. Unbelief would say that the Lord will surely fail you. O I think of a soul in its early beginnings. He would venture to follow the Lord in His ways; yet he is so full of fears that he begins to shrink back! Perhaps, he is intending to come before the Lord’s people to tell what he trusts the Lord has done for his soul. He will experience some nights where he fears the Lord will fail him, will shut him up. O, dear friend, that cannot be! He will not fail such a soul. We read in the prophecy of Isaiah, “He shall not fail.” O that glorious truth! This is that sweet hope and support of His people in all their times of trials. They will find, in due course, that they will have to say and confess that, He *did not* fail – He was faithful. To fail would be the

opposite of that glorious truth. He is faithful. He is faithful to His Word. He is faithful to the promises He gives. He surely is faithful to the purposes of His grace. He is faithful to them, and He will fulfill them. He will *not* fail thee.

Secondly, He will not *forsake* thee. How often a poor, tried soul comes to the place where he feels or fears that God has forsaken him. Remember how Jacob speaks of it. We have the word in Isaiah chapter 40, "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel," the Lord hath forsaken me? God's Jacobs come there. They have times when they fear that God has forsaken them. They feel at times to be so alone and forsaken of God. Here again, their enemy would have them think it is so. He will press it hard upon them that God has forsaken, that He *has* left them. I think of how the hymnwriter, Toplady, has expressed it in hymn 293. It is one of those hymns that expressed my feelings in my very early days, when I was struggling to know whether there really was something of a work of grace begun; sometimes believing it was so, and other times sinking down to such a low place. I was reading this hymn one evening at home; I was living with my parents at that time, but it was this word:

"If sometimes I strive, as I mourn,  
My hold of Thy promise to keep,  
The billows more fiercely return,  
And plunge me again in the deep.  
While harassed and cast from Thy sight,  
The tempter suggests with a roar,  
'The Lord has forsaken thee quite;  
Thy God will be gracious no more."

I thought, if this hymnwriter knew something of that experience, then perhaps I am right; I was sorely tried, but I felt a sweet hope that I was in the right way. But then, in the last verse he says:

"Yet, Lord, if Thy love has designed  
No covenant blessing for me,  
Ah, tell me how is it I find  
Some sweetness in waiting for Thee?"

I felt I could say that! I felt a sweetness in waiting for Him. O, the Lord will not forsake such souls.

Perhaps some of you have seen the little poem of "Footprints in the Sand." The story is told of a man who was thinking over his life. He thought he saw two sets of footprints, his and the Lord's, walking side by side. But he noticed that a few times in his life, there was only one set of footprints. He was really troubled by it, because, as he considered those times, it was when he sank the lowest. He asked the Lord, "Why is it that in my darkest times, Thou didst forsake me?" And the Lord

answered him, "No, dear child, it was then that I carried you." O, dear friends, He will not forsake thee. "What I do thou knowest not now." He will not forsake thee, whatever it is that you are going through, whatever trial you are in, whatever strange and twisting path you must walk in.

But let us consider a little more. He will not forget thee, He will not fail thee, He will not forsake thee. When we think of the multitude of people that came to the Lord with their needs, their concerns, their burdens, all through the day, every day. What a host of poor, needy, empty beggars are praying unto Him and crying out at any one time. We are tempted to think that, with all those calling upon Him, the Lord will look over me. But He will not forget thee. How often His dear people are in such a state, when so sorely tried, they conclude that the Lord has forgotten them.

The Lord speaks in the prophecy of Isaiah, "Can a mother forget her ... child ... the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me" (Isa. 49. 15, 16). O this is a sweet truth.

"Forget thee I will not, I cannot, thy name  
Engraved on My heart does for ever remain;  
The palms of My hands when I look on I see  
The wounds I received when suffering for thee." (H. 993)

So, here is something that He will not do: He will not forget. Others may forget; He cannot. Our dear friends may forget us, but He cannot forget. This is a glorious truth: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

But then, when we think of what He will not do, we recall the promise that He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape" (1 Cor. 10. 13). You have many temptations. Some of you younger friends, I do not know where you might be, whether the Lord has begun a work of grace in your soul or not. If He has, I can tell you that you will know of great temptations, especially in your youth; what temptations there will be! But the Lord will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. With the temptation He will make a way of escape. He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation. There is no one that knows better than He. Older friends, godly friends, may know many things, but they do not really know how to deliver out of temptation; but the Lord does. This is a thing that He will not do: He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."



2. Secondly, let us consider, as the Lord may help, something of this truth regarding things that He *must do*. For you see, dear friends, that is implied in our text: "What I do thou knowest not now."

There are many things that the Lord must do. He will do it, He will indeed. First of all, the Lord must keep all His people. He *has* to; He has promised to *keep* them. They are His sheep that need keeping, and if you are one of them, you will feel your need of keeping. At times, you will tremble at the thought of not being kept. The Lord knoweth His dear people in their need. He knoweth where they are, but He will keep them. When we think of the Lord's keeping, we think of how Joseph was kept throughout the trial that he was in. When he was tempted in Potiphar's house, what a keeping it was! He was preserved and delivered out of that sinful temptation. What a wonderful thing! Here was a young man, a young boy, and he was delivered from a great evil.

We remember how David, with all his wives, fell into it. He was not kept at that time. The Lord left him to prove him; but He did keep David, didn't He? David was not allowed to fall away. He was not allowed to go on and harm his heart for ever. No, there would come the message: "Thou art the man!" which would awaken him from his deadly stupor; which would turn him back to his God. He was kept. O the precious keeping!

Peter, to whom this word was spoken, needed a special keeping. You remember how the Lord had told him that Satan desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat. What a word that was! We would have thought that Peter would be filled with such fear, trepidation, carefulness and watchfulness; yet Peter still would boast. So Peter must be tried! Satan put him in the sieve; Peter did fall, but he was kept. Later, Peter looked back over the way the Lord had led him, and how the Lord had preserved him. In his first Epistle, he writes of those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. 1. 5). You and I have need in our present day to be kept by that power. If we have to keep ourselves, we will sink. What an utter ruin it will become; but O to be kept! This will be our prayer, a prayer that we will be made to feel more and more as we are led on, that the Lord will keep us; to keep us in the hour of temptation; to keep us from ourselves; to keep us from sin. So this is something He *must do*; He must keep.

But not just that. He must *teach*. How much we need to be taught! We need His teaching so much, and the Lord has promised to teach. He teaches by His blessed Spirit. He has promised this regarding the Spirit in the following chapter. He would send the Comforter to teach them and to guide them into all truth.

Remember how dear Job had to pray, "That which I see not teach Thou me" (Job 34. 32). I am sure, dear friends, this is something we will

each have to beg of the Lord many times, to teach us what we do not see. But He will teach. He must teach sinners in the way. Are we such sinners, who have need of that teaching of the Lord? Not just teaching in the way, but teaching the way itself; we are so often turned out of the way, we are so often going astray. There is but one way – that narrow way. It is the path of the just. The Lord must teach His dear people in that way. O this is where they will come then: “Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day” (Psa. 25. 4, 5). This is the prayer of His dear people, to be taught of Him. And we pray it continually. We want to be taught something of Himself. O what need we have of that teaching! This is the very teaching that the Apostle Paul received, and sought for himself and the churches. He never counted himself to have acquired what he wanted, “But this one thing I do,” pressing toward the mark, pressing forward. He sought to “know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death” (Phil. 3. 10).

Again, things He must do. Well, dear friends, surely, He must *perform* all things for us. And how many this morning feel that and long for that, that the Lord will perform all things for you? What a wonderful word is that of performing. The Word of God is so faithful in this. Think of how Job speaks of it in this way: “He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him” (Job 23. 14). This is that performing. If Job perceived that in the midst of his dark trial: He is performing the thing appointed, O, dear friends, so it is in our day. In all that is taking place, He is performing the thing that is appointed for us, as well as in the church of God. We love to think of those appointments when it comes to raising up ministers to preach the gospel. It is a wonderful performing when He brings poor souls under the gospel and blesses them and enables them to profess His name. It is a wonderful performing when He adds to the church daily such as should be saved. O, but there are souls that are fearful, tried, tempted, trembling. “What about me?” they would say. Dear friend, He is performing even on their behalf. How does He perform? Beginning the work of grace, He will perform it until the end. He keeps it going. How often poor, exercised souls feel that they will come short, that their oil will run out. No, the Lord will perform it. He will cause the smoking flax to burn as a bright flame again; He performs it. O wonderful performing when He works in this way, enabling them to hold on their way! It is that performing of the work of grace in the soul. This is His special work; this is His care.

But then, things He *must* do. He will supply, He must supply their every need. We live in a time when our physical needs, that of food or

raiment, is not something that is so dire as it was in former ages. We live in a time of plenty, a prosperous time for most of us. When we think of these daily provisions, we need the Lord to supply His blessing on them. He told His people of old, "ye shall eat, and not be satisfied" (Lev. 26. 26 and Mic. 6. 14). Then we think of those things regarding His house, regarding the Word of God. We need Him to supply understanding, light and power; understanding the truth in Jesus, light to those who walk in darkness, and power to overcome the enemy. We need that supply of grace. When the apostle had the thorn in the flesh, that is when he was truly taught the need of that supply. And so it is with ourselves. It is not until there is the thorn in the flesh, that crook in our lot, that we really perceive the need of such grace and the supply of it. These are the things He must do. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

But then, on this point of things He must do, I would mention just one more. He must *sanctify* the way that He leads in. When I think of the disciples at this time, what "a needs be" there was for the Lord to take this action to show them how they were to behave. I am sure not one of them would have bowed so low as to do what their Master was doing to them. The Lord set an example that was so powerful, humbling and self-abasing.

We had a dear member at Grand Rapids many years ago. She was not at the forefront of the members, one that people would look up to quickly, but she always took the lowest seat. She did not speak so much with words, but she did speak with her actions. I marked that grace. Sometimes there were older people that just needed to have their toenails clipped. That was a menial task! But she would go and do that for them with such willingness and grace, for I believe she did it as unto the Lord. O the needs be for these lessons! We need to have the sanctifying effect of them in us. Now, the many things the Lord leads us into to sanctify us, to make us shine more in His image. O that there might be a little understanding given. Does He not need to sanctify the cross that they take? If you and I are enabled to take up the cross, how we need to have it sanctified to our souls that we might prize it, because so often we would shrink from it and shirk it. So often, we feel unready to take it, and even feel rebellious under it, until it is sanctified. Can we count it to be a blessing indeed and bless the Lord for it?

"What I do thou knowest not now." That cross that is laid on you at present, you do not know and understand why, and you will not until it is sanctified and made a real blessing. It is a great mercy to see that the Lord is doing such things, and when we are brought to see that it is in the "all things" that "work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8. 28). This is that

way the Lord takes when He fulfills His word and makes it “work together for good.” Those of you this morning who have things in your life that you look back on, things the Lord has done and brought you through, some of those most trying and distressing times, has He not made them work for your good? The Lord is a Master at that. How wonderful He is! That word was given as His name: “His name shall be called Wonderful” (Isa. 9. 6). O dear friend, He is wonderful when He makes such things work for good, the most adverse things, the most ill things work for good. It is sanctified when they are brought to see that He has “led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation” (Psa. 107. 7). This is that right way. “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

Especially, these things are sanctified when their “affection” is set “on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3. 2). You do not need me or anybody else to tell you how little your affections are set there, and how hard it is to have them set on things above. We have to mourn and grieve over that. When the Lord does these things, at the present time, we cannot understand, we cannot know what He is about, the way that He is taking. Yet when it is truly sanctified, we will know it because then we will feel our heart is stayed on things above; our affections are placed there. Then we go out after Him. O may the Lord give us to understand a little of this: “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter, hereafter.”

3. Well, dear friends, there is perhaps much more on that point, but I want to consider thirdly, what *they* must do, that is His people; what poor sinners must do, whom He leads in this way that they know not. It is not something that is easy to the flesh, not something that we can do of the flesh. O what grace will be needed for us to do these things.

First of all, they need to be patient; patient in tribulation; patient in every trial; patient under every cross. “Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10. 36). Where are we to get patience? I think it was Berridge, in hymn 300, he said that he thought he had patience until the Lord loaded him down with various trials; then he found he had none. Patience is a sweet grace, and grace is a gift; grace comes from Him. This is where patience is to be found and to be obtained. O the patient in spirit! “Ye have heard of the patience of Job” (Jas. 5. 11). That means endurance, and that is what the word patience means; they need to endure. Those things which they cannot understand that come upon them. This is the thing that they must do, to be patient, to be still under them.

Secondly, they must watch in prayer. This too is a great grace. So many speak about prayer as if it is something that they can work quickly.

But the soul that is led of the Spirit knows that he cannot pray of himself. We may offer many words of prayer, but it is like the prayer of the Pharisee; it did not rise any higher than the ceiling. We want to know something of that prayer that does ascend, a prayer that really goes up. We want to be in the spirit of prayer, watching in prayer, and to pray without ceasing. O the exhortations that we have in the Word of God truly to pray. The Lord exhorted in the eighteenth chapter of Luke's gospel, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The thing we do so quickly is to faint. Then, remember the word of exhortation, that God "will avenge them speedily." O for the grace of prayer! O to watch in prayer. It is to be waiting on the Lord as we watch in prayer, and in waiting, to rest in His Word. This is the thing that these souls must do at such a time.

4. But now, as the Lord may help us, let us consider lastly, His end. For that is implied here in our text this morning, in the hereafter: "Thou shalt know hereafter." Thou shalt know at the end, the end of the way, the end of the trial; O when we think of the end! "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer. 29. 11).

Remember how dear Jacob, when he went to obtain a blessing, did it in such a way that he was always tried regarding it; he had to suffer so many things on account of it. What a bitter trial it was when he had to leave his father's house; when he was deceived in his wages by his father-in-law; when, upon his return to his father, he heard that Esau was coming with four hundred men. "What I do thou knowest not now." The "hereafter" came when he wrestled with the angel and obtained the blessing. Jacob was favoured to live in the land of Israel for a good number of years. When he had to leave again, the word was spoken to Jacob, "Fear not to go down into Egypt" (Gen. 46. 3). "What I do thou knowest not now," Jacob. Jacob did not want to go, even though he knew his son Joseph was there – he was afraid to go. But the Lord came with that word, "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will ... go down with thee." O dear friend, what a way it is. You may have something of that. You may have your Egypt that you are fearing to go down into – "I will go down with thee." O the end of the Lord. When he came to the end of his days, and after he had blessed his sons, the dear man gathered up his feet into his bed. Now he was ready. He died in the fulness of the joy that his God had blessed him. One has said that there was not a cloud in Jacob's sky as he came to the end. "What I do thou knowest not now." That way was so twisted; that way had seemed to be so wrong. Jacob would not have changed a thing in the end.

But what about dear Joseph? Sold by his brothers, tempted of Potiphar's wife, imprisoned for a time, forgotten by the butler, left as it

seemed. Yet there is something very beautiful about the life of Joseph. Three times you will read this in God's Word: "But God was with him." When he was sold, "God was with him." When he was tempted, "God was with him." When he was put in the prison, "God was with him." "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Whatever it may be that you have in your present path, may the Lord seal something of this word into your heart, into your soul. The day came when Joseph was exalted. You see, dear friend, that was not just for Joseph. No, that will come to all of those who fear God and follow Him. The day will come when they too will be exalted.

Turning again to Job, whom we spoke of in the beginning. How Job was emptied, wasn't he? He was emptied of all that he possessed; all was taken. He was emptied of his friends. They all charged him wrongly. He was emptied of his family. While his wife was spared, she came against him with her ungodly counsel. He felt to be emptied because his God had hidden His face from him. Though Job was emptied, afflicted and abased, the day came when the Lord fulfilled this word, "What I do thou knowest not now." Job, you cannot understand why I am taking everything away, but "thou shalt know hereafter." And Job was brought to that place in the end of the book, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42: 5, 6). Ah, but what then? "The LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends," and the Lord added unto Job more than he had before. O there was the exaltation. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

O, dear friends, what a hereafter; what a hope, what an expectation! It has been said of old, "The best is yet to be." It will be so for those that fear God. There is a hereafter; a glorious hereafter, a blessed hereafter. When they are brought to His feet at last, when they are brought to see,

"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."

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."  
May the Lord grant His blessing. Amen.

---

The wise men lost the star when they went to Herod, so you will lose the witness of the Spirit when you go into vain company.

*Joseph Mackay Reay*

## THE TEARS OF THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

---

Here are many interesting things said in these verses (John 11. 32-36), which, had we room to enlarge upon, would afford ample subject for meditation. The call of Mary; the company of the Jews; their observations; and the affecting interview of Christ with the sisters, when Mary fell at His feet, with the reiterating what Martha had said before; these are all capable of calling forth much matter for improvement. But I pass the whole by, in order to direct the reader to have his mind solely engaged in contemplating Christ. Every incident in this memorable event becomes tenfold more interesting from its relation to Jesus. And it were to lose sight of the great object for which the Holy Ghost caused it to be recorded, to be looking to any other.

The tears of Jesus open an endless subject for contemplation. I dare not, for sure I am I cannot, explain the wonderful circumstance in a thousandth part of it. Nevertheless, in a matter which interests the church of God so highly, I must not be wholly silent. Jesus wept. Yes, reader, it is our mercy that the Lord Jesus perfectly knew, and as truly felt the whole of what human nature is in all its parts, yet without sin. Had it been otherwise, He would have been man in appearance, and not in reality. Whereas, the Holy Ghost expressly saith, that “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. 17, 18).

Let us only attend for a few moments to the necessity of the measure, according to what the Holy Ghost here saith. It behoved Him to be so. The original marriage and union between Christ and His church made it so. For had the Son of God taken upon Him the nature of angels, what union would our nature have had with Him? But it is expressly said, that “He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2. 16). It was essentially necessary also, that the Son of God should become Man, not only to marry, and to take into union with Himself His spouse the church as one nature, but also for the purpose of redeeming that nature from the Adam-transgression into which that nature fell. The right of redemption was by the law belonging to the next of kin (see Lev. 25. 25). It could be redeemed by no other. Hence it behoved the Son of God, under both these grand and indispensable obligations, to take upon Him our nature, and to be united to it. And this union was to be in all points. He was to be very and truly Man, as he was very and truly God. All the sinless infirmities of our nature to know, and feel, in order that He might not only know them as

God, but feel them as Man. And it was by this very process alone, that He became fitted for our High Priest and Mediator. Most blessedly God the Holy Ghost bears testimony to this, when by His servant the apostle He saith, "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that He Himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5. 1, 2).

Reader, pause over this blessed view of Jesus, for it is indeed most blessed! Thy God, thy Husband, thy Jesus, felt in His human nature, yet without sin, all that thou feels. He wept, groaned in spirit, knew sorrow, temptation, soul-agonies, hunger, thirst, weariness, affliction, persecution, and the long train of human evils which frail flesh is subject to, in this time-state of the church. Before that holy portion of our nature which He took into union with the Godhead, should put on that glory which is the ultimate design for which He took it, it behoved Him to be clothed with all the sinless infirmities with which His church is clothed. And O the unspeakable blessedness of thus viewing Christ, thus knowing Him, and going to Him, under all our exercises! When upon earth, behold how He entered into the feelings of His people; and how their sorrows called forth the groans of His heart! And now in heaven, the sweetest of all thoughts is, that His nature is not changed, but His feeling is the same. All the affections of tenderness in Jesus, in His human nature, however highly glorified that nature is, are as truly so now as when below. He that wept upon earth at the sorrows of His redeemed, hath the everlasting continuance of the same tender feelings for them now He is in heaven. Reader, let you and I never lose sight of it, but always seek for grace to keep in remembrance those sweet views of Jesus, as often as we read, Jesus wept!

---

---

## THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

*By Henry Law (1797-1884)*

---

"This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing" (Lev. 14. 2).

No earthly skill removed the leper's shame. He pined in woe, until compassion smiled from heaven. When God's time came, the dreary trial ceased, and the gay spring of health put forth its bud.

The case of sin is similar. The plague runs on, until free grace relieves. God is the first, throughout salvation's work. He wills. He speaks. The sinner hears the inward voice, and seeks the cross, and in the cross finds renovated life.



The leper's misery had been a long, dark night. What must have been his joy, when the bright morn of cleansing came!

Reader, learn here that there is happiness brighter far than bodily relief. Soul-cure is cure of cures. The sense of pardon, the Father's smile, the hope of glory, the Spirit's fellowship, are the supremest bliss. The heart which Christ has healed is the fair garden in which unfading pleasure blooms. Earth's happiest sons are they who are God's sons in Christ. They who are one with Him, have fixed their tents on loftiest summits of delight.

Full of these thoughts, approach the leper's various cleansing rites. They are as streams, from many a mountain brow, all meeting in one ocean lap. They are, as rays from distant points, combining in one central blaze. They are, as different notes, uniting in one choral swell. All point to Christ, and testify, that "Christ is all."

The priest alone pronounced unclean, and he alone can now pronounce the cure. But how can meeting be? The tainted sufferer is an outcast from the camp. He may not seek the tabernacle-court. Therefore the priest will leave the gates, and hasten to the spot where lonely misery sits (see Lev. 14. 3).

Here faith discerns the willing flight of Jesus to our earth. His throne is heaven. His abode is light. His dwelling is bright glory. But the poor sinner mourns below. Can Jesus turn away? O no! He scorns not to put on our flesh. He counts it joy to seek the lost. The way is long, the ignominy deep. But toil and shame cannot obstruct. Need calls. Jesus draws near. Reader, shall He leave all for you, and will you not leave all for Him? His self-devoting zeal chides man's self-murdering sloth.

The cleansing rites must now be closely viewed. Spirit of light, reveal them in true light! Our eyes are blinded, till aid comes from Thee.

Clean birds are brought. In number they are two. One is death-doomed. Its trickling blood descends into an earthen vessel filled from the running stream. The other is plunged beneath the blood-dyed water, and then sent forth with dripping wing towards heaven. A bunch of hyssop is next bound with scarlet wool unto a cedar staff. With this the blood is seven times cast upon the meekly-bending man (see Lev. 14. 4, 7). These birds represent Christ. One sign is narrow to show all His work. Collect all types – He is the truth of each, and far more than the truth of all. One bird is slain. O blessed news! Our Jesus dies. Think, O my soul, your joy, your peace, your hope, your heaven, spring from a Saviour's grave. Your life is forfeited through sin. Stern justice draws the sword. The outraged law frowns ruin. You see the vengeance, and you hear the threat. But still you tremble not. You calmly point to Jesus and the accursed tree.

You know the refuge of the wounded side. You rightfully maintain that you are free. Christ's death is paid, that you may never die. His life is given, that you may live for ever. Blood is outpoured, which outweighs every claim. Rejoice, give thanks, sing praise. Through death, you tread down death. The cross uplifts you to eternal day.

The other speeds all red towards heaven. The dying Jesus is sin's death. The ascending Jesus is salvation's life. The grave restores, heaven's courts receive Him. The gates lift up their heads. The everlasting doors unfold. The King of glory enters in.

My soul be wise; stretch, too, your upward wings; pierce intervening clouds; dwell at heaven's gate; gaze on the work within the veil. Christ ever stands before the throne. You live because a living Saviour prays. Hence rising sins are pardoned, because a risen Advocate pleads. Hence heaven awaits you, because a Forerunner holds possession for you.

Seven-fold sprinklings from the cedar wand then follow. A distant Saviour is a Saviour none. A remedy far off removes no ill. The mighty benefit must be applied. The heart must know, the conscience feel, the life proclaim, that Christ is formed within. By varied means God brings the sinner into contact with the cure. Mainly the preacher's voice is used. Ye ministers of Christ, behold your work. Souls sit before you, waiting to be cleansed. What is it that you scatter round? What is the cedar, what the hyssop, which you wave? Are your words dipped in blood from the Redeemer's heart? You often mourn that the flock's leprosy abides. You seek their health, but still disease pollutes. May it not be, because your lips drop scantily the healing dew? No leper could be clean, until the blood fell seven times on him. No soul stands pure, until the stream from Calvary imbue it. Sermons should be as drippings from the cross.

Next all his hair is shaved away, and all his garments washed (see Lev. 14. 8). Nothing is kept which harbours seed of re-appearing plague. Believer, heed the lesson. It is wisdom's voice. Faith grasps a pardon, and wins endless bliss. But still the Adam-nature lives. Your present dwelling is in infection's clime. The flesh still lusts to evil. Sin daily strives to roll you in the mire. Open your eyes. Flee from each tempting circumstance. Avoid each slippery path. If there be place, or book, or man, or trade, which draws from God, or slopes the way to fall, shun them, O shun them, as contagious. The offending eye, though needful, must be closed for ever. The offending hand or foot, though useful, must be cut off. Reprieve is ruin. The loss is gain. The pain is joy. That most befriends, which keeps out sin. That injures most, which re-admits our deadliest foe.

Six days elapsed and then this cleansing is renewed (see Lev. 14. 9). While the believer lives, a watchtower is his place. Occasions will

return. The ebbing tide will flow again. The mortifying knife must still be used. While the foe plots, the shield and helmet may not be laid down. David seeks ease, while warriors fight, and David finds that his leprosy still lives. Peter is warned to watch and pray, but Peter slumbers, and the bait succeeds.

This teaching volume holds more pages yet (see Lev. 14. 10, 13). Fresh rites ensue. More victims yet must bleed. Reader, mark here the Spirit's loving heart. He never wearies to exhibit Christ. He multiplies, to win us to the pardoning cross. Did the burnt offering bring forth Christ wholly wrapt in flames of unremitting wrath? A burnt offering must now blaze. Did the sin offering show sin's hateful filth? A sin offering must now die. Did the trespass offering cast more light on the redeeming work? Did the meat offering change the scene, and give another aspect of the cross? Trespass offering must now be added. Meat offering must now be brought. All signs are sought to magnify, uplift, commend, the glorious work of our atoning Lord. Do any seek for cleansing without blood? Let such survey this bloodstained chain of rites. Their voice is loud, and clear, and oft-repeated. All sound this note. Apart from Christ, apart from His vicarious pains, there is no cure.

Blood from the trespass offering is now significantly used. The priest applies it to the ear, the hand, the foot (see Lev. 14. 14). The mark is written on every extreme point. And why? All parts need cleansing, and cleansing is provided for all parts. Complete remission of all guilt is the grand comfort of the gospel scheme. Christ is no partial Saviour. He takes away not some, but all our sins. If but one speck remained, there could be no admission to the courts of light. The Father's eye can only rest on purity as pure as God. But Calvary's stream makes whiter than the whitest snow. Doubtless each member has transgressed. The ear has readily admitted evil sounds. The door has quickly opened to the poisoning foe. Thus the whole mind has caught infecting taint. But sprinkle the blood, and all is clean. The hand has often been the tool of Satan. It has done guilty work in his foul service. But there is ready remedy. Wash here, and lift up holy hands, without one fear. The feet, too, often tread the miry paths, and rush unchecked to every scene of guilt. But all this filth must disappear. The vilest sinner, touched by this blood, can silence every accusing charge. Christ brings a pardon, entire throughout, for every sin of all who flee to Him. Can any hesitate? Will any heart refuse to shout, Blessed be God, for Jesus Christ?

Another rite remains. The priest takes oil – fit emblem of the Spirit's grace. With this again, the ear, the hand, the foot are touched. The rest is poured upon the leper's head (see Lev. 14. 15, 18). The oil surmounts the blood. The blood obliterates offence. The Spirit purifies the inner man. Where one is seen, all condemnation flees. Where the

other lives, the reign of sin is burst. One gives the plea for life. The other meetens for the heavenly home. One is the key. The other forms a fitness to enjoy. Unjustified, man stands without. Unsanctified, he cares not to go in. But pardon and renewal are linked in holy chains. One comes: the other speeds to follow.

As cleansing is complete, so renovation must pervade each part. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17). Each member lives anew to God. The ears hear for Him. They gather holy sounds, that holy truth may sink into the heart. The hand, the foot, seek only holy work. The one employ is to show forth God's praise, commend God's ways, advance God's kingdom, and adorn His truth. The wilderness is lovely as the rose. Where thorns and briars once were sharp, the myrtle blossoms, and the fir tree waves.

Reader, here is a ready test for you. You often hear of Jesus' cleansing work. Perhaps you boast of interest in His cross. But is your hope sincerely rooted in the gospel truth? Let now this tract enquire. Where are your signs? Fruit proves the nature of the tree. Warmth is the evidence, that fire burns. Light manifests the risen sun. He that is cleansed abhors all filth. He that has put on Christ, shines in the robes of light. The grace which brings to Christ imparts new life.

True, there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, but they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. He who is truth proclaims, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (John 13. 8). But truth adjoins, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8. 9).

Lord, cleanse me throughout with cleansing blood! Lord, fill me throughout with purifying grace!

---

## ESTABLISHING OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS

*Extract from the diary of F.C. Windridge (1867-1961)*

---

*November 2nd, 1955:* I have been reading *The Death of Legal Hope the Life of Evangelical Obedience*, in which I found this quotation from Beart's *Eternal Law and Everlasting Gospel* part 1, pref. pages 15, 16. It is by Mr. Owen Stockton, minister of the gospel in the seventeenth century. The book was printed in 1839 and I copy pages 32 and 33. This quotation is to me worth more than £10,000.

"I find that though, in my *judgment* and *profession*, I acknowledge Christ to be my righteousness and peace, yet upon examination I observe that my *heart* hath done quite another thing, and that *secretly* I have gone

about to establish my own righteousness (see Rom. 10. 3), and have derived my comfort and peace from my own actings. For when I have been disquieted by the acting of my sins, that which hath recovered me to my former peace hath not been that I could find God speaking peace through the blood of Christ, but rather from the intermission of temptation and the cessation of those sins. When I have been troubled at an evil frame of heart, I do not find that the righteousness of Christ hath been my consolation, but that which has relieved me as far as I can find, was that afterwards I have found myself in a better temper. Having been in trouble and perplexity, I have read the Scripture, gone to prayer, and in doing these I have been relieved; yet I do not find that at such times I had a real, true, living communion with God in such duties, or that the Spirit of God did in those duties reveal to me my interest in Christ and so quiet my conscience. Here I come to see what great need I have, and that it is of singular use, to watch over my soul in all its ways, both in reference to sin that I fall not into it, and, when fallen, what the carriage and actings of my soul are at such a time – whether I flee for relief to God in Christ or to my own works. For as Satan keeps some alienated from God by the gross pollutions of the world, so others from Christ by establishing a righteousness of their own. O Lord, break Thou this snare for me!”

A great deal of this is my own experience.

---

---

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSION

*By Thomas Watson (1620-1686)*

---

“Who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8. 34).

When Aaron entered into the holy place, his bells gave a sound. So Christ having entered into heaven, His intercession makes a melodious sound in the ears of God. Christ, though He be exalted to glory, hath not laid aside His bowels of compassion, but is still mindful of His body mystical, as Joseph was mindful of his father and brethren, when he was exalted to the court. “Who also maketh intercession for us.” To intercede is to make request in the behalf of another. Christ is the great Master of requests in heaven.

*Question:* What are the qualifications of our Intercessor?

*Answer 1:* He is holy. “For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners” (Heb. 7. 26). Christ “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5. 21). He knew sin in its weight, not in the act. It was requisite that He, who was to do away the sins of others, should Himself be without sin. Holiness is one of the precious stones which shine on the breastplate of our High Priest.

*Answer 2:* He is faithful. “It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a ... faithful High Priest” (Heb. 2. 17). Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a Son (see Heb. 3. 5, 6). He doth not forget any cause He hath to plead, nor doth He use any deceit in pleading. An ordinary attorney may either leave out some word which might make for the client, or put in a word against him, having received a fee on both sides; but Christ is true to the cause He pleads; we may leave our matters with Him, we may trust our lives and souls in His hand.

*Answer 3:* He never dies. The priests under the law, while their office lived, they themselves died. “They were not suffered to continue by reason of death” (Heb. 7. 23), but Christ “ever liveth to make intercession” (Heb. 7. 25). He hath no succession in His priesthood.

*Question:* For whom does Christ intercede?

*Answer:* Not for all promiscuously (see John 17. 9), but for the elect. The efficacy of Christ’s prayer reacheth no further than the efficacy of His blood; but His blood was shed only for the elect, therefore His prayers only reach them. The high priest went into the sanctuary with the names only of the twelve tribes upon his breast. So Christ goes into heaven only with the names of the elect upon His breast. Christ intercedes for the weakest believers (see John 17. 20), and for all the sins of believers. In the law there were some sins the high priest was neither to offer sacrifice for, nor yet to offer prayer for: “The soul that doth ought presumptuously ... shall be cut off” (Numb. 15. 30). The priest might offer up prayer for sins of ignorance, but not of presumption; but Christ’s intercession extends to all the sins of the elect. Of what a bloody colour was David’s sin! Yet it did not exclude Christ’s intercession.

*Question:* What doth Christ in the work of intercession?

*Answer:* Three things.

1. He presents the merit of His blood to His Father, and, in the virtue of that price paid, pleads for mercy. The high priest was herein a lively type of Christ. Aaron was to do four things:

i. Kill the beasts.

ii. To enter with the blood into the holy of holies.

iii. To sprinkle the mercy seat with the blood.

iv. To kindle the incense, and with the smoke of it cause a cloud to arise over the mercy seat; and so the atonement was made (see Lev. 16. 11-16). Christ our High Priest did exactly answer to this type. He was offered up in sacrifice – that answers to the priest’s killing the bullock; and Christ is gone up into heaven – that answers to the priest’s going into the holy of holies; and He spreads His blood before His Father – that answers to the priest’s sprinkling the blood upon the mercy seat; and He prays to His Father that for His blood’s sake He would be propitious to

sinner – that answers to the cloud of incense going up; and through His intercession God is pacified – that answers to the priest's making atonement.

2. Christ by His intercession answers all bills of indictment brought in against the elect. Believers, do what they can, sin, and then Satan accuseth them to God, and conscience accuseth them to themselves. Now, Christ by His intercession answers all these accusations. "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). When a man called Esculus was accused for some impiety, his brother stood up for him, and showed the magistrates how he had lost his hand in the service of the state, and so obtained his pardon. Thus, when Satan accuseth the saints, or when the justice of God lays anything to their charge, Christ shows His own wounds, and by virtue of His bloody sufferings, He answers all the demands and challenges of the law, and counterworks Satan's accusations.

3. Christ by His intercession calls for acquittance: Lord, let the sinner be absolved from guilt; and in this sense Christ is called an Advocate (see 1 John 2. 1). He requires that the sinner be set free in the court. An advocate differs much from an orator. An orator uses rhetoric to persuade and entreat the judge to show mercy to another; but an advocate tells the judge what is law. Thus Christ appears in heaven as an Advocate; He represents what is law. When God's justice opens the debt book, Christ opens the lawbook: "Lord," saith He, "Thou art a just God, and wilt not be pacified without blood. Lo! here the blood is shed; therefore in justice, give Me a discharge of these distressed creatures. It is equal, that the law being satisfied, the sinner should be acquitted." And, upon Christ's plea, God sets His hand to the sinner's pardon.

*Question:* In what manner Christ intercedes?

*Answer 1: Freely.* He pleads our cause in heaven, and takes no fee. An ordinary lawyer will have his fee, and sometimes a bribe too, but Christ is not mercenary. How many causes doth He plead every day in heaven and will take nothing? As Christ laid down His life freely (see John 10. 15, 18), so He intercedes freely.

*Answer 2: Feelingly.* He is as sensible of our condition as His own. "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4. 15). As a tender-hearted mother would plead with a judge for a child ready to be condemned – O how would her bowels work! how would her tears trickle down! what weeping rhetoric would she use to the judge for mercy! Thus the Lord Jesus is full of sympathy and tenderness, that He might be a merciful High Priest (see Heb. 2. 17), though He hath left His passion, yet not His compassion.

An ordinary lawyer is not affected with the cause He pleads, nor doth He care which way it goes; it is profit makes Him plead, not affection; but Christ intercedes feelingly, and that which makes Him intercede with affection is, it is His own cause which He pleads. He hath shed His blood to purchase life and salvation for the elect; and if they should not be saved, He would lose His purchase.

*Answer 3: Efficaciously.* It is a prevailing intercession. Christ never lost any cause He pleaded; He was never non-suited. Christ's intercession must needs be effectual, if we consider,

1. The excellency of His Person. If the prayer of a saint be so prevalent with God (Moses' prayer did bind God's hand, "Let me alone" [Exod. 32. 10]; and Jacob, as a prince, prevailed with God [see Gen. 32. 28]; and Elijah did by prayer open and shut heaven [see Jas. 5. 17]), then what is Christ's prayer? He is the Son of God, the Son in whom He is well pleased (see Matt. 3. 17). What will not a father grant a son! "I knew that Thou hearest Me always" (John 11. 42). If God could forget that Christ were a Priest, yet He cannot forget that He is a Son.

2. Christ prays for nothing but what His Father hath a mind to grant. There is but one will between Christ and His Father; Christ prays, "Sanctify them through Thy truth"; and, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4. 3). So then, if Christ prays for nothing but what God the Father hath a mind to grant, then He is like to speed.

3. Christ prays for nothing but what He hath power to give: what He prays for as He is Man, that He hath power to give as He is God. "Father, I will" (John 17. 24). *Father* – there He prays as a Man; *I will* – there He gives as God. This is a great comfort to a believer, when his prayer is weak and he can hardly pray for himself, Christ's prayer in heaven is mighty and powerful. Though God may refuse prayer as it comes from us, yet not as it comes from Christ.

4. Christ's intercession is always ready, at hand. The people of God have sins of daily incursion; and, besides these, sometimes they lapse into great sins, and God is provoked, and His justice is ready to break forth upon them; but Christ's intercession is ready at hand. He daily makes up the breaches between God and them; He presents the merits of His blood to His Father to pacify Him. When the wrath of God began to break out upon Israel, Aaron presently stepped in with his censer, and offered incense, and so the plague was stayed (see Numb. 16. 47, 48). So, no sooner doth a child of God offend, and God begin to be angry, but immediately Christ steps in and intercedes: "Father, it is My child hath offended; though he hath forgotten his duty, Thou hast not lost Thy bowels: O pity him, and let Thine anger be turned away from him!" Christ's intercession is ready at hand, and upon the least failings of the godly, He stands up and makes request for them in heaven.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE IN A DECADENT SOCIETY

*By Matthew Vogan (Scottish Reformation Society)*

---

Marriage is in continued decline, falling to an all time low in many nations according to the latest statistics. And it is not yet clear what impact the current crisis will have on the institution of matrimony. Despite studies that show marriage is good for society, its relevance is widely undermined. Marriage is vital for the future of the church as well as society as well as for the glory of God. It gives us a picture of Christ and the church. Research shows that while rates of marriage are higher amongst evangelicals, they are following the same downward trend. *The Future of Christian Marriage* is a book that examines the trends among young people identifying as Christians across different nations. It reveals that marriage is seen as more of a nice-to-have aspiration than a need-to-have essential. It seems that our view of marriage needs to be changed if we are going to preserve it. Not only that but we need to change. And that change is something we all need (married or unmarried) as we will see.

In *The Future of Christian Marriage*, Mark Regenerus writes, “As a researcher, studying the demise of marriage has been like watching an invasive fungus slowly destroy a stately old oak tree.” What is the disease that is attacking marriage? The same pervasive disease that is attacking the church and society. It is the prevailing principle (indeed idolatry) in our culture: expressive individualism. It proclaims that the highest good is individual freedom and self-expression. Its chief purpose is therefore to glorify and enjoy ourselves as we choose, resisting anything that would constrain.

It influences us in subtle ways and more than we care to admit. Its impact on marriage is clear. Marriage is either delayed or abused by pursuing individualist goals. We need more than some light-touch teaching about the benefits of marriage and what it will bring us in fulfilment. We need to have the spirit of loving self-sacrifice that Scripture puts at the heart of marriage and all relationships. This is why it is so counter-cultural. “The oak will not perish,” says Regenerus. “In fact, marriage will increasingly become ‘a Christian thing,’ which means the church will bear increasing responsibility for an institution with an uncertain future.” But this will only be carried out faithfully as we implement the challenging teaching of Scripture in this area.

The classic passage to go to in relation to marriage is Ephesians 5. 21-33. The last verse sums up in two succinct statements the key responsibilities that Paul has expanded on. The key principle is self-denial in the fear of God, because we have already given ourselves first to the Lord. This is to be expressed in their love (Tit. 2. 4; Col.

3. 19), sharing in what they have and living together (1 Pet. 3. 7), mutually bearing one another's burdens and weaknesses (Gal. 6. 2). In other words, they are to live out Christian character and grace in the context of marriage. The husband must not seek his own and love himself more than his wife; he must love her as himself (Eph. 5. 28, 29). The wife must equally deny herself in respect and submission to her spouse (verse 22).

The verse that opens this section outlines this key principle of mutual submission and self-denial (verse 21). He gives a general exhortation that applies to all members of families. As James Fergusson observes, the submission Paul speaks of here is that service of love which everyone owes to each other for their mutual good and benefit in their respective roles and relationships (Gal. 5. 13). It is submission to others that flows from a principle of love to them, and actually intends their good and advantage. It must be done with a humble spirit, being willing to debase ourselves, not proudly thinking our duty to others is beneath us. It is to be done in the fear of God, because humbling ourselves in this way is an evidence of fearing God and because it is the reason why we do it (Col. 3. 22, 23). The fear of God defines the extent of our submission to others, since we are not to submit to more than or in opposition to God. In this updated extract there are lessons for all of us.

#### 1. *Denying ourselves glorifies God*

We are not to neglect the duties of our calling and those which we owe to others by pretending that we have to engage in the worship God instead. God allows us time for both; we are to take time for both. It is consistent to have a conscientious regard for both. The apostle instructs both duties of worship (verses 19, 20) and towards others (verse 21 ff) as it were in one breath. This is clear from the grammatical construction of the words in the original "giving thanks always ... submitting yourselves one to another."

#### 2. *Denying ourselves manifests God's grace*

Conscientiously discharging the duties we owe to our neighbour in our various responsibilities (in a way acceptable to God) requires an abundant quantity of the saving work of God's Spirit in the heart. It is no less necessary in these duties than in those of God's worship and service. Verse 21 depends on and is constructed with verse 18, so that we read it, "Be filled with the Spirit ... submitting yourselves." [i.e. These verses belong together in one connected thought showing the effects of the Spirit's influence, "Be filled with the Spirit ... Speaking to yourselves ... Giving thanks always ... Submitting yourselves."]

#### 3. *Denying ourselves is for everyone*

There is no-one living whom God allows to live only to themselves. Everyone is obliged to inconvenience themselves in their respective

employments for the good and benefit of others. Even those in authority must do this for the good of those under their responsibility. This command is given to everyone without exception: "submitting yourselves one to another."

4. *Denying ourselves is mutually beneficial*

As God has obliged us not to live to ourselves alone, but also to others (whose good we are to aim at in our place and position) so He has provided for a mutual benefit or reward. In this way there is a kind of equality. He has obliged others to live to us and in one way or another do things for our good and advantage also. Both this command and the obligation on which it is based are reciprocal: "Submitting yourselves one to another."

5. *Denying ourselves pleases God*

Where the fear of God is rooted in the heart, it will make a person conscientiously careful and sensitive in relation to their duty towards others. They will not only do their duty, but also do it from a right principle and motive. This will keep them from overdoing things and displeasing God, while they endeavour to please others. The fear of God is the fountain, motive and rule of that submission which is here prescribed: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

---

---

## JOHN WARBURTON OF TROWBRIDGE'S WIFE

*(Concluded from page 127)*

---

After I returned from Brighton, for several weeks I saw a great difference in my wife, but I thought it perhaps arose from losing the child, and would end in nothing but natural sorrow. But one evening, poor thing, she was in such distress that she could not conceal it any longer, and burst out in a flood of tears, exclaiming, "O I am lost, I am lost for ever; and I believe my very senses are going, and I shall go mad." I told her that I hoped her senses were coming in the best sense of the word, and I asked her if her distress was about losing the child. "O no," said she, "the child is nothing to me: it's my never-dying soul that will be lost for ever." I asked her how she began to think anything about her soul, when she told me that a little before I left home, before the child was taken ill, I was preaching about the awfulness of the ungodly being cut down in their sins, and the awful eternity that these poor souls would have to suffer, and feel the wrath of a just God, and I came out with this word three times, "O eternity, eternity, eternity!" "O," said she, "it entered into my heart like a sword, and I saw and felt that I was the one that must endure eternal wrath for ever and ever."

O the joy that entered into my heart when she told me these feelings. "Bless the Lord," exclaimed my heart and tongue, "God is not showing thee these things to send thy poor soul to hell." I believed in my soul that it was the work of God, and I felt my heart sweetly opened to speak to her of the mercy, grace and kindness of a dear Jesus to every poor, lost, ruined sinner. But the more I tried to comfort her, the more she cried out, "I am undone, I am undone! I am not of the number that He died for! O what shall I do? and whither shall I flee? O," cried she, "I cannot see it possible how God can have mercy upon me." I could not help feeling keenly for her in her distress, but could not but bless and praise God that He had brought her to see and feel herself to be a poor, lost sinner; and I told her that God would in His own time reveal it to her joy and comfort that she was not only a lost sinner, but a saved sinner. But, poor thing! she could not take this in till the happy time arrived that it took her in; and here she was shut up unto the faith that should hereafter be revealed.

Many times did the devil tempt her to put an end to her existence; but when the set time to favour Zion was come God delivered her, and that precious. I was attempting to preach from these words, Eph. 3. 18, 19: "May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge"; and as I was showing in my little way the characters that were interested in this love, God sent the word home to her heart, blotted out all her iniquities like a cloud, and assured her that He had loved her with an everlasting love, and that with lovingkindness He had drawn her. O the joy and peace she came out of the chapel with!

We then lived out of the town, and generally called at one of our deacons' houses for a short time after evening service before we went home. The mistress of the house asked her if she would come on Tuesday, and take a cup of tea before the evening service, to which she answered quite freely and pleasantly, "Yes; if the Lord enables me I will." I turned my face and looked at her, and said, "How can you think about coming on Tuesday evening? what is there for you? You say you are out of the secret, and the things of God belong not to you." But she answered with a smile and a pleasant countenance, "Bless the Lord! I know what it is to feel the love of God, and I am sure that I am one of those that are interested in the love of God, for I feel its preciousness in my heart."

O the blaze of glory that came into my soul that the day had arrived which I had so longed to see with my eyes and to hear with my ears! and O the melting of soul that I felt that God had answered my prayer, though the devil had so often told me I never should see it. But what struck me with wonder above all the rest was that He should make use of my poor

mouth to pluck her out of the devil's kingdom, and likewise to lift her soul from off the dunghill, and set her amongst the princes of His people. I blessed Him, I thanked Him; I told Him He had well rewarded me for waiting twenty years, and I told Him that the blessing appeared too great for so worthless a wretch as I.

What happy and comfortable nights and days we had after this! Everything appeared right for a time, particularly with my wife, and for a short time it was all love and praise with her. Bless God! He brought her and taught her in such a precious manner that we had one heart, one way and one voice in the things of God and truth.

But by and by her comforts began to abate, and the fountain of the great deep began to be opened up within to let her see a little what a devilish heart she had got. I began to perceive a great gloominess upon her mind and a great backwardness to speak of the things of God and truth. Many things began to appear wrong in her eyes; the devil harassed her sore that it was all delusion, and in one of those plunging fits he told her it was all through my preaching, and sometimes he worked her up to that degree that, as she told me after she had had a deliverance from it, she was sorely tempted to murder me. I came home from the chapel one evening, and I wondered whatever was the matter with her.

I had been trying to encourage the poor, tempted children of God, and in the sermon I had said, "Come, ye poor *devil-dragged* souls, God will deliver you in His own time." When I came home she did not look quite pleasant, and by and by asked me whether I thought it was right to come out with such expressions as *devil-dragging*. "I have read," said she, "a good deal in the Bible, but I never read there about a devil-dragged soul. I have read a good deal of Mr. Huntington's works, and I never found such an expression there; and I have read some of Mr. Gadsby's works, and have heard him preach many times, but I never heard him come out with such an expression. I wonder where you have picked it up. It appears to me such a vulgar expression, that I really felt so ashamed for you that I did not know where to hide my face."

But I took no notice of her words. "Poor thing," thought I, "thou wilt know by and by a little of what *devil-dragging* means." And so it was; for she got into such a state of mind, and was so tempted to believe that it was my preaching that had been the means of driving her into it, that she was determined she would go to some other chapel. So one week evening off she went to one of the chapels; but she came out worse than ever, and when she came home she was full of nothing but misery and wretchedness. I asked her where she had been. She told me. "Well," said I, "and how did you get on?" "Why," she says, "let me have devil-dragging sooner than that. I have been told that I have nothing to do but to do my duty, live up to my privileges, watch and pray, take God

at His word, and trust to the merits of Christ, and then all would be well; but not a word of encouragement was there given to such an unbelieving, worthless, devilish wretch as I.” I could not help smiling, though I felt for her in her distress; and I knew that the Lord would appear in His own time.

But here she was, sorely harassed for some time, until a little while after this I was led to preach from these words: “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him” (Psa. 12. 5). God carried the word home to her heart, and she came home full of joy and peace, exalting free and sovereign, discriminating grace. Truly, her feet were set upon the rock, and a song of praise was put into her mouth, even thanksgiving unto her God. She declared that she could live up to her privileges now, and trust her God with body and soul for time and eternity. “Yea,” said she, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”; and she never once ever after grumbled at my vulgar speeches, for she was brought to know a little of what *devil-dragging* was.

Bless His dear name! All His children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of His children; and though they have so many sinkings, they must rise again, for He raiseth up those that be bowed down; though they have so many nights, morning is sure to come, and joy with it; though they have so many days of adversity, the day of prosperity is over against it; though they have to endure so many winter seasons, when there are nothing but sighs, groans and misery of every description, yet springtime is sure to come.

And O the heavenly delights when our dearly Beloved speaks to the soul: “Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away.” But what can we do without our dear Lord? His own mouth declares, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.” And I believe in my very soul that all who are taught of God are learning this lesson all their lifetime – that without Christ they can do nothing, and that with Christ they can do all things.

---

The articles by J.H. Gosden will be resumed, if the Lord will, at a later date.

## BOOK REVIEW

---

**Collected Sermons, Poetry and Letters by Herbert Dawson**, cloth bound, 688 pages, illustrated, price £29.95 plus £3.25 postage; obtainable from Mr. John Crowter, Haystacks, Green Lane, Potter Heigham, NR29 5LP.

I always remember an old, godly church member at Tenterden telling me of her mother's feelings when Mr. Dawson (1890-1969) first took the pastorate at Bethersden, Kent, in 1915, aged just twenty-five years old. She was deeply suspicious of this young man, with raven black hair and a strange Berkshire accent. She felt he was just another step in Union Chapel's removal from the "old paths," until he opened his mouth in prayer. "Then," she said, "I knew he was a keeper." I think she meant by keeper, an adherent to the "old paths," but in Kent, "keeper" is also a term for a shepherd, and Mr. Dawson was a real shepherd of souls, a pastor according to the Lord's heart. Far from Bethersden moving further from the "old paths" – it was an "Earthen Vessel" cause, and just prior to Mr. Dawson the Bethersden pastor had been Ebenezer Marsh, editor of *The Earthen Vessel* magazine – Mr. Dawson led his flock, by preaching and walked example, to occupy very different ground.

His ministry was plain, and delivered in a naturally-winsome manner. His sermons often had clear structure, and the text was opened and explained. But it was experimental ministry of the best type – not a description of spiritual experience, but an inescapable application to the hearer. Perhaps in today's terms it would be called "challenging" – but challenging in the example of Jesus' ministry, "What think ye of Christ?" It was that note, I trust blessed by the Holy Spirit, which I could not escape when I first heard Mr. Dawson's ministry from an old reel-to-reel recording as a teenager staying with my grandfather. It made Mr. Dawson's sermons precious to many souls.

A man's ministry may be measured in various ways – how far it conforms to the apostolic standard, "But we preach Christ crucified"; the blessing that attends the preached Word; how far the minister's walk conforms to his pulpit utterances. Taken with each of these measures, we feel bound to say that Mr. Dawson's ministry was amongst the highest ranking.

This book is an eclectic volume. When Mr. Dawson's son, Mr. A.P. Dawson, died, his widow gave to my father a collection of Herbert Dawson's typescript sermons. Some of these were published as far back as 1931, but the vast majority were preached in the last twenty years of his ministry, mainly at Bethersden, but some in now closed, local chapels, such as Rye and Folkestone. Realising the value of these fragile pamphlets, it was decided to get them bound up into a book. Some friends asking for copies of them, it became desirable to reproduce the volume in facsimile. So, the book came into being. A large volume, it contains fifty sermons preached by Mr. Dawson, some poetry by himself and his wife (a poet of some considerable merit), and some of his pastoral letters which he published each year for his congregation. Because it is hand produced as a facsimile, there is no consistency to the typeface or layout through the volume and the price is higher than an average book. But for those who enjoy profitable reading, we believe these facts will be minor matters. The book is illustrated, and the largest part of its contents is very rare and unobtainable from any other source.

Here is a book that contains a wealth of clear, doctrinal teaching and profitable, experimental preaching. It could be easily read and understood by our younger readers, while amply feeding the aged saint. The sermons would make excellent reading for services taken in the absence of a minister. We highly recommend it to you each.

Matthew J. Hyde, Brighton

---

---

### A CRY FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

*“When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I”  
(Psa. 61. 2).*

---

When my heart is overwhelmed in me,  
When my hopes are dashed once more,  
When sorrows rise as the tempest  
And anxieties seem to soar;  
Yet again I look to the Saviour;  
My Rock and my Refuge is He;  
He is the One who's unchanging  
When all seems uncertain to me.

He is the One who is with me;  
Who will hold my hand in the storm;  
Who says, “It is I” through the darkness;  
Whose voice calms the lost and forlorn.  
He speaks, and the waves lose their power;  
His voice makes the wind to be still;  
His presence can calm and soothe me,  
And cause me to rest in His will.

He is the One who knows all things;  
Who knows the pathway I tread;  
To Him there are no surprises,  
Then may I to Jesus be led.  
His Word is a lamp for my footsteps,  
A guide through the difficult way;  
A help as I still journey onwards  
To the light of eternal day.

Then come to me, O my Saviour,  
Leave me not alone in the swell.  
Say, “Be not afraid, I am with you,”  
And cause my heart to be still.  
Speak to me truly and clearly  
That I may not doubt any more,  
But trust in my dear Redeemer  
To bring me safely to shore.

J.K.



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
JUNE 2021

---

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

---

**GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETY MEETINGS**

*Report of the Annual Meetings of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society, held on Friday, April 9th, 2021, at Clifton, Bedfordshire, on Zoom, owing to the Covid restrictions*

**“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”**

*Sermon preached at the evening service*

**Text:** “And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esth. 4. 14).

Dear friends, what a terrible time it was! Satan had been very busy Satan is *always* busy! He never takes a break or a rest. His infernal spirit is always active to oppose the people of God, the things of God, and God Himself. He saw, at this time, what he thought was an opportunity to undo the promise given in the Garden of Eden – that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head, “and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3. 15); the promise confirmed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that God incarnate would come of the seed of the Jews in due season. And it was not the only time Satan sought to destroy the nation that God had set apart for this purpose, but on this occasion he went much further than he had done perhaps in previous times.

What a time it was! He had moved the erratic and ungodly king, Ahasuerus, using a ready agent, Haman, to set out a decree that the Jewish people, in all the provinces over which he ruled (and that was really the then known civilised world), should be slain. Of course then, if that had taken place, the nation would have been annihilated, and where would God’s promise have been? But, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision” (Psa. 2. 1, 4).

While Haman was working so openly, and the king was foolishly yielding to this wicked man – all the while behind the scenes God was working. My dear friends, in the darkest of hours, whether it be nationally, or in the churches, or personally in your life, dear friends – God is always working. Blessed be His holy name. Very often that work is greatly hidden – hidden from others, hidden even from the people of God, who do not understand as yet what God is about. But when it comes to light it is so clearly seen, “This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes” (Psa. 118. 23).

Well, the Lord had already begun to work. He was not taken off guard (as we might say) by this terrible edict. The Lord knew that the law of the Medes and Persians could never be altered according to their own vanity. The Lord knew all about that. And in His sovereign providence, He had brought to the throne of this vast empire one whom He would use to overthrow the intent of Satan. That reminds us, dear friends, God is never at a loss to raise up one to defend His cause. He is never perplexed. “But the city Shushan was perplexed.” We are told it in this very chapter. But God was not perplexed. God is not perplexed! That is why Paul could say, writing to the church at Corinth, “We are perplexed, but not in despair” (2 Cor. 4. 8). Paul, why are you not in despair? Because I know that my God is not perplexed.

You may be greatly perplexed tonight by this thing and that thing – matters not falling out as you hoped or expected. It may have brought many shadows in your life, and you wonder wherever the scene will end. One thing is absolutely certain: your God is not perplexed. He has not abdicated His throne. He has not handed it over to an inferior power. Your times are in His hand. There is a lovely word at the end of John chapter 3: “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand” – these dark things, these impossible things, these perplexities. They are not in your hand, nor mine, nor even the devil’s really, not ultimately. They are in God’s hand, Christ’s hand. Isn’t that a mercy! Then may we be able to do what we were exhorted to this morning in our prayer meeting address, “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psa. 46. 10).

Well, how strange it was how Esther came to the throne. What strange means God used, overruled. There was another queen, Queen Vashti, and the king had been drinking for several days and was no doubt not in a very sober state, and he and his friends wanted to see the queen in her royal robes. And I think the poor lady felt she would be exposed to the ridicule and foolishness of these half-drunk men. So she declined. The king was so angry. You know the outcome of it. He, in his haste, deposed Vashti and she was no longer queen, and there he was, a king without a queen. Can we condone Ahasuerus’ rage and ill-temper? No, we cannot! Yet, in the providence of God, in a most strange way, we find the new queen is none other than this young woman, Esther.

That brings me to the next point: not only is God never at a loss to make a way to fulfil His own purposes, but also remember this: He can use whom He will, even a young woman of the despised nation – the Jews – the very one under the sentence of death. She had come to the throne “for such a time as this.” Sometimes God uses the most despised of means, as men may look at it. He has chosen the things that are foolish in the eyes of the world to confound the wise. The weak things

to confound the mighty. Why has He done it? “That no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1. 29), that He would have the honour and the glory of it.

As you read through the history of the church of God in the Old and New Testament, you see again and again how the Lord uses instruments that we would have passed by. Think of Gideon, that man who was of the tribe of Manasseh, which was the least reputable tribe; it was the smallest. His family in Manasseh was not counted much. And among his own brethren he was not counted either. He was the very *last* man we might have sought out to be the one to lead Israel against the Midianites. But when the Lord met this weak man, what did He say? “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour” (Judg. 6. 12) – the very opposite of what Gideon felt. That is what the Lord made him though!

When the Lord takes an earthen vessel in His hand, He makes that vessel and fills that vessel for His own purposes. The work is the Lord’s. The strength is the Lord’s. The grace is the Lord’s. But He uses weak vessels for His own honour and glory, “That no flesh should glory in His presence.” We could give many other examples as well.

But here we have this unusual thing, this young queen on the throne of, what was then, the greatest empire of the time, and wife to an erratic man who was often overtaken with drink, and irrational in his behaviour. What is this young woman doing there? God has put her there. Why has God put her there? “For such a time as this.”

He put Obadiah in Jezebel’s court, of all things, that he might be the one to rescue one hundred and fifty prophets and feed them in caves, while she was seeking to do her murderous work. What was Nehemiah doing as the king’s cupbearer? That he might have the ear of the king when Jerusalem’s walls needed to be rebuilt. What is Daniel doing during the reign of Belshazzar, that most ungodly king? To be God’s mouthpiece of judgment to him: “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting” (Dan. 5. 27). Even in our own nation we mourn because there seem so few in high places that fear God’s name, and they are afraid even to mention it in case of ridicule. Who can tell, that even now there may be one there whom God has put there, “for such a time as this.” “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

But did Esther feel adequate? Did she feel, as it were, strong enough for it? No! The poor woman felt the very opposite. So then, friends, she had recourse to *prayer*. She and her maidens, they fasted and prayed. Then Mordecai and his friends, they fasted and prayed. And the hymn we sometimes sing was no doubt in spirit pleaded by them:

“The force of their united cries  
No power can long withstand;

For Jesus helps them from the skies,  
By His almighty hand."

(H. 966)

What were they praying for? Well, first of all they were praying that when Esther went into the king's presence, he would receive her. For he had another law that was very capricious. If someone went in unbidden, then it was a capital offence. Probably it was for the king's safety. In a way, you can understand. But he was such a capricious man, that he would not think twice about sentencing anyone to the gallows. But you see, she had to go. It was not according to the law. The law forbade her to go unbidden. Should we not be thankful that King Jesus is not like that! He has not forbidden a needy sinner to come. The very reverse! He says as He now sits on His throne, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). Bless His holy name, He does not turn away the coming sinner. No! He extends the golden sceptre infinitely more readily than Ahasuerus did. Well, she had to go in unto the king. That was the first thing that was daunting.

Secondly, she had to make a large request. Really it was that the law of the Medes and Persians should be overturned – something that was unheard of in their day. You know in the case of Daniel how his enemies reminded Darius that the law of the Medes and Persians altered not. "You have said that anyone who worshipped any other gods than thee for thirty days must go into the den of lions. Daniel has done that very thing, so there is no way back, king. For the honour of your throne you must do as you said." And although Darius laboured hard to undo the designs of those wicked men, in the end the law of the Medes and Persians prevailed, and into the lions' den went Daniel. Mind you, God went with him. He will go with you, poor friend, in the lions' den if that is where you have got to go. Or in the fire, He will walk with you through it. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43. 2). "For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isa. 41. 13).

Then the third thing she needed was wisdom, how to handle this matter. Friends, she knew where to ask for wisdom. Do you know where to ask for wisdom, dear friend? Have you got an impossibility, a perplexity tonight? Have you got something that is weighing heavy on your spirit, and you know not what to do with it? Well, take a lesson from godly Queen Esther. I believe she knew where to take her trouble. They wrestled and prayed, those dear women, and Mordecai and his friends, that she would be given wisdom when she went in unto the king. "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

So then we have her coming in to the king, and the wonderful way the first part of the prayer was answered. The golden sceptre was extended. That is the first indication that God was in the matter, like “the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees” (2 Sam. 5. 24). When you hear that, then go forth. And here was a “sound of a going” – the golden sceptre extended toward her.

Then she makes a request – a strange request. Instead of immediately asking for the life of her nation, she just asks that the king would come to a banquet with this man, Haman. And he does. Then he says, “What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request?” And she asks that they would come the next day for a similar banquet. Why ever did she not ask on her first banquet? I will tell you why. I will give you two reasons. One is: divine sovereignty. The second is: divine sovereignty put on her spirit a caution.

When there is a caution on our spirit, beware of breaking through it. There may be a reason for it. God’s time might not quite have come. It may be on the horizon; it may be at the door; it may be just for a moment you have got to be still, and know that God is God. I believe that was where Esther was. She prayed for wisdom, and the Lord gave it. And she said, “I will do to morrow as the king hath said.”

So what intervened between? The great God who put Esther on the throne worked. He caused a sleepless night for King Ahasuerus. “On that night could not the king sleep.” Why was that? Had he had a busy day, perhaps, and things revolved around his mind? We do not know, but God kept him awake – so much so that he wanted to pass awhile the hours of darkness, and he called one of his courtiers, “Go to the library and bring something to read to me.” And when the courtier went to the library, no doubt there were probably thousands of scrolls or books he could have chosen. But he chose the very one that had to do with Mordecai; the very one who had exposed a treasonable plot against the king some while before. But he had never been thanked for it. No OBE, no CBE had been given, as we would say. I expect Mordecai wondered, Why was that?

Perhaps he did not seek any honour like that. But nonetheless it must have puzzled him. No-one said, Thank you. But be cautious, there may be a reason for that. God’s time had not yet come. Mordecai knew that he did it as unto God, and there he left it. The Lord knew that, and knew his heart.

Perhaps one of you feels overlooked tonight in some matter. I know not what it may be. And your old nature is ready to try and justify yourself. And what does God’s Word tell you tonight? “Be still, and know that I am God.” God knows the end from the beginning, and in due season He will bring forth your righteousness to the light, and your

judgments to the noon day. But until then, “Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day” (Ruth 3. 18).

So Mordecai had to wait. But you see, now it was revealed unto the king, and the king realised no-one had thanked him, no-one had honoured him. So he resolved in his mind that this must be put right. And all this happened between the two banquets. God whose works are absolutely perfect! Yes! It is a wonderful thought, isn’t it? The timing of God’s dealings is perfection itself.

“Say not, my soul, from whence  
Can God relieve thy care?  
Remember that Omnipotence  
Hath servants everywhere.

“His method is sublime,  
His thoughts supremely kind;  
God never is before His time,  
And never is behind.”

Those ministers who have been in Lakenheath vestry will know those words are there for their encouragement. I believe W.S. Cooper left it there. No doubt he had pleaded it many a time.

Well, God’s time had come. So the king resolves some honour must be given. Of course, he asks Haman to do this. In the meanwhile, what had Haman been doing? Haman had been building gallows – little did he realise – for *himself*. He thought it was for Mordecai. But no! God was overruling. He was building gallows for himself. God always has the last word. And He will have the last word. And He did there, as we know. So, when the king said, “What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?” Haman, in his false pride, thought, Well, it is bound to be me. Who else but me? I must have the king’s horse, and the king’s robe, and the king’s crown, and someone must go before me and give accolade to me! “Go, Haman, and crown Mordecai, clothe him in my robe, put him on my horse, lead him through the city!” We wonder how ever Haman could do it knowing his animosity to Mordecai. But do it, he did! And his wife, for once, spoke a truth. “You have begun to fall before Mordecai, Haman. That is not the end of the matter.” I think already the dark shadow was lengthening over her family. She could see it. Because God is a God of judgment, and He was coming to act at last on behalf of His dear, ancient people. Well, that is the background to our text this evening hour.

“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” But I do not want it only to be a providential sermon this night, although the Book of Esther is full of God’s wonderful providence. But let us come to another way of looking at it, and forget for a moment

Esther, and Mordecai, and Haman and Ahasuerus, and let us now think of this text in its highest, and deepest, and longest, and widest dimension – of a precious Christ. “Who knoweth whether Thou” – a precious Christ– art come to *Thy* “kingdom for such a time as this?”

We want to look at it in three ways:

First of all: How did Christ come to His kingdom?

Secondly we must understand what times are they that He is there for?

The third thing is, do you know it? Have you proved it?

“That Christ is God I can avouch,  
And for His people cares,  
Since I have prayed to Him as such,  
And He has heard my prayers.” (H. 31)

“Who knoweth?” Do you know it? Do I know it? I believe some of us do. We have pleaded that precious name, and we have proved it.

“This is the name the Father loves  
To hear His children plead;  
And all such pleading He approves,  
And blesses them indeed.” (H. 383)

So first of all then: *How did He come to His kingdom?* Now of course, the earthly kingdom was what the Jewish nation in our Lord’s day had in view. They wanted a king in Jerusalem who would rule and reign over them, and make them the great nation of the earth, and all subservient to them. They had only earthly thoughts about His kingdom. But Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. No! He said that to Pilate when He was accosted in the judgment hall. “Art Thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King.” “My kingdom is not of this world.” “Pilate, My kingdom is of a different dimension to what you are thinking of. Your throne is precarious to say the least.” And it certainly was with Pilate. Not long after our Lord’s crucifixion, Pilate was removed from his throne, and according to some godly scholars committed suicide. His was a shaking throne, and all earthly thrones are like that. They are shaking thrones. They come and they go. And God permits it for His own sovereign purposes.

“Here He exalts neglected worms  
To sceptres and a crown;  
And there the following page He turns,  
And treads the monarch down.” (H. 4)

It has always been so, and so it will be.

O then, how did Christ then come to His kingdom? Where is He now? He is sat at the right hand of His heavenly Father, verily God, verily Man. How did He come there? Let us follow it out for a moment.

It was decreed that He would come there, in the covenant of grace ere time began, that covenant which is made by the Three Persons – the glorious Trinity. The Father covenanted especially with the Son, that He would bring to His kingdom a number that no man could number out of every kindred, nation, tribe and tongue to fall before Him, and crown Him Lord of all.

But how was that to be done? Ah, friends, you see there was a kingdom of darkness that had to be overcome. When the Fall came, the prince of darkness took over the human race. And ever since then man has been born spiritually dead. We come forth from the womb, speaking lies, in Satan's kingdom, in Satan's darkness, in Satan's service. That is how you and I were born. But the dear Saviour was determined not to leave any of those members of His mystical body in the clutches of Satan.

How did He do it? Well, as sent by the Father, He came into this sin-cursed earth. Although He was a King, that was not apparent to the natural eye, as He came as a Babe in Bethlehem's manger. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9). There were one or two who recognised His Kingship, even in Bethlehem's manger. The shepherds did. Simeon and Anna did. So did the wise men. They were in a very small minority. Very few recognised that the Babe in Bethlehem's manger was anything other than a babe recently born. But He was, and is, King of kings and Lord of lords.

"His shoulders held up heaven and earth,  
Though Mary held up Him." (H. 709)

I know the hymn puts it, "*When Mary held up him*" – almost inferring that she held up heaven and earth when she held up Him. That cannot be so. His shoulders held up heaven and earth, *though* Mary held up Him. There is a distinction. She held her Babe – given. He held up heaven and earth. And *He still does!* He still does. Do you believe it? You say, "But my times are very shaky at the moment. Things are not as I had planned." Child of God, you have forgotten who rules, and who reigns!

I believe the late Mr. Bradford, who was the esteemed pastor at Matfield for many years, tells that when he was called by grace, he was greatly encouraged by something he had read about Oliver Cromwell. Oliver Cromwell, during the short reign he had, sent one of his ambassadors across the North Sea to Holland. He wanted him to do some business on behalf of the government. He took with him his attaché, as you might call him, who shared the cabin with him. That night because of deep anxiety, the ambassador, like the king, could not



sleep. He was so restless that he paced the cabin during the night, until the other man got weary of it. He said, “Master, can I ask you a question?” He said, “Yes, you can ask what you want.” He asked, “Do you think that God ruled the world before you were born?” He answered, “Of course I believe that! Why do you ask?” “Well”, he said, “Do you believe He will rule it when you are gone?” He answered, “Of course I do!” He said, “Then why cannot you believe He is ruling it *now*?”

You say, but my *now* is so different from what I expected. Think what Esther’s *now* was! Think what Mordecai’s *now* was – gallows built for him, surely. Friends, God is still reigning. God is still in control. God is on His throne.

Now come back to the dear Saviour, and how He came to His throne. He came to His throne through the agonies of the cross. And you must come to your throne, child of God, in that lesser sense in the same way. Firstly by the cross as your justification and your sanctification, and secondly by a way of tribulation. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14. 22). The Word of God says so. But O, the sorrows of the dear Saviour, how He came to His throne! Think of it! Spat upon by the men of His generation. He was smitten. He was scourged. Blood poured down His holy back. His hands and feet were nailed to a cross. A crown of thorns, not of glory, hangs on His dear head as He suffers, and bleeds, and dies. Can this be the King of kings? Can this be the Lord of lords? Is this the Man the prophets have told of? Well, the dying thief saw it, didn’t he! Of all the characters you would have thought would have not understood – the dying thief understood it! “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom” (Luke 23. 42). And blessed be God, the dear Saviour while He hung, suffering, bleeding and dying, gave him the answer, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” Yes! He was willing to save that poor wretch as He suffered, bled and died – do you think He is less willing to save sinners now He is on His throne? What was said in that hymn we have just read:

“Eternal life by Christ is given,  
And ruined rebels raised to heaven,  
Then sing of grace so rich and free,  
And say, my soul, why not for thee?” (H. 984)

Why not for thee? You see, this is full, free grace to such as sinners be, to those plucked as brands from the burning, translated out of Satan’s kingdom into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

But how did He come to His kingdom? By those intolerable sorrows, that cup He drank and drained of the Father’s wrath, until there was not a drop of curse left in it for His dear people. Then He bowed

His lovely head, yielded up the ghost. His holy soul fled into the bosom of His heavenly Father. His holy body lies in the tomb awaiting His resurrection morning. Then on that glorious morning, the stone rolled away, forth He comes.

“Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;  
Christ has burst the gates of hell.” (H. 485)

And so He has! And now He is at the right hand of His Father – in that same body, that same Jesus, bearing the same marks in His holy hands, and feet, and side. “For such a time as this.”

*What times are they that He is there for?* Our time, that we are in this present moment, friends – “such a time as this.” What is your time this evening hour? You say, “It is my wretched heart. I never thought it was so base, never thought it was so corrupt, never thought such vileness would come out of it. It is staggering me!” “For such a time as this.” A precious Christ in glory – able to save to the *uttermost* all “that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7. 25).

Another may say, “O Satan has been so busy. He has made havoc in my soul and circumstances. I see his footprints everywhere, and I am so unable to overcome him. He seems to have me at his mercy. I am like Christian with Apollyon standing over me.” “For such a time as this.” “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2. 18).

“For such a time as this.” Again, look at it like this. Some of you are afflicted, in much pain. For such a time as “in *all* their affliction He was afflicted.” Yes!

“I feel at My heart all thy sighs and thy groans,  
For thou art most near Me, My flesh and My bones;  
In all thy distresses thy Head feels the pain;  
Yet all are most needful; not one is in vain.” (H. 993)

In your very affliction, dear friend, He is at the right hand of the Father. “For such a time as this.”

You say, “But it is a time of perplexity. I don’t know what to do, which way to turn.” He, “who of God is made unto us” – His people – “wisdom” (1 Cor. 1. 30). “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isa. 30. 21).

“Such a time as this.” O, I am such a hard-hearted one. My prayers seem so cold. My reading of God’s Word seems so formal. My religion seems to have lost all its power. What am I to do? “For such a time as this.” Listen to what He says: “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14. 19). Come, poor, feelingly-dead sinner tonight. Tell Him all about it, and plead His life. Plead His death, for poor sinners such as you.

But you say, “But it is my loved ones. I have got a burden in my family. I know not what to do, or how to manage. And there are those who are not called by grace whom I long to see brought into the fold, and there is no answer.” “For such a time as this.” Do you remember that one who kept falling into the fire? And the disciples thought they perhaps could heal him, but no, they could not. What did the dear Saviour say? “Bring him unto Me” (Mark 9. 19). Now friends, whatever that case or cause may be tonight, He said, “Bring it unto Me.”

I love that word in Deuteronomy chapter 1. Moses was relating how the burden of dealing with the legitimate affairs of the nation was shared through various tiers of authority. Then he says there are certain matters which no-one had wisdom for. And what were they to do? “The cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.” God was speaking through Moses. And He says just the same tonight. That cause that is too hard for you – that door you cannot open – that mountain you cannot make into a plain – that crooked thing you cannot make straight – that rough place *you* cannot make as it were smooth – *bring it unto Me*.

“For such a time as this.” But you say, “But I have got a thorn in the flesh. It is a sharp one. And it is every day that it brings me low, and it makes me feel so inept, such a fool, so inadequate, so inefficient for the very path Thou hast put me into. Lord, what am I to do?” “For such a time as this.” “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12. 9). The Apostle Paul would never have valued that precious promise without his thorn, would he? So if you are in a thorny path tonight, then there is a word for you to plead.

“For such a time as this.” Then what about your dying day? It must come sooner or later, if the world is spared. That last day will dawn that you will not see the end of. Your soul will depart this body in which so much sin has been committed, and so much ought not to have been done that has been done, and ought to have been done which was not done. What failures we are! “For such a time as this.” Think of the dear psalmist David on his deathbed. What was he to do? His family was in chaos. His nation was not as it ought to be. His own life had some severe blots and blemishes in memory. He turned away from it all, and he said, “Although my house be not so with God; *yet* He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire” (2 Sam. 23. 5). “For such a time as this.” The covenant of grace suits the empty, the poor, the guilty, those who feel to have failed, those who feel to have come to the end of everything. The covenant of grace exactly suits such cases. David fled to it, and he found it a very blessed pillow on which to rest his dying head. “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

So we have very briefly hinted at the great King on His throne, and secondly we have these times we pass through, and we should mention our national time, should we not? A bereavement at the moment – the loss of Prince Philip, and the pandemic that is sweeping the world, and our nation as well, as it has done. Even at such a time as this our God is approachable. We may tell Him all our needs and all our burdens nationally. If only our leaders would realise it. The remnant that fear God’s name *do* realise it, and they *do* bring it before Him, and may we continue to do so! “For such a time as this,” when persecution laps on the very doorsteps of our houses of prayer – “such a time as this.” The Lord knows! It is not happening without His permission, or without His knowledge.

I love that word in Genesis spoken about Jacob and Laban. “I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee” (Gen. 31. 12). “I have seen it. I have been watching.” Laban was a very unscrupulous man. He changed Jacob’s wages ten times, and took advantage of him. Mind you, Jacob was reminded again and again of his own deception. But he was a child of God. “I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.” But the Lord appeared, and He put a shield around him!

“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” So the final point this evening is: *Who knoweth?* Who among us here tonight have proved this blessed King to be there on our behalf? Can you look back and say in some little measure that you are not a stranger to this fact that King Jesus sits where He is for such a poor, wretched sinner as you? Have you ever been amazed at your poor prayers being answered so bountifully by this great God? All you could pray was, “Lord, help me!” And to your amazement, help came. You knew where it came from. And you have proved why He is in that kingdom for such a time as you came into.

And you must look at it like this, as David did in Psalm 31: “My times are in Thy hand.” So, when these times come, where we feel so inadequate, so poor, so unready – remember, they have not come by chance; they have not come by accident; it is not as if God has somehow mismanaged your path – it is part of the way. Job said, “He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” In the same chapter he said this: “For He” – God – “performeth the thing that is appointed for me” – that time appointed for me – “and many such things are with Him” (Job 23. 10, 14).

Then look at it like this: God does put His people sometimes in places for which they do feel to be totally unsuited, in and of themselves. What are they to do? Where are they to go? God has put them there to feel their weakness that they may prove His strength; their felt foolishness, to prove His wisdom; their inability, to prove His ability.

And whatever God may call you and I to, where He may put us in providence or in grace, in the church or any other way – we are safest when we realise our inability, our weakness, our hopelessness without Him. Then we are driven to Him, drawn to Him for the help that we need. Without these things, friends, we would not come, would we?

I have often thought of godly David. He learnt so many lessons, didn't he? And he learnt them often by mistakes first. When he left King Saul and had to flee from those javelins, he thought with his natural wisdom he could somehow devise a way. Down to Gath he goes, and telling such a tissue of lies on the way down. Is that the way, David? Are you sure the Lord is in this? We do not read he prayed about it, do we? It is not long before we find that man surrounded by angry men seeking revenge for the slaying of Goliath of Gath. This poor man! This foolish man! This man who was devoid of wisdom! “This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” It was undeserved, unmerited. But from that moment on, David had to prove that he needed the Lord to guide his steps. He sends his parents down to Moab, “till I know what God will do for me” (1 Sam. 22. 3). No longer what I am going to do – but “what God will do for me.”

It may be the case of one or another listening tonight, the Lord has a path before you – some responsibility perhaps in His church, or some responsibility that is going to come upon you. And you may feel just like Esther must have felt – so inadequate, so unfit. Yet, remember the King of kings who sits at the right hand of the Father is that One who gives all needed wisdom, and strength, and grace for the path to which He has called you. He has never yet put His people in a path in which they can manage on their own, or where He will fail to give them what they need in that path. “When He putteth forth His sheep, He goeth before them.” Do you need any more than that? No!

“Fear not, brethren, joyful stand  
On the borders of your land;  
Jesus Christ, your Father's Son,  
Bids you undismayed go on.

“Lord, submissive make us go,  
Gladly leaving all below;  
Only thou our Leader be,  
And we still will follow Thee.” (H. 267)

Whatever times may come, from our Lord – darkness or light; sorrow or joy; adversity or prosperity – whatever it may be, may we, “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3. 14), believing that:

“He who has helped me hitherto  
Will help me all my journey through;

And give me daily cause to raise  
New Ebenezers to His praise.” (H. 961)

And my last thought is this: There is one thing the Book of Esther teaches us: God always has the last word. The devil does not; the world does not; you do not; others do not. God has the last word! If you are perplexed tonight, friend, whatever it may be – be sure, who will have the last word? Your God will! And what is more, you will be thankful for it. You will bless Him for it. And you will say, “This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death” (Psa. 48. 14).

May God add His blessing. Amen.

---

---

### MORNING PRAYER MEETING

Mr. G.W. Hyde (Pastor, Tenterden) read Psalm 46 and spoke as follows:

The words particularly upon my mind and spirit are those of the tenth verse: “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” If ever we need to heed this word, “Be still, and know that I am God,” then it is now. Not only because we are gathered together, whether remotely or actually; on every occasion when we gather together, indeed we need to have this word before us: “Be still, and know that I am God.” We need to be still and know that God is God personally, collectively, denominationally and nationally.

Israel was the chosen people and a nation, the natural chosen people and a nation that God showed much mercy upon. There were times when they needed to be still and know that God is God. They typify the spiritual people of God, the church, so they were under the same guidance and exhortations and promises as would then be realised by all the Lord’s people down through the ages of time. When those Israelites came out of Egypt, there at the Red Sea the command was, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.” We need in our times to see how the Lord will bring us out of all the varying troubles that have taken place during the past year. We find that our leaders at times seem to be certain that this or that will take place, and then at other times it seems all to be overthrown, and we have had to enter into various lock-downs. But O to see the Lord’s movement of these waters, to divide the sea, as it were, that we may pass through.

So the little remnant that we have, we trust still, in our own land and in areas throughout the world, though we may not know them, the Lord has His remnant, and it is that we should pray on and desire as we may

be still before Him, to stand still, to sit still, to see our God appear for us. We in past centuries as a nation knew persecution. We have been much preserved from such outward persecution in our day, but we see the clouds gather. We wonder what we may have to face. We fear indeed that our young people may need much grace to stand in the trying day. We have not time to go into the matters, but I am sure you will know what I mean.

We find denominationally, we denominationally need to be still. The Lord has a controversy. He is a God of judgment. Let us tremble as those did between the altar and the place where there was the evidence of God's solemn yet glorious presence, as was known in the tabernacle and in the temple; to tremble for those who walk contrary to Him, those that seek the world, and yet they think they can mix it with religion. We "cannot serve God and mammon." What a solemn thing it is when we see the world being brought into the churches. O that we may consider the Word of God and not desire in the least way to grieve the Holy Spirit. For is He not grieved?

We find there are those who act deceitfully. Is our Yea, yea? Is our Nay, nay? We must search our own hearts. O to be honest before God and before men. We find there are such that defy gracious discipline, and so there are those things that are mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians where the apostle says, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." And we each may need in searching our hearts to be humbled at the Lord's feet, to be still and know that He is God. May we plead His mercy and forgiveness, and so be given the grace, as the apostle continues in that last verse of that fourth chapter of Ephesians: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven *us*."

Then collectively, we gather remotely. Let us consider it is but a means under the present situation, but never put from our minds the exhortation, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Means may be temporary, a provision for the time, but may our great concern be to know that God is God, and narrowly look to Him for all guidance, and not settle to convenience.

Then personally, to "be still, and know that I am God." He is ready to pardon. He has pledged to lead and guide His dear people. He will strengthen. Our "strength is to sit still." Israel of old would not, but may we be brought to know what it is to sit still – to sit still at His feet, to sit there at the mercy seat, to sit and pray at the throne of grace. You may say, Do you mean *kneel*? Ah, *sit* is but a figure, whether actually sitting, kneeling, standing before our God. In these things may we have the

primary consideration that God is God. Whom have we come before? He that is in the heavens. He that ruleth in all things. So the Lord will be exalted. He rules and reigns. He will first of all be exalted among the enemies, the heathen. He will make them His footstool. He will bring them under His feet so that they cannot exalt themselves and laud it over the Lord's people, though they may with every endeavour seek to do so. But the Lord makes a way of escape for everyone who believes in Him. O may our faith be strengthened.

Again, we consider that in His church He is exalted to purge, to purify, to sanctify the truth to be set forth, which is a sanctifying means. "Sanctify them through Thy truth," were the words of our Lord and Saviour. We may see those things take place, but the Lord has promised to bring the third part through the fire, His remnant.

"Be still, and know that I am God ... I will be exalted in the earth" – to deliver His people. He will "ride prosperously because of truth," within the church, within our hearts, and also without in the world. He will "ride prosperously." He quells men's enmity against His cause of truth. He subdues His people's lusts, sanctifies them in the sight of others and their own, and makes His people to know their native vileness and nothingness. As the God of love and mercy unto whom He will show it, He leads, guides, encourages, upholds. He is exalted in all the earth. Only the church of Christ can rightly, fully say, "The Lord of hosts is with us" – Immanuel.

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Hymns 1143, 1146 and 1027 were read during the prayer meeting. The following prayed: Mr. B.E. Izzard (Pastor, Fenstanton), Mr. D.F. Stevens (Ripley), Mr. C.P. Warboys (Oakington), Mr. G.E. Hadley (Pastor, Stotfold), Mr. P.J. Pocock (South Moreton) and Mr. F.A. Ince (Hope, Sedgley). Mr. Hyde closed with prayer and the benediction.

---

---

## BUSINESS MEETING

After the reading of hymn 1139, the Chairman of the Society, Mr. G.D. Buss, called on Mr. Richard Field (Carshalton) to seek the Lord's blessing on the meeting.

The Chairman then read Revelation 12.

CHAIRMAN: Dear friends, the Book of the Revelation is indeed a great mystery, and many have speculated about this and that and the other concerning its interpretation, but there are four things we may be sure of



that are very clear to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to receive in the chapter we have read.

First of all, the Child born is none other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ now sitting at the right hand of His Father, crowned with glory and honour. The woman is the church of Christ, and we notice that she is persecuted, she is opposed, she is threatened, she appears very vulnerable. Her main antagonist is the dragon, or we would call him Satan, as he is in verse 9, and he with all the hellish power he has, knowing his time is short, is sending forth more and more evil against the living people of God in our day. It is the living people of God he hates; it is the living people of God he opposes; it is the living people of God if he could, he would devour. But blessed be God, there is further a wonderful thing here for us to understand: that though the opposition is great, though the accuser of the brethren is persistent in his accusations, yet we read in verse 11, “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” It is those two things, dear friends: the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, which under God have the power to give victory to His church, both as a collective church and individually. God’s people are those who eventually, by grace, overcome, and not in their own strength, not in their own ingenuity. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”

So, we read in Romans 8, “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” The blood of the Lamb is the greatest evidence of His love to His church. You must never think, dear friends, He loves His church less in lean times, as they are, for the most part, in our generation. She is as dear to Him today as she was when the gospel prospered more and there were many more believers. She is just as dear to Him, and in no way has He diminished His love for her or His purposes for her. This is something very precious to believe, and in our day when we are so isolated, increasingly so, what a mercy it is we may still be pleading the blood of the Lamb, that overcoming blood. Just as on the night of the Passover you remember the sprinkled blood came between them and the destroying angel, so does this precious blood shield the church of Christ amidst all her trials, amidst all her troubles, till she gets safely home.

The second thing she has is the Word, the unfailing, unchanging, unchangeable Word of Almighty God. It is a wonderful thing to have a personal testimony of it, for it is that personal testimony of it that will last – not head knowledge, not notion, not opinions, but that which is written in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. As the psalmist said, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart.” So said the dear Saviour, and so says the church of Christ, possessed in measure by the same spirit. “The word of their testimony.”

As I thought of this, I thought of how remarkable was, for example, the testimony of the woman of Samaria, which was used to bring, it seems, many believers in Samaria. What power there is in God's Word, whatever instrument He may use, and friend, this is what we need in our day. We are living in difficult days and it seems they are going to become more difficult. Where are we to look for our strength? Where are we to look for our overcoming? Not in ourselves, but in the blood of the Lamb, who has overcome all that has ever opposed His church, and the word of the testimony written in our hearts by the blessed Spirit. "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it ... that men should fear before Him."

In these difficult days in which we are living, may the Lord help us to hold on our way, even as Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in very difficult times in his day: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." May God give us enduring grace and patience, whatever trials may arise, and may we at last be found with that blessed company above. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." What a miracle it will be to be there, when we think of all the opposing forces there are – our own wretched hearts, the world around us, this great accuser, Satan, and death itself – to get safely home will be nothing short of an eternal miracle, and indeed eternity will not be long enough to praise a triune God for safely bringing the church home to glory.

"O may I live to reach the place  
Where Christ unveils His lovely face,  
Where all His beauties we behold,  
And sing His name to harps of gold!" (H. 18)

May God bless these few remarks and make us overcomers in His precious name.

The Chairman then welcomed friends to the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Society and mentioned a few practical points with regard to the voting procedure via zoom. He mentioned that any decisions taken at this meeting will have to be ratified at the next Annual General Meeting to be held physically, it is hoped, in 2022, if the Lord will, as there is no provision in our constitution for remote Annual General Meetings.

A resolution was put to the Meeting that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on April 12th, 2019 be approved. (There had been no Annual General Meeting during 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic.) This was proposed by Mr. M.J. Lee (South Chard), seconded by Mr. M.J. Hyde (Pastor, Brighton) and carried *nem con*.

Following this, a proposal to approve and adopt the Annual Report and Accounts for 2019 was put to the Meeting. This was proposed by Mr. A.W. Chapman (Ashwell), seconded by Mr. J.B. Hart (Rotherfield) and carried *nem con.*

The Secretary, Mr. D.J. Christian, then introduced the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Society for the year ended December 31st, 2020.

MR. CHRISTIAN: Dear Chairman, Subscribers and friends, As we begin another report to the Annual General Meeting of the Society, we have been thinking of the words in the prophecy of Isaiah: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” It is almost two years since our last Annual Meeting and, at that time, we did not think there would not be a meeting in 2020 or think we would have to meet remotely today. These things did not take our God by surprise, and we believe the pandemic that has spread through the earth is His judgment, although sadly, few will acknowledge this. We express our deep sympathy to those who have lost loved ones, lost employment or been seriously ill, but may we lay these things to heart. We are reminded of the words of Peter: “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

The two main purposes of the Society are to give grants to those in need and the publication of our magazines, the *Gospel Standard*, the *Friendly Companion* and *Perception*. Regular quarterly grants are made to individuals and to chapels for the support of the ministry. A wider distribution is made in December from the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund. Occasional grants are made as needed, and assistance is given to ministers needing to replace their cars. Total grants of £120,571 and £131,771 were made in 2020 and 2019, respectively.

Overall, the Society had a deficit of £104,578 compared with £92,146 in 2019. Income fell from £118,733 in 2019 to £99,715 in 2020 while expenditure fell from £211,238 in 2019 to £204,445. The deficit was reduced by unrealised gains on investments of £152 in 2020 and £359 in 2019. The three individual funds showed deficits of: Aid and Poor Relief £74,868, Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund £17,286 and the Magazine Fund £12,424. We are very thankful that the Society has sufficient reserves to continue without reducing the grants.

The Magazine Fund suffered from increased postage costs and reduced income, and near the end of 2020 we were informed that the costs for printing the magazines for 2021 would have to rise substantially. This was too late to alter the prices charged, and so the fund will be expected to show a considerably larger deficit for 2021. In addition, all magazines sent abroad now require a customs label and postage costs have also risen again. The total effect of these increases means a rise in cost of just over 40%. The prices for 2022 are set in July, but we hope to phase in the increase over a period of two or three years.

In June, Mr. Timothy Rosier relinquished his position as Editor of the *Gospel Standard* and Mr. Stephen Rosier was appointed in his place. It was with sadness that the Committee subsequently accepted his resignation and the resignations of them both as members of the Committee and from the Gospel Standard List of Ministers. We record our thanks for their labours in both

respects over the past years. Our Chairman, Mr. Gerald Buss, agreed to take over the Editorship on an interim basis. We seek the prayers of our churches and subscribers in the appointment of one anointed by the Lord to take up this weighty burden. We are thankful that Mr. Gary TenBroeke has been helped as Editor of the *Friendly Companion* and Mr. Trevor Scott as Editor of *Perception*. May the Lord continue to grant His help to each one and may the magazines be blessed to the readers.

We would welcome new subscribers to our magazines, and we offer a year's free subscription to newly-married couples either direct or through the chapel parcels. Please contact the Secretary if you wish to take up this offer.

Similarly, we would encourage those who attend our chapels and who agree with our Articles of Faith to become subscribers to the Society. The subscription is £5 per year and forms can be obtained from the Secretary.

Since our last meeting, several of our ministers have passed away. We particularly think of our churches in the United States, where two of the three Pastors have been called home: Mr. Jay K. Stehouwer of Zion, Grand Rapids in November 2019 and then in January this year Mr. Michael T. Pickett of The Old Paths, Choteau. Others who passed away were Mr. Philip B. Pont and Mr. Hedley D.C. Taylor in 2019, and Mr. Peter Cornwell, Mr. Frederick Peplow and Mr. John Burrows. We are pleased that the Lord has raised up some younger men to preach the gospel and we pray that the Lord will bless their labours and raise up others.

During 2019 the name of Mr. Matthew Hyde was added to the list of Gospel Standard ministers and in 2020 the names of Mr. Timothy Barker and Mr. Michael Ridout were also added, although Mr. Barker later requested that his name be removed. The initial responsibility for putting forward the names of ministers lies with the churches, either the church where they were sent out from, the church where they are Pastor or a church that feels constrained to do so. Ministers are eligible to be considered if they have been preaching for three years and are members in good standing in one of our churches. We would encourage our churches prayerfully to consider this matter and put forward the names of ministers who fulfil the criteria and whose ministry is in power and in the Holy Ghost.

During 2019 there were several changes to the Committee. Mr. Henry Mercer retired, and Mr. David Broome did not seek re-election due to pressure of work with the Trinitarian Bible Society and other responsibilities. Later that year, Mr. Timothy Parish and Mr. Philip Pocock were co-opted onto the Committee and the appointment confirmed in the ballot in April 2020.

Sadly, a number of our chapels have closed during the past two years as the congregations have died out or become too few to carry on. In 2019 Canterbury, Haslingden and West Street, Croydon closed, and in 2020 Zoar, Romford and Ebenezer, Luton held their last services.

Following the closure of Hope Chapel, Rochdale a large portrait of John Kershaw, measuring approximately three feet by two and a half feet, was gifted to the Society. It is in need of restoration and the estimated cost to clean and restore the picture and repair the frame was just under £2,000. The Committee did not feel it a right use of the funds to do this, but if any friends consider it should be restored and would like to help please contact the Secretary.

We feel deeply sorry for our overseas churches. In the United States Mr. Gary TenBroeke is now the only minister, Mr. Peter Dekker in Canada, while the churches in Australia do not have any ministers. During the early part of 2020, Mr. Mark Seymour visited Australia, followed by Mr. Michael Pickett, who stayed much longer than intended due to the travel restrictions imposed because of the pandemic. Here, however, we have another instance of God's ways being higher than our ways, as Mr. Pickett was able to baptize two ladies at Melbourne during his extended visit. Several ministers have preached week evening services for the Australian churches using the livestreaming facility.

It had been hoped to have a meeting in November 2020 at Clifton for prayer for our churches and the nation, and at one time we thought it might be possible to hold the delayed Annual Meeting, but in the end the regulations did not allow this. The Committee regretted that there had not been a National Day of Prayer and suggested that our churches could join in prayer for our nation in the week commencing 14th February this year.

The Committee have written letters to the Prime Minister, other Government ministers and organisations, about current issues but either have not had a reply or received a standard acknowledgement.

We thank our friends at Clifton for the use of the chapel once more and hope that in another year, if the Lord will, we should be able to meet together to hold our Annual Meeting here again.

As we close our report, we acknowledge the Lord's goodness in many ways, but our desire is for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our churches and among the nations, and a gracious revival.

“Saviour, visit Thy plantation,  
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain!  
All will come to desolation,  
Unless Thou return again.” (H. 1144)

The members of the Committee seek your prayers that the Lord might grant His help in conducting the business of the Society.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Christian for his report and for all he does behind the scenes, which is greatly appreciated. As had already been mentioned in prayer, it is a very daunting task. The Chairman asked whether there were any questions. There were none, and the proposal to approve and adopt the Annual Report and Accounts was put to the Meeting. This was proposed by Mr. R. Tarbin (Mount Bures), seconded by Mr. G.E. Hadley (Pastor, Stotfold) and carried *nem con*.

The Secretary announced the result of the election of four members who were retiring at this Meeting and eligible for re-election. 228 papers were sent out, of which 130 were returned and there was one spoiled paper. All members received over 80% of the votes, so Messrs. A.J. Collins, B.E. Izzard, D.W. Kerley and B.P. Mercer were elected to serve for a period of three years.

Mr. D.W. Kerley then expressed thanks on behalf of the re-elected members of the Committee.

The Chairman mentioned that Mr. B.E. Izzard and Mr. T.J. Parish, both members of the Committee, have been in the deep valley of affliction and we pray

they may be restored to their usual health and strength. He said he been in contact with the churches in Australia and the United States; also, that the Australian friends are exceedingly thankful for the ministry of those who have preached to them online. He referred to Mr. G.L. TenBroeke, who is severely ill with Covid, and expressed sympathy to the friends at Choteau in the loss of their Pastor, Mr. M.T. Pickett, and also mentioned that Mr. A.G. Randalls of Bournemouth is recovering from Covid. Reference was made to the needs of the overseas churches, with Zion, Grand Rapids also being without a minister.

The Chairman mentioned the Library report at the end of the Annual Report and expressed appreciation for the work of the librarians.

The Chairman gave notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Trust to be held at Oakington on Saturday, September 11th, if the Lord will. The Trust hopes shortly to publish: *An Exposition of the Last Words of David*, by Martin Luther, and edited by Mr. Henry Sant.

The Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund will be held remotely, if the Lord will, on Saturday, 24th April.

Thanks were expressed to the friends at Clifton for their hospitality, and also to Mr. Edmund Buss for his invaluable help with the technology.

The Chairman said the collection at the evening service would be for the Gospel Standard Magazine Fund, which is in need at this time, and if any friends wish to donate online, bank details can be obtained from Mr. D.J. Christian.

The Chairman then read hymn 922, after which Mr. B.P. Mercer (Pastor, Eastbourne) addressed the meeting from the words in 1 Corinthians 4 verse 15. After this, hymn 500 was read and the Meeting closed with prayer and the benediction.

---

---

## SUKEY'S PRAYER

*By Sukey Harley*

---

*Sukey Harley was a quaint Shropshire woman whom the Lord began to reach in His sovereign way through the witness of two godly ladies in her village. Their insistence on the new birth puzzled Sukey, but awakened a desire to know the God whom they knew for themselves. The only prayer she knew was the Lord's prayer, which she repeated often, but she felt she needed a prayer of her own. The following extract tells how the Lord gave and answered the prayer He indited in her heart.*

Then I thought I must have a new prayer, the old prayer won't do. I kept repeating it over and over again, but I wanted a new prayer. I mourned, I cried to God to teach me a new prayer. Yes, I asked my dear Father in heaven – for He was my Father though I did not know Him – to teach me a new prayer. These words clapped into my mind: “Lord, lead me into the true knowledge of Thy dear Son.” I never heard that God had a Son, yet these words came into my heart. It was the prayer God taught me Himself; no one else taught me. I never, never heard

what those two women would be bantering me about. I was so tossed with my own thoughts I gave no heed to their words. The Lord put those words into my heart. I seemed quite rejoiced that *their* God had taught me. He had eked out my prayer a little longer, for I still kept saying the Lord's prayer and added those new words to the end of it. I never coveted any fresh words after this.

Well, I prayed this new prayer for about a fortnight. On the Sunday night after the fortnight I went with the women to chapel but O, what a dreadful state I was in. I thought I was going to hell. What was the use of my praying any more? I was tempted to give in praying. I thought I should never know *their* God. Before I went to bed, I got into the dark corner, and, as usual, I began in my way to pray those words. I thought I felt the devil pulling me by the hair of the head, yet I held fast by the table. I was afeared to go to sleep that night for I thought I should tumble into hell.

On the Monday morning while I was eating my breakfast (but I had no stomach to eat) it was after Charles was gone to work, those words entered my mind: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3. 20). I said, "That is the text the man had for his sermon last night." Well, it was! But I hadna' heard it then. I heard it now, though. All the words came quite plain into my heart. O, I thought, suppose it should be *their* God at the door! O how joyful I would get up and loose Him the door. Now, I thought, I can ne'er give in praying, those words have encouraged me so. I went up the ladder into my bedroom, and began to pray. I made such a noise the folks might have heard me in the street. I was afeared I should frighten my child. I came down and looked at her; she was a little one, eating her breakfast. I went up again and did not stop long. I came down again and filled the child's bag with meat and sent her off to school. I put her out at the door and locked and bolted it.

Then I said with all my strength, "I will never open this door again till I know *their* God." I stuffed the windows with all the old rags I could find: I could not bear the light. Then I went down on my knees in the dark corner and began praying these same words that I used to do, the same words over and over again – the Lord's prayer and, "Lord, lead me into the true knowledge of Thy dear Son." I felt as if I would have pulled the roof over my head, I went tearing and tearing at it with such vehement earnestness. Well, who put that strong cry into my heart? Was it from myself? No; but He gave it me and forced me to cry out, because it was His own blessed will to hear me and answer me.

I felt Him come. It's past my talking about! Such a wonderful time; it's clean past telling. No words can express the feelings of my heart at

this time. He fetched me off my knees. I started up. I cannot find words to express the wonderful doings of that blessed moment. Well, this is part of it. He showed me all my sins that I had committed even from a child. Yes, that bit of pink ribbon I had stolen for my doll's cap, came upon me. O He showed me my black desert, how I had deserved to go to hell – what a reprobate I had been and how like a devil I had walked upon the earth. How I had angered Him with my sinfulness. My heavy sins and my vileness came upon me. O, He appeared such a holy God, such a heavenly, bright and glorious Being. Suppose He had said to me then at that awful moment, "Depart from Me, ye cursed," He would have been just, and to hell I must have gone.

O what a holy God mine is! Well, I was lost; I couldna' tell what to do; lost in wonder, lost in surprise. Yet all this time He kept me from being frightened. I had been frightened, but not now: there was somewhat that held me from being frightened. He seemed to tell me all my sins were forgiven. I had such a sight inwardly of my dear Redeemer's sufferings; how He was crucified, how He hung on the cross for me. It was as if He showed me what I deserved, yet He seemed to say He had suffered that desert. It was as if He made it so plain to me, how that He would save me, because it was His own blessed will to save me. It was as if He had shown me how He had chosen me from the foundation of the world. He would have mercy on me because He would have mercy.

I never knew what sin was till now, but He showed me what it was – how black, how dreadful. But He saved me till I was so overwhelmed that I didna' know what to do. I can truly say since that blessed morning I have a Saviour and a Redeemer, yes I have. Ever since that blessed time, my dear and heavenly Father has kept me in His dear hands, and guided me and counselled me Himself.

Well, I went and unblocked the windows, cleared away all the dirty rags and let in the blessed light of the sun, the glorious light, the Father's light. I unbolted the door and opened it. I looked out. What a glorious sight! I saw my God in everything – the clouds, those clouds I had so often puzzled over. My God was in the clouds. The trees, the hedges, the fields, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, showed me that I had a God.

All things were new to me. I was unbound. I was loosed. Yes, I wondered at it. I went to old Nancy Smith's door and looked in. I could not speak. She said, "Sukey, what's the matter?" I could make no answer. Off I ran to the other. I was enabled to tell her somewhat, but very little. I could not find words to express the goodness of God to me. I now understood and believed those words, "Ye must be born again."

This blessed state continued a good while; I felt the happiest creature, the joyfulest woman on the face of the earth. My God enabled



me from that very time to break loose from all my vain companions; they thought it very hard, yes, and so did I too, but my heavenly dear Father called me out from them, and I followed Him, I dared not do otherwise; I was set clean off at a distance from them. Ever since that blessed morning I have been a lone soul on the face of the earth: "A sparrow alone upon the house top." I often think of that verse; it suits me.

It was no great while after this, I had a desire to read; I longed to read the blessed Word for myself. I got my little wench to teach me the letters; she used to grow sleepy, so I would give her two suppers of a night to encourage her; all the while I was praying to my God to enable me to learn. She brought me on as far as this: "God is love; God is light." These very words came over me; when I spelt out the words, they came into my heart. I thought: my God *is* love, He *is* light, He can teach me Himself. I wanted no more teaching of Mary. From that time I would take my book, and go down on my knees, and look up to my heavenly Father and beg of Him to teach me. I used to spell out the words, and then look up to know how to call them. O how I felt at these times! I can give no description of my feelings, but I had this confidence given me, that He would teach me to read His blessed Word; and He did teach me. It was surprising how He put the words into my mind and memory; yea, I can truly say, I have been taught of God.

---

---

### THE LORD'S DEALINGS WITH HIS SERVANT WILFRED WISE

---

Wilfred Wise, minister of the gospel, died suddenly on his way to preach at Fitzwilliam on December 6th, 1973, aged 61. Since 1970 he had been a member of the church at Chaucer Street, Nottingham, where he had the oversight.

The following is his own account of his call by grace and to preach: "Being favoured, in God's kind providence, to be born of God-fearing parents and to be brought up under a sound gospel ministry, I acquired a natural understanding of the doctrines of grace. I had, however, no real interest in the truths preached and the most welcome word of the service was the last 'Amen.' I remember, when about the age of fourteen, often hearing godly persons talking together of the Lord's dealings with them in His grace, and frequently some would talk of the way in which after the Holy Spirit had convinced them of their sinnership, they endeavoured to gain God's favour by trying to please Him with their own good works, finding after much toil that this was in vain and having at last to cast themselves on the mercy of God. I thought

these persons to be very foolish, and resolved that, should the Holy Spirit one day convince me of my sinnership, I would be much wiser than they, and instead of seeking acceptance through my own righteousness, I would go directly to Christ Jesus, seeking His pardon, which I thought I would soon obtain. However, it pleased the dear Lord the Holy Spirit to lead a poor, blind fool in a way that he knew not and in paths that he had not known, eventually making darkness light before him and crooked things straight; and how He did confound the wisdom of this one who thought himself to know the ways of the Lord in His dealings with His people!

“I remember in my early teens being confronted by this thought: As you lie here, you are either destined to heaven or to hell. Which is it? How solemn this thought was! I believe that about this time I began to be concerned about my salvation. I began to ask the Lord that I might be born again, that He would have mercy upon me. Then at times, remembering the truth I had so frequently heard, that it is God who commences the work of grace with the sinner, I felt that I was all wrong, as I was commencing with God. I often sought that God would convince me of my sinnership, and at the same time pleaded for His mercy. I felt that this could not be a real work of grace in me because I had not been suddenly cut down and felt the terrors which some spoke of.

“Now I went to the house of God, not waiting for the last ‘Amen,’ but to hear for myself, putting my mouth in the dust, if so be there might be hope, and that perhaps this, which I felt within, might be of God. It was now that I wanted the weeknight as well as the Sunday services. I believe that this work was carried on over several years, and I was brought very feelingly to say with the hymnwriter:

‘And if my soul were sent to hell,  
Thy righteous law approves it well.’ (H. 761)

How bewildered often I was, as the pathway in which I was travelling was so different from the one in which I thought the Lord led all His people! Often I would search the old *Gospel Standards* to see whether any of God’s children had travelled in such a path as mine. If I could find perhaps some of my steps set out in such experiences of those who had gone before, what hope was felt in my soul that, perhaps after all, this was the work of God! So much for my own wisdom and thoughts of what I would do, I could not even detect the Holy Spirit’s leadings in all this, but I remember being given some hope from the lines of a hymn which reads:

‘They pray to be new-born,  
Yet know not what they mean,  
They think it something strange ...  
Something unaccomplished yet.’

“So the time went on until I was about nineteen years of age, when, I believe, one Sunday evening, under my late father’s ministry [he was pastor at Chatteris], my gracious God manifested a little of His sovereign grace, mercy and love to my soul. How during that sermon the first verse of hymn 200 flowed into my soul:

‘Ah! but for free and sovereign grace,  
I still had lived estranged from God,  
Till hell had proved the destined place  
Of my deserved but dread abode.’

I felt now no more a stranger or foreigner, but to be one of His people. How I felt His love flow into my heart and mine to Him. As I left the chapel and stood in the dark of the garden, feeling the sweetness of divine love, the words,

‘If once the love of Christ we feel  
Upon our hearts impressed,  
The marks of that celestial seal  
Can never be erased,’ (H. 344)

came with such power that I felt this to be true – that the marks would never be erased. Also,

‘He’s an heir of heaven that finds  
His bosom glow with love,’ (H. 1082)

and I said, ‘Lord, I am an heir of heaven.’ I had no doubt of it. How clean I felt, no sin to trouble me now! But how I did hate sin, not because of any fear of punishment, no, but because it is sin, and something in me hated it! How I did beg the dear Lord not to let me sin again.

“Although I had known what it was to hate my father as he stood in the pulpit because he so cut me off, now I knew what it was to love him, not because of any earthly ties of nature, no, but with that love which transcends earthly love and in which earthly relationships are lost sight of in the heavenly. I felt him to be my brother in Christ Jesus.

“I look back to the time and place, where first I was exercised about the work of the ministry. This was in 1936, when I was twenty-four years of age. The place was my place of business. On this particular morning, as I was engaged in business, without any outward cause I found myself saying mentally, ‘I could not preach, I could not preach.’ On this experience continuing for some time, I began to examine myself as to the cause of this strange experience, and after some time felt that it sprang from an inward persuasion that I should have to do so. This persuasion came with such power and was so unlooked for and unsought that I knew that it did not come from myself. Dare I say, on looking

back, that as the Holy Spirit is spoken of as coming upon His servants of old, so, in measure, He came upon me? How I told the Lord of my inability to speak and of my lack of knowledge, but still the persuasion persisted powerfully for a time and never really left me, although at times lost sight of, and I was brought at last, in March 1952, to stand before the church at Chatteris to tell them of my exercise! But O the times which went over my head in the intervening years, during which, from time to time, the Word of God was opened up to me and I preached many a sermon to myself!

“In 1940, I was approached by one of the members of the church at Chatteris and also one of the supply ministers, who both asked me if I was exercised about the work of the ministry. This astonished me much, as neither by word nor hint had I made known my feelings about this matter.

“Later, in 1940, I was called to join H.M. Forces and this step, I felt, was to be the end of the matter. O the godlessness of my surroundings, but even here the exercise was continued! When in 1942 I was sent to North Africa, I verily thought how wrong this proved the exercise to be, for was it not possible, I thought, that I should never return and this would be the end of it all? But these events were to lead me to the place where I was first to open my mouth in His name and try to show forth His praise. It occurred like this: a missionary in the district where I was stationed invited servicemen to go to her house on Sunday evenings for hymn singing. After going several times, I was asked if I would speak to those gathered on the next Sunday. At first I refused to do so, but on reflecting that those who gathered had not the gospel preached to them, and feeling something of the exercise to set forth the truth in the Lord’s name, I consented. In much fear I stood up, in that large, upper room of an eastern house in the Arab quarter of Constantine before a mixed company of servicemen, and told them: ‘Ye must be born again, or ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven,’ and on another occasion: ‘TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.’ With what effect? Who can tell? for soon I was moved on and did not speak again.

“After spending some three-and-a-half years abroad, I came home and left the Forces. I was privileged to sit under the preached Word. I believe the exercise was continued, and also a desire to know and do the Lord’s will. Two experiences stand out and were, I feel, the means of bringing me to tell ‘the King’s household’ of my exercise. One was a dream, in which the words spoken to Moses were spoken powerfully to me: ‘Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ O the sanctifying power which persisted with the word during the following days, and I looked for the way to be opened, feeling the Lord’s time was drawing nigh. Then, when hearing Mr. Windridge at

Richmond, he spoke from the verses containing the words: 'Who will go for us? Whom shall I send? Then said I, Here am I; send me.' Dr. Wiltshire said to me after the service, 'What a strange sermon!' It was not strange to me, and again I looked for the Lord to open the way. Shortly afterwards, in 1952, I received an invitation to preach at Haynes chapel. After submitting what I hope is my call to the ministry and trying, as enabled, to preach before the pastor and church at Chatteris along with two ministers, I was sent out with the approval of the church.

"What else can I say, but, 'Having received help of God, I continue unto this day'?"

---

## OBITUARY

---

**Margaret Annie Ruse**, a faithful member at Hope Strict Baptist Chapel, Stotfold, for over fifty-seven years, passed to her eternal rest on March 5th, 2019, aged 86 years.

Margaret was born in Watford in February 1933, the youngest of eight children of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hare. From birth she was regularly taken to Watford chapel, where the family attended. She had a sad childhood. Her mother was taken into a mental hospital when Margaret was eighteen months old. Margaret was sent to live with an aunt in Peterborough for eight months before returning when her mother came out of hospital. When she was three years old her mother was confined to the mental hospital for the remaining years of her life. Margaret said, "I had a mother, and yet no mother!"

Margaret grew up often feeling unloved and of a very nervous disposition. From the age of six, Margaret became overwhelmed with fears of death and eternity which stayed with her until much later in life.

Soon afterwards, her father took up an occupation in Baldock, Hertfordshire, and he, with his family, began attending Hope Strict Baptist Chapel, Stotfold, a distance of over three miles, which they walked. As a child she often prayed, feeling God was someone to confide in, her mother being absent. In her childhood years she prayed about many things although she told no-one.

In these early years of her life, the things of God were more attractive to her than worldly things. She did not know why, but the fear of death and eternity was still with her in the background of her mind. One day the words of Jeremiah 3. 14 were quoted at chapel: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family," but she misunderstood and thought it said, "One of a family." This caused her deep exercise in her heart because she concluded it was her eldest sister who was chosen, as she often talked with her father with an open Bible between them.

However, Margaret knew there was no reason why God should choose her own self; she was too sinful and insignificant and sometimes felt unloved and unwanted by people. So she thought, "Why should God want me?"

Yet she felt compelled still to pray, especially when there were exams at school. She wished to become a teacher, but had to leave school after only one term in the sixth form to run the family home. She gave up hope of becoming a teacher.

It was at this time the Lord began to teach her deeply about His salvation. Under a sermon by Mr. P. Laver, the Lord showed her her real state as a sinner before a holy God. He spoke about the judgment day and eternity in heaven or hell. It was an enlightening of the fear she had of death and of a never-ending eternity. She knew she would be condemned to hell. She trembled inwardly and felt like those who would call on the rocks to fall on them and cover them. She had no hiding place! She says that she had had Jesus preached to her all her life, but He had meant nothing to her savingly. After the service she was thankful the sun was still shining, but she knew God's holy eye was upon her and she was a sinner before Him. She trembled inwardly for many years on account of her felt sinfulness, but could tell no-one of her deep exercises. On one occasion she went to Haynes Chapel, where Mr. K. Cordle was preaching, and he preached from John 10. 16: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring." How she longed to be one of those other sheep.

Through a remarkable providence of God, Margaret was able to train as a teacher (even without full exam qualifications) through the kindness of the vice principal of the college at Saffron Walden, Miss Gladys Riche, who attended the Strict Baptist chapel at Cambridge. On the morning of the day of her final examination, all fears were removed by the words powerfully spoken to her: "Be still, and know that I am God." Although a providential mercy, she knew she could not depend on it for her soul's salvation.

Margaret met her future husband, John, at Hope Chapel, Stotfold. Their friendship deepened when she was at college. Their courtship had many trials owing to family concerns. One concern was she could not leave her father and live over twenty-four miles away near Newport where John worked in the family bakery business. But following the sudden, sad death of her father in January 1956, Margaret and John felt they could marry and live at Newport. This was a time of much happiness in Margaret's life with a husband, and after two years of marriage, a daughter. However, she began to realise that this happiness would not be everlasting. Deep down she began to fear greatly that her heart was too taken up with these providential blessings and that the inward felt sin of her heart would sink her to hell.

One day she read in John 14. 26 where Jesus told that God would give the Holy Spirit to His disciples to teach them all things. Later she read Luke 11. 11-13: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" She prayed earnestly for it. Mr. G. Humberstone came to Stotfold and preached from Matthew 7. 7: "Ask, and it shall be given you." Hymn 399 became her ardent prayer: "Jesus, reveal Thyself to me." He did in August 1961. When doing her household duties, the words, "Daughter, go in peace," were quietly whispered to her. She tried to put them from her, feeling that such a sinner as she was could not be called a "daughter." Yet it was what she had been praying to know for so long, whether she was one of His children, one of His other sheep! The words remained with her for the rest of that week, persisting in her mind. On the following Sunday, alone in the evening, when her husband took his parents to their home and the children were in bed, she thought she would see if those words were in the Word of God. On taking her Bible, it fell open at Luke chapter 8, and verse 48 stood out as though in bold print: "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." She said that never would she forget the waves of peace that came rolling over her soul. Words could not describe it. All fear and trembling had gone from her soul. There was nothing, not one sin, between her soul and a precious Christ. Jesus had spoken to her and had stilled the storm and brought a peace which "passeth all understanding."

The exercise of baptism became strong, yet she feared and was very nervous to take such a step. The word in Song of Solomon 1. 8: "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents," struck her with power and the way seemed opened up. But she could not take the step. Then reading in Isaiah chapter 1, the Lord spoke powerfully a second time through verses 19 and 20: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." All resistance was completely dispelled from her, and she was made willing to go! She was baptized by Mr. John Green in November 1961.

She enjoyed spiritual peace for several months, and then as daily duties of family life and other concerns had to be attended to, she realised she could not always be on the mountain top. Many tribulations tested her faith.

One day, the family having moved to live in Letchworth, Margaret was doing the washing. As she stood at the kitchen sink, these words dropped into her mind: "Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity." Immediately the Lord Jesus appeared to her for a few moments, hanging on the cross. She said she did not see Him with her natural eyes, but in those few moments she saw and felt her sins were all imputed to Him, who gave Himself as a sacrifice for all His people's

sins. Again she was melted down with such love to Him at the sight. She finished the washing but hardly knew how.

Margaret had real experiences as a saint of the Lord. They were His work from beginning to end. Although practically she had many hard things in her life, and great fears spiritually, she proved the faithfulness of her God to supply all her need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

I found Margaret a most faithful member of the church at Hope Chapel, Stotfold. I valued her prayerful support of myself as a deacon and then as pastor. Although she was greatly afflicted with dementia during her last years, she would smile when people spoke to her of the truth as it is in Jesus. Her last days were spent at the Harpenden Bethesda Home where she received much loving attention. Her funeral was held at Hope Chapel, Stotfold on March 18th, 2019 with interment in the local cemetery.

She held fast to her hope through God's grace to the end of her days. She now enjoys those comforts for evermore.

G.E. Hadley

---

---

## FIVE WORDS

*"I had rather speak five words with my understanding ... than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (1 Cor. 14. 19).*

*"Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2. 2).*

---

Five *precious* words! My soul hangs on their worth!  
 What mysteries, what gospel they set forth!  
 Christ gave His life that sinners might be free:  
 O wondrous grace, O love beyond degree!

Five *vital* words! To save the lost He came;  
 No hope apart from Him, no other name.  
 Eternal wrath was ours, but Jesus died;  
 He vanquished hell when He was crucified.

Five *solemn* words! 'Twas sin that placed Him there;  
 God's holiness could not the Saviour spare,  
 Since He decreed to bear His people's sin,  
 An accursed death to die, their heaven to win.

Five *welcome* words to all who feel their need –  
 By God's good Spirit may we truly heed –  
 Although we merit hell, the Saviour died;  
 For our salvation He was crucified.

Anon.



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
JULY 2021

---

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

---

**“HE SHALL COVER THEE WITH HIS FEATHERS”**

One of the most precious doctrines to a believer is the promise of the preservation of the saints, implying their perseverance through all the changing scenes in life's journey. This is one of the blessings for which the Saviour prayed to His Father, for His church in His high priestly prayer: “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are” (John 17. 11). (In passing, how blasphemous it is for the pope to assume the name Holy Father which can only belong to God Himself. Surely the solemn prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2. 4 is fulfilled in this.) What a mercy that the Lord's people have their heavenly Father to commit the keeping of their souls to, as to a faithful Creator (see 1 Pet. 4. 19).

This precious truth is the theme of Psalm 91. Following on from Moses' confession of mankind's frailty in Psalm 90, the precious promises of the Psalm provide a sacred antidote to quieten the many fears of God's children.

The fourth verse has a particularly sensitive note: “He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.”

Notice that God does not delegate the keeping of His saints to any other than Himself. Just as the shepherd in Psalm 23 was always watching over his sheep as his and ready to protect, so it is with “God's *own* feathers” that He protects His own.

These feathers are soft, demonstrating the loving care God has for His own. It was this truth which supported Jeremiah in difficult days: “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Also, Isaiah when he echoed Zion's complaint: “But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isa. 49. 14, 15).

These feathers may be spoken of as the exceeding great and precious promises stored up for God's people in His Word. How Ruth, having received the promise from Boaz, “Fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest” (Ruth 3. 11), was exhorted by Naomi to shelter under the wings of the faithfulness of the God of Israel, and sit still, even as the

church in the Song of Solomon, in a different metaphor, “sat down under His shadow.” When she left Moab and came to Bethlehem, she came under those wings, and how precious they had already been when Boaz put his protecting arm around her in the gleaning field.

These feathers may be spoken of as the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, that covers all those who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. What a sure and secure covering this is to the Lord’s tried and tempted people! When the law thunders, the devil roars, the world opposes, the flesh repines, what a hiding place!

“Jesus, Thy Godhead, blood and name  
O! ’tis eternal life to know;  
Here let my soul her hold maintain,  
When pressed by conscience, wrath or law.” (H. 908)

These feathers may be spoken of as the providential care over God’s people, especially in times of need and extremity, just as young chicks flee to their mother’s sheltering wings when there is danger. Her wings come between them and the peril. How those wings preserved Jeremiah and Baruch when the angry king sought them. We read in Jeremiah 36. 26: “But the LORD hid them.” Likewise, the Lord often hid David during those long years of persecution by Saul, and Elijah during the three years and six months of drought.

“A sovereign Protector I have,  
Unseen, yet for ever at hand;  
Unchangeably faithful to save,  
Almighty to rule and command;  
He smiles, and my comforts abound;  
His grace as the dew shall descend;  
And walls of salvation surround  
The souls He delights to defend.” (H. 346)

In the early years of the twentieth century, a godly man in Bedfordshire owned a chicken farm. Sadly, one night the chicken houses caught fire and his living was devastated. Surveying the scene of desolation the next morning, he inadvertently kicked the burned-out carcase of a hen. To his surprise, several little chicks ran out. While the fire raged, they had sheltered beneath the wings of their mother hen. She had perished but they were safe. The godly man found a double comfort at this unexpected sight. Surely if the little chicks had been preserved under their mother’s wings, might not he find a shelter beneath the soft feathers and wings of the Almighty in this hour of deep trial?

But then his thoughts went deeper. Was there not One who laid down His life under the fires of infinite justice, that he, a fleeing sinner, might escape the consuming fire?

“On Him almighty vengeance fell,  
That must have sunk a world to hell;  
He bore it for a chosen race,  
And thus became their Hiding place.” (H. 134)

There is no sweeter, softer place for a sinner to hide, than under the feathers of the finished work of the Saviour. May we be found there, under the shadow of the Almighty.

---

---

### A PRAYER OF DAVID

*Sermon preached by John Warburton, at Gower Street Chapel,  
London, on Tuesday, October 13th, 1840*

---

**Text:** “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit” (Psa. 51. 10-12).

By the aid of God, we shall attempt to make a few remarks from the words of the text I have just laid before you.

We have no ground whatever to doubt but that David was a man of God, a man born of God, highly favoured of God, and possessing a rich experience of the goodness and the greatness, the mercy and power, the faithfulness and majesty of God. Sometimes he takes up a whole Psalm in extolling and exalting the glory and mercy, the goodness and power of his God. At other times we find him sunk down into the greatest depths of despondency, insomuch as to lead him to exclaim like Asaph, “Is His mercy clean gone for ever?” “Will He be favourable no more?” At times he tells us that his mountain stands strong and shall never be removed. And again, “Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled.”

In the Psalm before us, he nearly takes up the whole of it in prayer and supplication unto God; and my dear friends, what encouragement it is to our poor souls, when the Lord brings us into great and extreme trial, to remember that our case is not the only solitary example, but that we can take comfort and guidance from the trials and troubles of God’s saints who have suffered in a similar manner.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right Spirit within me.” Now it is very evident and very clear that David, a man after God’s own heart, knew to his sorrow, his grief, and his great distress, that he had an unclean heart; and that this unclean heart was a source of excessive grief to his soul; and therefore, he cries out to God, from a keen sense and feeling of the plague and misery of sin, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” And it is

evident, my brethren, from this supplication, that the psalmist David loved “a clean heart”; that it was his great and supreme delight, on which all his affections were reposed. He knew that this alone could enable him to approach worthily unto God; and that enjoying this blessed access unto Him, he would be able to rejoice in His presence, and his meditation upon Him would be sweet unto his soul. This he knew might be his honour and his privilege, and therefore he begs of God to create in him “a clean heart.” So that you see it was no encouragement to David to have an unclean heart; it was no source of pleasure to him to feel this, but rather a source of misery and pain.

It is clear in this petition that the psalmist was convinced, feelingly convinced, that nothing but God could give him this clean heart; that it was not in the power of his reading, of his studying, of his hearing, of his walking in God’s path, but that it was only the gift of God, His own gift and none other’s. Therefore he cries, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” His soul was turned from every other source but God to grant him the blessed gift; and as a poor beggar, a poor pensioner upon His mercy, he begs that God will hear his cry, and grant him his request, so that he might be delivered from the devilish and unclean heart, so that he might be freed from it and put his foot upon it, that he might commune with his God and feel the blessing of His goodness and His power.

Now, my friends, is this the case with you and with me? It is a very easy thing for people to come to chapel, and take their seats, and become regular members and attendants, to assent to the truth preached and even strive with all their might to prop up and support the cause of the Lord; but the point is, are your souls led to understand and seek after the things that God has taught His children of old, that are left in the blessed records of His truth, and penned out in sacred characters in His Word? If you have not the bright side, if you have not the black side, if you have not the two sides brought up to meet together, upon what ground can you look calmly into eternity? God Almighty search your hearts, my friends. I have no sinister object in view; I have no pleasing of men in view; yea, rather nothing but the affronting of men in view, but may God bless you, and search our hearts, and discover unto us upon what ground we stand.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Have you ever felt the plague of an unclean heart? Have you ever proved the truth of what Christ says, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications,” and all uncleanness? Is that your plague, is that your evil? Have you known what it is to cry with Paul, “O wretched man that I am”? Do you know what it is to feel the

plague and vexation of your souls? If you have not felt this, you have never had the fountains of the great deep opened in your souls.

There may be some of you who may be thinking that your hearts are better than others, and that you do your duty when you meet here in the presence of God. Perhaps there may be someone come here this evening out of curiosity – someone that has heard what a country fool there is preaching at Gower Street Chapel, and is induced thus to come and hear what sort of a fool he is. I tell you, if you have never seen your own depravity, if you have never felt its burden, and groaned in spirit to get rid of it, if you have never sighed for deliverance from its curse, you know nothing of a “clean heart.”

But then, say you, you are not going (to be sure) to put the uncleanness of a man’s heart to be evidence that he is a Christian? God forbid that we should. What! put the devil’s work as an evidence of God’s handiwork! No; but I am talking about the plague of an unclean heart; I am talking about the soul that wants to be right; I am talking about the feelings of the poor child of God, that is now suffering under it, and wants to be delivered from it, and to go up into the presence of his God and commune with Him. Now if you know nothing about all this, what is all your religion, what is all your profession, what is all your knowledge, what is all your usefulness, and what are all your prayers? Why, when you come to the winding up – when death comes to break the pitcher at the fountain head – when eternity opens up its door and you must enter into an unknown world – if you have not had Christ, if you have not felt God in your soul, and the kingdom of God in your heart, you plunge into hell where there are devils and damned souls for ever and ever.

“Renew,” he says, “a right spirit within me.” Why then, David was plagued with a wrong spirit, a bad spirit. Poor soul! though he was king of Israel, and had been brought through so many troubles, and had seen the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, as far as ever mortal eye beheld of the power and goodness of God, yet, poor soul, he knew to his sorrow what it was to have a bad spirit, to be plagued with a bad spirit, to be tormented with a devilish spirit. And where is there a poor child of God in the world, but what is tormented at times, and plagued with it – and I believe some so more than others? We cannot, however, measure the heights and the depths of these things. This can be done only by God, and we must wait willingly and patiently until He shall reveal it unto us. I believe there is not a poor soul, but what is plagued with a bad spirit.

What do you mean by a bad spirit? An ill-tempered spirit? Yes, an ill-tempered spirit, a discontented spirit, a murmuring spirit, an unbelieving spirit, a proud spirit, a devilish spirit, that comes from

beneath, and from a place that is opposed to God, and to the consolation of the soul. Where is the man in the Bible, but was plagued at times with this bad spirit? Moses felt it. I am sure Abraham had a bad spirit, a stubborn unbelief, a slavish fear, which is not God's Spirit, for it seems to dispute God's Word, and to despair of God's truth and promise. It seems sinking into despair for fear God should not do according to His word. It is a spirit that comes from beneath. God says to Abraham, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." But poor Abraham was fearing, eternally fearing, whether after all he should not be left of God and plunged into despair, and perhaps afraid that God would never appear to him again. The very promise carries it with it, or else there is no sense in the words, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward"; and I believe God blessed it to his soul and favoured him with a good spirit. He "renewed a good spirit" in his heart. I am sure Job had not a very good spirit, when he cried out unto God, and cursed the day that he was born. I am sure he had not a very good spirit, or a very right spirit, when he said, "Let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return." And again, "That He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!" And again he says, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life." I am sure poor Jonah had not a very good or a very right spirit, when God says to him, "Doest thou well to be angry?" – asking him only a quiet question, simply whether it was right or whether it was wrong that he was angry – "Yea," says he, "even unto death."

Ah! my friends what sort of spirits have you? How often do we find a poor child of God, as peevish, as rebellious, as discontented, and as stubborn as a very yew! Yea, and sometimes trying to harden his heart, and determined to plunge into further damnation. Ah! my friends, what does this bring to our hearts? – guilt, dismay, sinking, sorrowing. I believe in my own heart, that God will bring this people to see this bad spirit, to feel this bad spirit, to guard over this bad spirit, to cry to God to renew a right spirit, and to lead them up to Him in faith, in love, in hope, in gratitude, in contentedness, and in resignation. My friends, the poor, dear child of God has no peace of heart, no real, right, godly peace in the heart, but as God reconciles it, renews a right spirit within it, and causes it to tell us of our wants. Oh, what a blessed spirit is that, when the soul feels content with its condition, content with all its troubles, content with all its trials; when it finds itself renewed in spirit, and can say, "The will of the Lord be done!" My friends, this is religion; this is the religion that does good to the soul; this is the religion that brings glory to God; this is the religion that brings peace to the mind.

Come, come, then, poor soul that feels a bad spirit, that feels an unclean heart, God help thee to come to Him. It is of no use to go to thy

fellow mortals with it; it is of no use to go to the parsons with it; it is of no use to go to any human arm with it; but go to thy God, where David went – to God, with his burden, his simple cry, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” God heard him in His own time, and the Lord blessed him in His own time; and God said, I will not despise the sighing of the needy, I will grant their prayer. God help thee to come with thy burden, and plead it for Christ’s sake before His blessed majesty. May He give thee a clean heart, faith, love, patience, zeal, light, life, liberty. It is all His gift, all at His disposal, and He has promised to give it to them that ask.

But again, the next thing in David’s petition, or rather in our text is, “Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.” How is there such a thing possible as going away from God’s presence? It is utterly impossible to get away from God’s omnipresence. But David did not mean this. God’s presence he well knew was everywhere. So that David does not mean that he could ever be cast out of God’s omnipresence. For he tells us again in another place, “Whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.” So that he could not mean, “Cast me not away from the omnipresence,” for let him be in heaven, or earth, or hell, there would God be and His presence would be with him.

But it is evident from the whole tenor of the Psalm that when he says, “Cast me not away from Thy presence,” he means that he might not be cast out of His fatherly presence as his Father and his God, as his Friend and as his Brother, as his Daysman, as his blessed portion, and his All in all. For David well knew that it was the presence of his blessed God and Father, that was his light and his life, his portion and his victory and his glory. The thought of being cast out of his heavenly Father’s presence – what is there could be more grievous to a poor child of God? This, it appears to me, is what David means when he prays that he may not be cast out of God’s presence but shall continue to enjoy His lovingkindness. This is the very thing that Moses so earnestly begged of God when he came into the wilderness, in going through the desert, in his way to Canaan. O Lord, the people know Thou art with us, and Thy presence goeth with them.

Now here, then, we must understand him as asking for His fatherly presence, His blessed presence, as his God and his deliverer; His presence to uphold, instruct, defend and guide him, stand by him in every storm, that he might not be left without the presence of his covenant God, that he might not be left alone to cursed unbelief, and carnal reason. This

is why David cries out, "Cast me not away from Thy presence." Now, have you ever prayed for this? There are thousands and tens of thousands of professors of religion who never think of it. All the presence of God they ever think of, is to be privileged with the means, to attend upon the means; to read the Word of God and take His promise to themselves. This is the utmost extent of their knowledge, and with this they rest satisfied and at ease. But they know nothing about it, until they cry with David from their very soul, "Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." They know nothing about it. Do you know anything?

My brethren, I speak it with simplicity and humility – I do know something about it – I know a little about it as far as God has blessed me; for without the presence of God my Father, I am nothing at all. If I come to chapel without His presence, the devil tells me He will never come again. If I go sometimes to the Bible without His presence, it is a Book that I cannot know. If I come sometimes to enter into Christian conversation without His presence, and to act as a little child in His presence, I am as carnal and as worldly and as unprofitable as though I had never known it. So, my brethren, it is my cry that God's presence would be with me in all that I do – in my preaching and reading, in all my toils in temporal things, in my prayers and in my pulpit, and when I come to cross over Jordan's stream.

My soul has begged with prayers, that God will never leave me to die without His blessed presence; for when you come to grapple with death and to meet an angry Father's frown, when you come to have the devil rise and point at death and to eternity, what a sinking it is to a poor soul! How the tabernacle trembles, how the spirit faints! "Ah," says Satan, "you are coming to die and to grapple with death, and how will it be with you? Where is your wedding garment? Where is the oil for your lamp? It is gone out, it is gone out, poor, dear soul; and thou canst not go to anybody and buy." Thou must go to the Lord, and to none else. And it is poor, trying, searching work enough for the soul, when it wants the presence of the Lord.

Come, then, poor soul, and take this heartfelt expression of David. If thou hast within thee the feeling of David, if thou art treading in the steps of David, and if David's God is thine, He will bring thee to the heights of Zion, and thou shalt dwell in the city of song for ever and ever. "Cast me not away from Thy presence." Oh, my friends, what is all without the presence of God!

But could not David look back to the hill Mizar, and see how the Lord took him first from following after his father's sheep in the wilderness? Would he not remember Goliath of Gath, how He brought him to slay him with a sling and a stone, and to cut off his head, and



caused him to sing for his deliverance, and shielded him ever since? Would he pray about taking the Holy Spirit from him? Had God ever hinted such a thing? Is it possible that God could ever falsify Himself? Has He not said He takes possession of the hearts of His people; that it is His dwelling place, and His house? And has He not said, 'Here will I abide for ever'? God has promised every blessing to His own dear children, as free gifts, and sovereign gifts, and they are all deposited in His beloved Son, and secured in Him for us. They are free and sovereign gifts, and the devil can never hinder us from having them. Satan can never hinder us from having them. God has told us that all His blessings are in Christ Jesus; that every blessing is treasured up in Him – "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

But He at the same time tells us He will "be inquired of." "I will ... be inquired of by the house of Israel" to do these things. God has promised that they shall be done, but God has determined that His people shall pray. If a man never prayed for them with his heart, where is the token that he is a righteous man? The righteous crieth unto the Lord, and the Lord heareth him, and answereth his request. "They shall come," He says, 'with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them; and I will bring them through the fire, and purify them as silver is purified, and as gold is tried; and they shall call upon My name.'

So that, you see, God will have His people pray to Him. How can a man expect these blessings if he has never prayed, or been brought to see the necessity of praying unto God? David prays that God would not take the Holy Spirit from him, for if that were taken away, he could never pray. He knew that all the blessings of revelation, the opening up of truth, and the blessed application of those truths to his heart, was the work of the Holy Ghost. Ah, my dear friends, may you all be taught as I have been taught! I know that He alone is the Comforter; I never had any comfort but what was brought to me by Him. I know that He is the sole and blessed truth; that He is the Witnesser of my sonship with God – that the Spirit itself beareth witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God. It is He who reveals Christ Jesus to our heart. It is He who opens up to our understandings all the truths of God's holy Word, with His blessed and enlightening beams. When His light and His revelation are withdrawn, then nothing is left to us but carnal mindedness and darkness. What a lump of ignorance, what a lump of death, what a lump of worldliness and carnality we are! The soul has neither light, nor life, nor power, nor peace, not a single spiritual desire, when the Spirit of God has withdrawn His blessed influence. Have you ever prayed that you may not be left without this Spirit – this Spirit to teach you and guide you?

In my study for the pulpit, I do believe that nine hours in the day out of ten are in prayer. My cry to God and the Holy Trinity is to guide me

and stand by me. I have sometimes been so confused and so stuck fast, that really I have been brought to doubt whether God did hear me, or whether I prayed consistently with the words of His truth. I have prayed that God would lead my understanding into the truths of Scripture; that He would open to me the prophecies; that He would come to types and to shadows and to different offices and characters, and explain them to me, so that perhaps once in a month I might be able to give a good experimental sermon. But I did not experience it, and this has made me fear that the Holy Spirit was taken from me.

But when I have felt His blessed and enlightening Spirit, and God has made the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are strong – then I have felt quite another man. My soul has then felt the blessing of God; it has felt in a state of liberty and peace; it has triumphed in God and felt the power of His salvation. My soul has then been content to be as nothing, and to come up in the way that the Lord should lead me. Therefore it is that we should love to pray that the Spirit of God may not be taken from us.

Again, he says, “Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.” Now it is plain and evident here that David rejoices that salvation was to be found in God. He cries that the blessings of salvation may be manifested in his heart; that they may be with him in his bonds, and afflictions, and carnal reasonings, that so his soul might be brought up to God and rejoice in His salvation. When David desires the salvation of God he is prompted to exclaim, “He is my rock and my defence,” and as Asaph said, “the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

God has promised to those who seek after Him, that they shall “draw water out of the wells of salvation.” It is the blessings of the salvation of Christ made known to the heart by the Spirit of God, that comforts us in all our afflictions, and griefs, and sorrows. And like David, your souls will cry again and again, until the blessed request is granted, “Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.” The souls of God’s people shall travel with David; their hearts shall go unto him, and the God that was David’s shall give encouragement to them.

“Uphold me with Thy free Spirit,” and then I shall indeed be free; I shall walk in liberty; I shall walk in light. I shall be free in body, free in mind. “Uphold me with Thy free Spirit,” and I shall then be free – free from falling into bonds, from falling into unbelief, from falling into pride, from falling into rebellion, from falling into anything dishonouring to God. “Uphold me with Thy free Spirit.” I shall then walk in freedom, live in freedom, fight in freedom, and go to death in freedom. I shall

walk before Thee, my God and Father, in the liberty with which Thou hast made me free. I shall enjoy freedom in Thy presence and Thou shalt put a crown upon my head – a crown of light and of glory. May God grant His blessing through Christ Jesus. Amen.

---

### THE WINGS OF A DOVE

*By Murdoch Campbell (1900-1974)*

---

These Psalms (55 and 56) have one thing in common. In vivid language they present us with a view of David passing through some of his greatest afflictions. One of his natural, or instinctive, reactions to his sufferings was that he might “get away from them all.” If only he had “wings like a dove” that he might fly away to some place of rest, far beyond the reach of fear and danger! For God’s people, however, confronted, as they often are, with many adverse providences, there is no such place in this lower vale. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.”

God’s people are often described in the Scriptures under this same lovely figure: “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” “Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” Christ addresses His bride in similar words: “O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice.” But, like the dove that came back into the ark, not until life’s storms all pass away shall they enter upon the final rest which remaineth for the people of God.

David, we notice, discovered a more excellent way of easing his burden. “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee.” This we do by bringing it to the Lord in prayer. In the original Hebrew, the word “burden” also means “a gift.” Samuel Rutherford once wrote that when Christ espoused His people to Himself, one of His marriage gifts to each one of them was a cross. Some former Christians used to speak of their trials as “the ballast in the boat,” keeping the vessel steady and balanced. This is well illustrated in the case of Paul: “Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” The thorn stayed with him. It kept him humble and dependent on the Lord to the end. Our pains and chastenings are among God’s priceless gifts to us. Therefore, when we are inclined to say, “My burden is more than I can bear,” let us remember that our burdens are not more than He can bear. And with our burdens He carries ourselves as well. The wisdom of the saint consists in this: “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

## LET US EXAMINE OURSELVES IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD

*By I.A. Sadler*

---

The Lord is speaking to the churches and individual believers through the events of 2020 and 2021. May He give us the humility and spiritual ears to “hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 2 and 3). “The LORD’S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it” (Mic. 6. 9). May we examine ourselves with candour and frankness. A vital question is, how should this be done?

The Lord has given us in the Word of God the solid foundation and a divine standard upon which to examine ourselves humbly before God. The Word of God (in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit) is our infallible and inerrant guide. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119. 105). The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God, declared unto the Father, “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth” (John 17. 17). The Lord has also invited the poor and needy to come unto Him for wisdom and help. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas. 1. 5). “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11. 13). The Lord has promised that if we ask in Jesus’ name, it shall be granted. Therefore, shall we not ask for wisdom and the grace of obedience to follow the Lord, confessing those matters in which we have sinned both individually and collectively?

Let us then briefly consider the principles upon which we may examine ourselves, that the honour and glory may be to the Lord, and not man. We must be clear to distinguish between those things that are essential to salvation, those that are essential to obedience to the Word of God, those things in which we have liberty before the Lord, and those things which are the traditions of men. The Lord severely rebuked the Pharisees for “making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7. 13). We will briefly consider these four categories, so that we should not be left to confusion and to mix the precious and the vile in the churches.

However, we must firstly preface what follows with the principle that the Word of God is to be our infallible and inerrant guide, the sole basis from which we derive sound doctrine and practice, and by which we judge experience. It is clearly necessary that the Bible we refer to is actually the Word of God, and not a corruption of it. The doctrine of the divine inspiration and preservation of the Word of God and the purity of

the Word is vital for our spiritual health (see the excellent publications on this subject published by the Trinitarian Bible Society). "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19. 7, 8).

### *Doctrines Essential to Salvation*

There are Biblical doctrines that are fundamental and essential to salvation. Without a true, God-given faith and belief in these, there can be no salvation. These are founded in the very nature of the Triune God, who Christ is and His work of salvation, and the office of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as churches and as individuals we can only have true spiritual fellowship with those who believe in the Trinity, that Jesus Christ as the Son of God is truly God and truly Man, that salvation is by the righteousness, atoning sacrifice, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and that all true believers are justified by faith through the grace of God. To follow or preach another Christ or to deny the Trinity is heresy and soul destroying. Therefore, the churches can have no spiritual fellowship with any in such heresies, whatever denominational name they may bear, or whether they look ever so sober and upright in appearance or practice. Heresy is heresy, and it must be separated from. Those who follow such heretical beliefs are still our neighbours, whom we are to love as ourselves; but they must remain as neighbours, unless the Lord give them repentance unto life.

The second Epistle of John gives the most emphatic statement, which has been sadly neglected by many in recent years. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

### *Doctrines Essential to Obedience*

There are many other scriptural doctrines that are necessary for obedience unto the Lord, and by following them in love and faith unto the Lord we give that right honour unto Him. The Lord said unto Joshua concerning the Scriptures as revealed at that time, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way

prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Josh. 1. 7, 8). Peter declared in his second Epistle, “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.... We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1. 16, 19).

May the Lord give us prayerful, loving and spiritual attention to the Word, and then we may be assured we are walking in the right way and giving honour to God in the churches. This is necessary for church union and communion, and for harmony between churches by following the scriptural order in matters of church membership, discipline and inter-church transfers (Col. 2. 5 and Acts 18. 27). “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14. 33).

However, in this sinful world not all Christians agree about every doctrine, for example the doctrine of baptism. Whilst it is necessary that the churches hold fast to the truth, we still have spiritual fellowship with those from whom we may differ on points not essential to salvation. If we consider the days of the Judges, there are those “worthies” spoken of in Hebrews 11, who nevertheless erred in various matters (for example, Gideon, Samson), as well as David and Solomon. These things are written in the Bible for our instruction and warning, but we are not to judge these Old Testament saints as unbelievers. Likewise in our own day, we must be careful to avoid rash and proud judgments about the eternal state of believers from other churches. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10. 12). Have we ever considered that we may be erring ourselves in both spirit and practice, and that a spirit of judgment of other believers may be in reality hypocrisy in the sight of a holy God? Alas, the evidence is before us that many things are not in their proper scriptural order in many churches and lives. If we as sinners see this, how much more so a holy and sovereign God!

### *Matters in which there is Scriptural Liberty*

In the Old Testament, the forms of worship and many other matters were most strictly prescribed for the children of Israel. This is not the case for the New Testament church which has been called out of every nation, kindred and tongue to the end of time. We find the principles set out in the New Testament, the most important of which is love unto the Lord and love unto the brethren (see 1 Cor. 13, 1 John 2, for example). However, we do not find exact formulae for how divine worship is to be conducted, the number of hymns or psalms to be sung, what colours of dress are permitted, whether a women’s head covering should be a hat or

a scarf, etc. But we do find exhortations to humility, a gracious order, sobriety and reverence, amongst others (see especially Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians and his Epistles to Timothy and Titus).

It is therefore dishonouring to the Lord to judge other believers in matters where the Word of God gives liberty before the Lord, or in respect of customs that may legitimately differ between cultures. Would to God that Romans 14 was followed as carefully as Romans 8 to 11: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3. 16). Let us not neglect any part of God's Word.

Likewise, we should not tenaciously hold to customs in perpetuity that may have been right in their place and time, but which are not the Word of the Lord that "endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1. 25). The rules of individual churches that are right for that church, are not necessarily a universal rule for all churches and for all time. Nevertheless, the worship and the affairs of a church should be conducted in an orderly and scriptural manner in the service of the Lord. We must not use this liberty as an excuse to dilute or avoid the scriptural pattern, as the Lord sees our hearts and motives. All must be done in love to the glory of God and the edification of others. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak" (1 Cor. 8. 9). "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5. 13).

### *Traditions of Men*

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians commending certain traditions. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2. 15). The tradition spoken of here is that which the Apostle Paul handed down to the church, faithfully and under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is in sharp contrast to the "mystery of iniquity" and the "man of sin" spoken of earlier in 2 Thessalonians 2. Paul declared that he received his gospel, not from man, but from the Lord Himself; Paul "conferred not with flesh and blood" (see Gal. 1. 11-16). Regarding the Lord's supper, he wrote: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Cor. 11. 23). The only tradition that we should hold to is what God has handed down to us: "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29. 29).

The great charge that Paul gave to Timothy was, "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4. 2), not to preach himself, nor the opinions or traditions of man. If what is handed down is directly from God and is received by living faith, if it is from the Word of God, speaks of Christ and glorifies Him, then it is to be commended. However, if it is from man, even otherwise

godly men, and is given a respect and importance irrespective of God's commandments, then we are in grave danger of error. In Scripture, we consistently read of how fallen man corrupts the commandments and ways of God. "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccles. 7. 29). If the respect of persons or the fear of man predominates over a love for the Word of God, then vain traditions are propagated and clung to, despite what God has revealed. This brings us to what the Scriptures say in condemnation of the traditions of men.

Forthright teaching on this subject was given by Jesus Himself during His earthly ministry. Concerning the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus quoted Isaiah: "In vain do they worship Me" – God – "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Moreover, Jesus accused them of "making the Word of God of none effect" through their tradition (Mark 7. 7 and 13). The Apostle Paul also wrote, "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. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 8, 9). The Word of God is to be our infallible guide, not the traditions of the fathers. As fallen sinners we quickly collect traditions and corrupt them. We must time and again prayerfully return to God's Word seeking that the Holy Spirit would guide in all things as individuals, families, churches and Christian organisations.

Some examples must be given as a warning of the danger and consequences of following the traditions of men. These things are sinful and bring dishonour upon the name of a holy God.

1. Where the traditions of men take precedence over the commandments of God, tradition can assume an inflexible and absolute authority that rules all, becoming like "the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not" (Dan. 6. 8). When traditions rule in a church or an organisation, Scripture is interpreted and made to fit into tradition. However, all that we do must be subordinate to the Word of God. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119. 105). If we walk otherwise, we are in rebellion against God, no matter how spiritual and holy we make ourselves to appear before men. Tradition speaks that we should follow man's example, but faithful preaching of the Word points to Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14. 6). We should seek a childlike faith to believe, receive and keep the Word of God. Christ must be our infallible Guide, not tradition. We should see "no man, save Jesus only" (Matt. 17. 8).

2. Like the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the honouring of the traditions of men leads to spiritual pride and to judging others who do not follow "us"; whereas the question should be, "Do they follow the Lord?"



Tradition can also be misused to preserve a position of authority, rather than humbly bowing at the feet of Christ, the Word (see John 11. 48).

In conclusion, may the Lord give us ears to hear the judgments that are upon us at the present time. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. 4. 17). May we who profess to be spiritual and to follow Jesus Christ, truly hearken unto His voice at this time and turn back from those ways that dishonour Him in our lives and in the churches. May we give the honour and glory to God alone. The Lord says, "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts." But we must not say in response like the priests of old, "Wherein shall we return?" (Mal. 3. 7). Rather, we who profess to uphold the Word of God and seek to be led by the Holy Spirit, let us prayerfully and humbly follow the inspired Word of God, confessing our sins.

Jesus said, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John 12. 26).

---

---

## PRAYER'S ACCEPTANCE

*By Henry Scudder*

---

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8. 15).

As the prayers of a true child of God differ from the prayers of the unregenerate, so their acceptance with God is also different. Their difference is seen in three ways. First, a true child of God in prayer calls God "Father" with faith and holy confidence, with the affections of a child. When we ask forgiveness for sin, it is with grief that we have by our sin offended our Father, and it is with a hearty purpose not to offend Him again. Also, when we pray for health, liberty, grace, or for any other good thing, it is with a desire that in the enjoyment of them, we may better please and honour our heavenly Father. In contrast, the wicked calls God "Father" only for form.

Secondly, the child of God prays chiefly and most heartily for spiritual things, such as faith, forgiveness of sins, holiness, God's favour, and those things which concern God's kingdom and glory. In contrast, the unregenerate prays chiefly and most heartily for corn and wine, for temporal things. It may be for heaven and happiness (with Balaam) in general wishes, but not particularly and unfeigned for grace to forsake their beloved sin, and to live holily unto the end of their days.

Thirdly, the prayers of the godly, when they are made in sincerity, are like all of their other good works; they have a supernatural goodness in them, being acts of the regenerate through the Spirit, and are performed to a supernatural end. In contrast, the prayers of the wicked, though in some ways unfeigned, at best are but natural desires, not intended as a service to God, but only as a means to serve themselves in those things which they know can be obtained by no other means. Now as to the acceptance of prayers with God, those which His children make, though they are not without much imperfection, because they are the prayers of men reconciled to God by Christ, and proceed from hearts purified by faith, and because they are in the name of Christ, become acceptable through Him, so far as to procure not only temporal good things, but also spiritual and eternal.

---

---

### THE CARNAL MIND

*By John Owen (1616-1683)*

---

The carnal mind is not only an enemy, for so possibly some reconciliation of it unto God might be made, but it is enmity itself, and not capable of accepting any terms of peace. Enemies may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. Yes, the only way to reconcile enemies is to destroy the enmity. So the apostle in another case tells us, we who were enemies are reconciled unto God (see Rom. 5. 10). That is a work compassed and brought about by the blood of Christ, the reconciling of the greatest enemies. But when he comes to speak of enmity, there is no way for it, but it must be abolished and destroyed: "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity" (Eph. 2. 15). There is no way to deal with any enmity whatever, but by its abolition or destruction.

And this also lies in it, as it is enmity, that every part and parcel of it, if we may so speak, the least degree of it that can possibly remain in anyone, whilst, and where there is anything of its nature, is enmity still. It may not be so effectual and powerful in operation as where it has more life and vigour, but it is enmity still. As every drop of poison is poison, and will infect, and every spark of fire is fire, and will burn, so is everything of the law of sin, the last, the least of it; it is enmity; it will poison, it will burn. That which is anything in the abstract is still so whilst it hath any being at all.

Our apostle, who may well be supposed to have made as great a progress in the subduing of it as anyone on the earth, yet after all cries out for deliverance, as from an irreconcilable enemy (see Rom. 7. 24). The meanest acting, the meanest and most imperceptible working of it,

is the acting and working of enmity. Mortification abates its force, but does not change its nature. Grace changes the nature of man, but nothing can change the nature of sin. Whatever effect be wrought upon it, there is no effect wrought in it, but that is enmity still, sin still. Thus, then, by it is our state and condition. "God is love" (1 John 4. 8). He is so in Himself, eternally excellent and desirable above all. He is so to us; He is so in the blood of His Son, and in all the inexpressible fruits of it, by which we are what we are, and wherein all our future hopes and expectations are wrapped up. Against this God we carry about us an enmity, all our days; an enmity that has this, from its nature, that it is incapable of cure or reconciliation. Destroyed it may be, it shall be, but cured it cannot be.

If a man have an enemy to deal with that is too mighty for him, as David had with Saul, he may take the course that he did, consider what it is that provoked his enemy against him, and so address himself to remove the cause and make up his peace. "If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let Him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD" (1 Sam. 26. 19). Come it from God or man, there is yet hope of peace. But when a man has enmity itself to deal withal, nothing is to be expected but continual fighting to the destruction of the one party. If it be not overcome and destroyed, it will overcome and destroy the soul.

And here lies no small part of its power which we are enquiring after; it can admit of no terms of peace, of no composition. There may be a composition where there is no reconciliation. There may be a truce where there is no peace. But with this enemy we can obtain neither the one nor the other. It is never quiet, conquering nor conquered, which was the only kind of enemy of whom the famous warrior complained, of old. It is in vain for a man to have any expectation of rest from his lust, but by its death; of absolute freedom, but by his own. Some in the tumultuating of their corruptions, seek for quietness by labouring to satisfy them, "making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," as the apostle speaks (see Rom. 13. 14). This is to slake fire by wood and oil. As all the fuel in the world, all the fabric of the creation that is combustible, being cast into the fire, will not at all satisfy it, but increase it, so is it with satisfaction given to sin by sinning, it does but inflame and increase.

If a man will part with some of his goods unto an enemy, it may satisfy him; but enmity will have all, and is not one whit more satisfied than if he had received nothing at all, like the lean cattle that were never the less hungry, for having devoured the fat. You cannot bargain with the fire to take but so much of your houses; you have no way but to quench it. It is in this case as it is in the contest between a wise man and

a fool, “whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest” (Prov. 29. 9). Whatever frame or temper he be in, his importunate folly makes him troublesome. It is so with this indwelling sin, whether it rage or laugh, whether it violently tumultuate, as it will do on provocations and temptations, it will be outrageous in the soul, or whether it seem to be pleased and contented to be satisfied, all is one, there is no peace, no rest to be had with it, or by it. Had it then been of any other nature, some other way might have been fixed on, but being it consists in enmity, all the relief the soul has must lie in its ruin.

---

---

### GOD IN CHRIST RECEIVING SINNERS

*Extract from a letter by Thomas Charles (1755-1814)*

---

I have at last arrived at a degree of certainty as to two points in religion:

First, that I am altogether a sinner, loaded with unworthiness, a fit companion, every moment of my life, for the poor publican (I love his name), or to the poor woman that was a sinner. I look upon the ground on which they stood, often with no small degree of delight. With them I would wish to spend my days, and as they did, so should I upon that ground conquer all my guilt, sin, the world and the devil. I am convinced that it is the only ground on which we can conquer and thrive.

The second point of which I am certain is, that God receiveth sinners, *as such*, and that therefore, as such, I may go to Him and am welcome at all times to go to Him. This last point is the very life of the little religion I have. Often blind, obdurate, unbelieving, sensual and devilish, yet I am no more nor less than a sinner, and as such, God receives and relieves me. There is a new and living way consecrated for us. We have boldness or full liberty to enter, and we have a great High Priest, not only *in* but *over* the house of God.

Since all these things are so graciously ordered by infinite mercy on our behalf, let us draw near in full assurance of faith. I repeat it again, that all my life and comfort depend on this point; yes, the strength of every grace, and the defeat of every enemy, are continually derived from this one source. With this point in view, the moment I am a sinner, I am with God, and my relief comes, lusts and temptations are subdued, comfort is freely communicated, and holiness is transferred through all the powers of the soul. Gospel holiness will never thrive, God will be never pleased, and Christ will be never glorified, on any other ground. What a stupid being I have been! Eight and twenty years I have made some sort of profession, yet after all these years, I have in a great degree

to learn what it is to be a sinner, at least, to live in that spirit, and to commune with God in that frame of mind. I do most earnestly pray the Holy Spirit to teach me that lesson better. I think, with some degree of assurance, that He does and will hear me.

I hope if we live to meet each other again in this world, we shall greatly rejoice together in the free and full salvation of the gospel for sinners. It is the only remedy to heal all our diseases, to wash away all the filthy stains of sin. His people are sinners, and He saves them from their sins. As sinners, let us have much to do with Him, and never rest till we are filled with all the fulness of Christ. Every new year must be a happy one, while we live thus as sinners with and upon Christ, and whether they be few or many, will be of no great consequence. May you and I begin and end every year with, and in dependance upon, the dear Redeemer, till at last we finish our course with joy.

Bala, January 6th, 1798

---

---

## THE SOURCE AND CERTAINTY OF PROMISES TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

*By Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)*

---

A promise is nothing but a manifestation of love, an intendment of bestowing some good, and removing some evil from us. A declaring of a man's free engagement in this kind is a promise. It always comes from love in the party promising, and conveys goodness to the believing soul. Now what love can there be in God to us since the Fall, which must not be grounded on a better foundation than ourselves? If God love us, it must be in one that is first beloved. Hereupon comes the ground of the promises to be in Jesus Christ. All intercourse between God and us must be in Him that is able to satisfy God for us. The almighty Creator will have our debts discharged before He enters into a covenant of peace with us.

Now this Christ hath perfectly done, and thereby reconciled lost sinners. Hereupon the promise immediately issues from God's love in Christ to believing souls. He must first receive all good for us, and we must have it at the second hand from Him. The promises in Christ are as the spirits in the body. They run through all the ages of the church. Without Him there is no mercy nor comfort to be had. God cannot look on this cursed nature of ours out of Christ; and therefore whosoever apprehends any mercy from God, he must apprehend it in Christ, the promised seed. To make it clearer. Our nature since the Fall is odious

to God; a sinful, cursed nature remains in the best of us; and therefore that God may look peaceably upon it, He must look upon it in Him that hath it undefiled, and in Him whom He loves, even His only Son, like unto Himself, that hath taken our nature upon Him.

Now, our nature in Christ must needs be lovely and acceptable; and if ever God love us, it is for Christ alone, who was predestinated before all worlds to be a sacrifice for us, to be the Head of His church (see 1 Pet. 1. 2). He was ordained to do us good before we ourselves were ordained. Christ is the first Beloved, and then we. God loves us in His beloved One. "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1. 11). As if the Lord had said, I am pleased in Him, and in all His; in His whole mystical body. Christ is the Son of God by nature, we by adoption. Whatever good is in us is first and principally in Him. God conveys all by the natural\* Son to the adopted sons. Therefore, all the promises are made to us in Christ. He takes them from God for us. He Himself is the first promise, and all are yea and amen in Him. They are not directed to us abstracted from Him; but we are elected in Christ, sanctified in Him, acquitted from sin through Him. "With His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5). If Christ had not satisfied the wrath of God by bearing our iniquities upon the cross, we had been liable every moment to condemnation. If He had not been free from our sins, we had for ever lain under the burden of them. "You are yet in your sins," saith Paul, "if Christ be not raised" (1 Cor. 15. 17). We are freed from our debts, because Christ our Surety is out of prison. He is in heaven, and therefore we are at liberty.

The promises are a deed of gift which we have from and by Christ, who is the first Object of all the respect that God hath to us. Why are the angels attendants on us? Because they attend upon Jacob's ladder, that is, upon Christ, that knits heaven and earth together. So that the angels, because they attend upon Christ first, become likewise our attendants. We have a promise of "eternal life," but "this life is in His Son" (1 John 5. 11). God blesses us with all spiritual blessings in Him (see Eph. 1. 3), and makes us sons in Him the natural Son. Whatsoever prerogative we enjoy, it is in Christ first, and so belongs to us; but no further than we by faith are made one with Him. How darest thou think of God, who is a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 29), and not think of Him as He is pleased and pacified with thy person in Christ, who took thy nature upon Him, to be a foundation of comfort, and a second Adam; a public Person, satisfying divine justice for all that are members of His body?

We may think upon God with comfort, when we see Him appeared in His Christ. As long as He loves Christ, He cannot but love us. Never

---

\* That is, "Son of His nature," not at all in the modern sense of "natural."

think to have grace, or salvation, or anything without Christ. Doth God love me? Doth He do good to my soul for my own sake, abstracted from His Son? No, surely. Then should I fly from His presence. But He looks upon me in His Beloved, and in Him accepts of my person. Therefore our Saviour prayeth, "I desire Thee, blessed Father, that the love wherewith Thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them" (see John 17. 26).

This should direct us in our dealing with God, not to go directly to Him, but by a promise. And when we have a promise, look to Christ, in whom it is performed. If we ask anything of God in Christ's name, He will give it us (see John 14. 13). If we thank God for anything, thank Him in Christ, that we have it in Him. What a comfort is this, that we may go to God in Christ and claim the promises boldly, because He loves us with the same love He bears to His only beloved Son. If we get fast hold on Christ, and cleave there, God can as soon alter His love to Him as alter His love to us; His love is every whit as unchangeable to a believing member, as to Christ the Head of the body. The promises are as sure as the love of God in Christ is, upon which they are founded, and from which nothing can separate us (see Rom. 8. 35). For promises being the fruit of God's love, and God's love being founded first upon Christ, it must needs follow that all the promises are both made and made good to us through Him.

If a prince should love a man, and his love should be founded upon the love he bears to his own son, surely such a one may have comfort: that love will never fail him, because it is an affection natural, and therefore unalterable. He will always love his son, and therefore will always delight in him in whom his son delighteth. Now Christ is the everlasting Son of the Father – His dear and only Son, in whom He is ever well pleased, and through whom He cannot be offended with those that are His. So surely as God loves Christ, so surely He loves all that are united to Him. There is nothing in the world can separate His love from His own Son; neither is there anything able to separate His love from us that are one with Him (see Rom. 8. 35). God loves Christ's mystical body, as well as His natural body. He hath advanced that to glory at His right hand in heaven; and will He, think you, leave His mystical body, the church, in a state of abasement here on earth? No certainly. God loves every member of His Son, for as He gave us to Christ, so Him hath He sealed and anointed to be a Saviour for His people.

This is the reason why God looks upon us with a forbearing eye, notwithstanding the continual matter of displeasure He finds in us. He looks on us in His Son; His love to us is grounded on His love to Christ.

And hereupon comes our boldness with God the Father, that we can go to Him in all distresses with comfort, and say, Lord, look on Thy Son whom Thou hast given for us, and in Him behold His poor members now before Thee. In ourselves we have dread, but in Thy dearly Beloved we have joy in Thy presence. If we come in the garments of our elder Brother, we are sure to get a blessing; but in ourselves, God cannot endure to behold us. If we bring Benjamin to our father, if we carry Christ along with us, then come and welcome.

---

---

### IN THE HAND OF A MEDIATOR

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

---

“In the hand of a Mediator” (Gal. 3. 19).

The hand of a Mediator was the great blessing every enlightened son of Adam, from the Fall, sighed after, and looked for in every approach to God. Hence the first transgressor, for the want of it, hid himself from the presence of God, amidst the trees of the garden. Hence Israel cried out to Moses, “Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say”; “but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” And Job longed for a Daysman, that is, a Mediator, that might lay His hand upon both parties (see Job 9. 33).

See then, my soul, thy privileges; for thou hast a Mediator, and a glorious One indeed, in whose almighty hand all thy concerns are eternally secured. “Ye are come,” saith the apostle; he doth not say, ye are *coming*, but, ye are *come*, “to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.” O then, in all thy approaches, have an eye to Jesus. Put all thine affairs into this glorious Mediator’s hand. Remember, He wears thy nature, pleads thy cause, takes up all thy concerns, and ever liveth to make intercession for sinners; and therefore, cast all thy care upon Him, for He careth for thee. And look to this one grand thing – that all thy confidence, and all thy joy, ariseth wholly from Jesus’ Person and righteousness, not from any supposed graces, tears, repentance – nor even from faith itself, if viewed as an act of thine. Cast aside, as filthy rags, all that is thine, and never, no not for a moment, look at anything as a procuring cause, but let Jesus have all thy confidence, all the glory, and thou wilt have all the comfort. Though Satan accuse, though conscience pleads guilty, God’s broken law pronounceth condemnation, and justice demands the penalty, Jesus hath answered all, and is on the throne to see the issue. O the blessedness of having all in the hands of a Mediator!



## EARLY EXPERIENCE OF F.L. GOSDEN

---

Frank Luther Gosden was born on August 5th, 1890, the son of John and Mary Gosden of Brighton. It was a large family of thirteen brothers and sisters, ten of whom lived to adult life. The eldest son was John Hervey Gosden, the well-known minister and editor of the *Gospel Standard* (1935-64).

Frank had won a scholarship to York Place Grammar School at the age of twelve, but his father would not permit him to reap the full benefit of it, and removed him from school as soon as permissible, putting him to learn the grocery trade, very much against his own inclinations. Of this period of his life he writes:

“At Burgess Hill my mind was open to receive any impression. There were three distinct influences in that business house. The first most corrupt and pernicious; another religious; and a third that of the housekeeper, who attended the truth. The first two suited my carnal mind, and in looking back to that time, how clearly I see that a natural religion is compatible with living in sin! Being passionately fond of music, I was much encouraged by the Congregationalists. (The remembrance of this makes me suspicious of musical talent in the services.) This social religion was as whitewash covering the sepulchre within. When natural conscience accused, a notion of universal charity excused. So I continued ignorant of both God and myself.

“After some time I was very alarmed by the death of a lad about my own age. The terror of death and eternity so possessed my mind that I could find no relief. Guilt and condemnation followed me and my health began to decline. Miss P. (the housekeeper) became concerned, and by her kindness, I was brought more immediately under her influence and began to attend the chapel in Park Road. I proved, however, that:

‘Not all the outward forms on earth,  
Nor rites that God has given,  
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,  
Can raise a soul to heaven.’ (H. 190)

“I made a sincere and determined attempt at self-reformation, but proved that ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh,’ so that I could not rise above its level. Truly the law worketh wrath. My heart rose in awful rebellion against the sovereignty of God: ‘Why hast Thou made me thus?’

“About 1910 I went to live at Ardingly, and hoped if possible to throw off every kind of yoke. Mr. S. was an upright, good-living man – a Congregationalist. I began to attend with him that denomination. Their kindness, music and tolerance strengthened my enmity against the austerity of divine sovereignty. A student from a London College took

for his text on a memorable Lord's day: 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy' (Rom. 9. 16), but being unable to do anything with it, he gave it up. But it did not give *me* up! I seemed ground between my own guilt and helplessness and the justice of an angry God. My 'willing' and 'running,' having brought me to felt despair, hid the last part of the text from my view: 'But of God that sheweth mercy.'

"Walking the lonely road one dark evening, there came into my troubled heart a strange influence. I was brought to this conclusion, that what I needed was salvation, a *free* salvation. Coming to a lamp post, I took out Gadsby's hymnbook and opened on number 331:

'Beset with snares on every hand,  
In life's uncertain path I stand;  
Saviour divine, diffuse Thy light,  
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.'

"The Lord made that hymn the prayer of my heart, and mercifully diffused His light, giving repentance and godly sorrow. My prayer poured out before Him and like Jonah's, I felt it 'came in unto Thee, into Thy holy temple.'

"Then I understood the last part of the text referred to: 'But of God that sheweth mercy.' The law of the Spirit of life in Christ made me free from the law of sin and death. A new song was in my mouth; the very trees seemed to clap their hands.

"In 1914 I joined the army. When in France, the Lord kindly remembered that I was but dust, covered my head in the day of battle and granted me to 'go forth ... unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.' He enabled me in a little measure to honour Him before men. While in France, where there were no means of grace and none of His people (at least none that I came into contact with), He drew me near to Himself. During the whole of 1916 He favoured me; He enabled me to seek Him and often to find Him. I believe that my experience, through His rich mercy at that time, is expressed by Jeremiah: 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.'

"In October 1916 when, through exposure, my health began to fail, before I was invalided home, in reading Psalm 91, I felt the loving-kindness of the Lord and a desire to be brought back to meet again among His people. And I made a vow that if the Lord brought me safely back, I would, as He might so enable me, walk in the ordinances of His house.

"At the same time as I made my vow, the *thought* of preaching entered into my mind. I want you to take particular notice of this; the *thought* of preaching entered into my mind. Do not set any more value

upon that than is due, because under those peculiar circumstances (when the Lord had, as I believe, pitied me even as a father pitieth his children), it is quite likely that many might have had such thoughts come into their mind.

"I will not call it the commencement of *exercise* with respect to the ministry, but the *thought* began there.

"I came home, and in 1918 I was enabled to pay my vow. The friends asked me if I would speak at the prayer meetings, which at that time were very well attended. In the first place I refused, but on one occasion when our late dear friend, Mr. Nicholls, senior, asked me if I would speak, I told him I could not; I had never spoken. In the middle of that prayer meeting he called upon me. I read the 1008th hymn,

"Come, Holy Spirit, calm my mind,  
And fit me to approach my God,"

and then tried to speak in prayer. I believe the Lord there blessed me and gave me access and communion with Him.

"As time went on, in 1919 it was proposed to erect at Ticehurst a cross in memory of those who fell in the war, and Mr. Cooper asked me if I would collect for that purpose, which I immediately consented to do. On my way home there came upon my spirit an exceedingly solemn consideration with respect to the cross of Christ. It had an effect which I shall never forget; so much so that I felt it impossible to collect for such a thing which was to be erected for the glory of men who fell in the war. Meditation upon the cross of Christ continued, and that night I awoke with a peculiar, solemn influence around the room and in my heart. Being just awake, I wondered what it meant. Then a sense of guilt, an apprehension, a solemn consideration as things were brought to my mind; without any mental effort, it seemed as though every wrong thought, every questionable act, all that I was possessed of and had ever committed in a way of sin, was brought before me. I became enveloped in a cloud and indwelt with a sense of guilt. But as I seemed almost threatened to be engulfed, the cross of Christ was brought before my faith, and as I seemed filled with conviction of sin, there came upon my spirit a power, a sacred power to confess, and a spirit of repentance. Without any mental effort my whole soul seemed as it were to begin to empty itself into the Person of Christ, and the cloud which had enveloped me and the darkness and the guilt I had felt seemed sensibly to remove and the Sun of Righteousness arose in my heart with healing in His wings. As sin was thus emptied out of my conscience, the sensible relief was as if an inflamed boil had been lanced; my whole soul was relieved. I lay with the peace of God in my conscience, which indeed passed all understanding. And I said to the Lord, 'Is there any more, Lord? Search

me, let nothing be left.’ It seemed such a complete emptying until I was enabled to say in such a measure as I have never been able to say since, ‘I’m clean, just God I’m clean!’

“The influence of that blessed experience lasted for some few days, and it seems that it was reflected somewhat in prayer. The people began to express their opinion with respect to my having the ministry on my mind. At that time, as I went about the shop, the Scriptures were unfolded to me and, mysteriously, this did not interfere at all with my work. But alas, in such an atmosphere, with a carnal mind, these things did not abide long! In this climate, this south wind, there is much pride mixed, as I now view it, much that was of the flesh.

“About this time, a godly friend ventured to write to me upon the matter of the ministry. When I received that letter, it filled my spirit with an awe and guilt, for I felt that there was much in my profession that was of the flesh and pride. That letter caused me to tremble lest I had by some vile manipulation deceived the people and caused them to think of me more highly than they ought to think; and it brought me into great trouble. Soon after this, the deacon at Flimwell, Sussex, asked Mr. Nicholls about me, and wrote asking me to come to Flimwell. This brought such darkness and trouble and anguish into my spirit, that I feared I was about to bring myself into such a solemn place that would leave me marked as a deceiver for the rest of my life. Mr. N. came to see me and I observed in his face a gravity, a solemnity. That was a solemn time to us both, for darkness had come upon me and he also feared, and we feared together. There was an awe in that front room. I might say that since that time, Mr. N. has been kept exceedingly tender and exercised with regard to this; he has felt the weight and solemnity of it, and the Lord has kept him tender in His fear. That was the end of what I might call the first phase in those matters that have led up to this meeting.

“In the midst of this solemn state of mind, the Lord permitted to spring up in my fallen heart such enmity and rebellion against His providence, that I determined to make a fresh start with regard to the things of this life. It was a time when things in my department were getting very slow in the country. I was required to do things which my pride considered I was above doing, and my heart rose up against it so much that, feeling the terrible state of my spirit, I trembled, yet could not extricate myself. I was determined to get away from these parts and once more turn my energies to business to make things more prosperous temporally. Knowing a commercial traveller who had left his position on the road, I wrote to Father that I thought it was time that I began to do something different and better for myself, and mentioned this particular vacancy. My heart was lifted up still more, and I planned what we

should do, where we should go, the better house we should have, etc. Then I was required to take a grocery journey on a pedal bicycle, much against my pride, and my rebellion was such that I hardly knew how to make a call or how to take an order.

"I went into a field to have some dinner, threw my bicycle against the hedge, and, having no paper to read, casually took out of my pocket a *Gospel Standard*. There I read the account of Harold Dunk of The Dicker, his last end. The Lord broke my heart. I felt it thaw as sensibly as butter before the fire. He gave me to see eternity; He gave me to consider the things of Christ. Instead of rebuking me, He allured me, gave me to meditate upon Christ's things and to consider the inferiority of the things of time compared with eternity. My difficulty then was to call on people because of a broken heart. With this blessing came again the thought of preaching; and so it continued, sometimes more, sometimes less, and sometimes not at all. Although I had said nothing to the friends, they continued to feel concerned toward me with reference to the ministry.

"To come down to the end of what I might call the second phase of this solemn matter, one day at the Wadhurst town chapel when there was no minister, Mr. N. said, 'Do you feel you can speak?' I said, 'No, I feel that to read a sermon would be more profitable to the people and more for the honour of God.' One friend gave out hymn 812, 'Whene'er I make some sudden stop,' which so entered into my very being, especially the last verse,

'He is my Helper and my Guide;  
I trust in Him alone;  
No other helps have I beside;  
I venture all on One,'

that I found when the time came, I was not myself, and I ventured to speak.

"After that I was asked from time to time to speak, but felt it too great a matter, and I declined, declined, declined. But I ventured again at the town chapel, and it seems that one friend who was there, felt the unction of the truth. Then unwisely, as I think, though well-intentioned, the matter became public, and I began to receive invitations. Oh, the trouble. Oh, the heart-searching I had before God! The climax to that was this. At the special services at Heathfield, I was asked if I would take the services there on the following Lord's day. I declined, saying that I felt I needed something far clearer before I committed myself in that way. But it was felt that it was time, having spoken several times at home, so I said, 'Well, I must leave it with you; but if I feel anything definite that the Lord's hand is against it, then I shall have to act

accordingly.’ It was announced that I should be there. Friday night that same week I retired to bed well as usual, but when I awoke on Saturday I was fixed, could not move my neck an inch, had to look at one place on the wall. My wife tied on the bed a rope for me to pull myself up, but the pain was so excruciating that I fell back exhausted and practically fainting. There was the Lord’s day before me. I had to write explaining, and our dear friend Mr. Jempson also went over to Heathfield to explain the case to them. But instead of rebellion and hardness of heart, I fell before the Lord submissive to His will.

“Things continued thus. We had much difficulty in getting ministers suitable for the pulpit. Friends at Shovers Green desired me to give an address. At first I declined, then ventured for one service. According to the testimony of some of the godly, the Word has been profitable to them. What brought the matter to a climax and led immediately to this meeting was this. On August Monday Mr. Croft spoke from Daniel, last verse: ‘But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.’ In the early part of that chapter Daniel said, ‘What shall be the end of these things?’ I know the things to which he referred were different from the trouble I was in, but I had asked the same question with regard to this heavy matter: ‘What shall be the end of these things?’ So I felt that if I were helped the next Lord’s day and any friend was really profited, and should Mr. N. say anything about it, I could not refuse a meeting. That is the only reason why I consented to this meeting.

“I must leave it. I do desire that a right conclusion by God Himself may be the result. But I would emphasise what I began with, and may the Holy Ghost, as it were, set the balances of the sanctuary in your consciences. I do trust that what I have spoken is the truth as before Him. But there is that vital fact which I feel I must emphasise – put that in the scale on one side – the darkness I have felt this fortnight, and His silence in trying to seek a word from the Lord. In your consideration of this tremendous matter, let that be put fairly in one scale of the balances; and if that outweighs the other, may the Lord enable you to fear Him, so that His will alone may be done and not ours.”



One sin may have many sins in it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and say it is but a little one. How many sins were there in Adam’s sin! O take heed of any sin! As in one volume there may be many works bound up, so there may be many sins in one sin.

*Thomas Watson*

## TO LOVE CHRIST

*By Thomas Vincent (1634-1678)*

---

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1. 8).

This Jesus Christ whom Christians love, is the eternal Son of God, the second Person in the glorious Trinity, who in time assumed our human nature, clothed Himself with our mortal flesh, lived like a servant in a mean condition, died like a malefactor the cursed death of the cross, and all for our sakes, for our sins, rose the third day for our justification, ascended up into heaven after forty days, and there is set down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high, to make intercession for us, and to make preparation there for our reception into the glorious mansions and eternal habitations, which are in the Father’s house. He is called “Jesus,” from the Hebrew word *yeshua*, which signifies “to save,” because He “shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1. 21). He is called Christ from the Greek word *christos*, which signifies to anoint, He being anointed by the Father with the Spirit and with power, to be Mediator between God and man, to be the great Prophet, and Priest, and King of the church. This Jesus Christ Christians have not seen with the eye of sense; indeed some Christians in the primitive times, as the apostles, who were of His family, and other disciples who conversed with Him frequently, did see Christ with the eye of sense, but it was in His state of humiliation, when He was here upon the earth, and not in His state of exaltation now in heaven. It is this Jesus Christ whom Christians have not seen, that is the Object of their love.

---

## BOOK REVIEW

**A Call to the Church in the Pandemic**, by David Campbell, pastor of the Edinburgh congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland; 217 pages; £8.50 plus postage; published by Ettrick Press and available from their website, [ettrickpress.co.uk](http://ettrickpress.co.uk), or 98 The Brow, Brighton, BN2 6LN.

In the days of godly King Edward VI, John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, and Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, seemed separated by relatively-minor differences. When they were both imprisoned and then later martyred for their faith during the reign of Queen Mary, they found a gracious union in the truth where lesser things could be laid aside and they could walk in love together as brethren. Over the last year or more, God has been pleased to bring the nations of the earth into distress by the Covid 19 pandemic, from which many have died, and the restrictions brought upon the churches, such as have never been known before, have caused much searching of heart among Christians. This book is one which has been published as a result, and one in which we feel many who are graciously exercised concerning the Lord’s voice to us in this

pandemic will find much profit. When the Lord's ways search our hearts, when we are called to bow before God's sovereignty and to ask the question, "Lord, is it I?" we find union with others of the Lord's people with whom we may not see eye to eye on lesser things, but whom we can walk in communion with when brought together as broken-hearted sinners, looking and pleading for the Lord's merciful appearing and for the gracious power of His Holy Spirit.

The book consists of a series of addresses written for the author's congregation during the time of the first lockdown during March to June 2020, when the inability to gather together for public worship caused much sorrow. Chapters with such titles as "They have refused to return," "Enter into thy closet," "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry," "What is it that God hath done to us?" "The hiding place," will give a flavour of the subjects which deeply searched the author, and we believe will resonate with many of our readers too. May the Lord's blessing rest on this book, and may the circumstances which now distress us eventually prove to "have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. 1. 12).

John. A. Kingham, Luton

---

---

### THE SINNER'S WELCOME AT THE DOOR OF MERCY

---

Who is it knocks at mercy's door,  
And pleads on humble knee?  
A sinner, Lord, as vile and poor  
As ever came to Thee.

Say, what's the cause of all thy grief?  
What is it thou wouldst have?  
Lord, of all sinners I'm the chief,  
But such Thou cam'st to save.

My wants, my wounds, and wretchedness,  
Are all before Thine eye;  
O let Thy mercy meet my case,  
And every want supply.

I dare not plead before Thy face,  
That better days I've seen,  
Alas! I sprung from Adam's race,  
A leper all unclean.

Yet, as I passed beside Thy door,  
I saw it written there,  
The sinner wretched, blind or poor,  
Receives a welcome here.

Lo, such I come, and at Thy feet  
Receive Thy mercy free;  
O love untold! my soul repeat,  
Why me, O Lord, why me?

John Kent (1766-1843)



THE  
**GOSPEL STANDARD**  
AUGUST 2021

---

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

---

**JOSHUA: A TYPE OF CHRIST**

---

God's servant Joshua in several ways is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. His name is identical in meaning (Saviour), as is implied in both Acts 7. 45 and Hebrews 4. 8. He was one of the few people in holy Scripture, of whom we read no faults. That does not mean he did not need a Saviour – Joshua was well aware of that need – but of his great Anti-type, it was truly said: "I find no fault in this Man" (Luke 23. 4).

Joshua was the appointed man to bring the children of Israel into the Promised Land, something which Moses was not permitted to do, he being the type of the law, and Joshua of the gospel. To enter the Promised Land of the gospel, God's children must be dead to the law and the law must be dead to them. That is their hope in the covenant of works must be slain and they be unreservedly taught to rely on the covenant of grace of which Christ is the Mediator, He having satisfied and fulfilled all that the law could demand of them, thus cancelling any further claim. He, by His Spirit, leads His people into the land of the gospel. Thus, the words in Joshua 1. 2 have a deeper meaning than at first appears: "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to ... the children of Israel."

Joshua was God's appointed captain over Israel in their battles, so the Lord Jesus Christ is the Captain of our Salvation. Joshua was used of God to save Israel from its enemies in Canaan, so the Lord Jesus Christ is the Almighty Deliverer of the church. "That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1. 74, 75).

There is one incident right at the end of the life of this godly man, Joshua, which is rarely spoken of, in which Joshua is a close type of his glorious Namesake. In Joshua 24 he is exhorting the people before his death. In so doing he reminded them of the wonderful way the Lord had led them as a nation to possess what God had promised Abraham, so many generations before. He reminded them of the snare that idolatry had been in their history and knowing that the "Canaanites still dwelt in the land," warned them of their need to flee from idolatry and worship the one true and only God, Jehovah. He challenged them with the words

of verses 14 and 15: “Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And, if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

Although the people protested that they would serve the Lord, Joshua reminded them of the solemn truth, that “ye cannot serve the LORD” (24. 19). He knew that though God is perfectly just in demanding of us absolute and perfect obedience, yet because of the Fall, the fulfilling of this responsibility lies beyond our reach. He had been a sad witness of man’s failure in his long association with the children of Israel, and no doubt was just as aware of his own inability as a fallen sinner by nature. But he, relying on the God of all grace of whom it is said that He “is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor. 9. 8), looked to the Lord for all needed grace and help.

It may be asked then, in what way is Joshua a type of Christ in this respect?

As Joshua had a house, meaning his family and servants, so the Lord Jesus Christ has a house, His church. This sacred truth Paul takes up in Hebrews 3. 4-6: “For every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

The Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the church (His house), gives a precious promise which Joshua could not give to his house. Joshua’s determination was good, but though he exercised authority over his house, he could not give them grace; he could only as enabled set a good example before them. But Christ has said: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12. 9). In Psalm 110. 3 it is promised that Christ’s people shall be willing in the day of His power (see Psa. 110. 1-3).

The Lord Jesus Christ has not only left us an example that “we should follow His steps,” but has also suffered for His house (see 1 Pet. 2. 21). Thus, the fruit of Christ’s sufferings is a willing people serving Him. “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this” (Psa. 22. 30, 31). As Joshua was the head of his house, so Christ is the Head of the church,

and those who are favoured to be numbered in that house are made willing subjects to the authority of their heavenly Head.

So, Moses left Egypt, Ruth left Moab, and Rebekah uttered those well-known words: "I will go" when confronted with the challenge Joshua put to his generation: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Christ the Head of His house, His church, makes each of "the household of faith" willing in the day of His power.

The ultimate end that God, in Christ, has in view is to form a people for His praise in eternity to come. "Therefore" – because of the blood of Christ in which their robes are washed – "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" (Rev. 7. 15).

What a mercy that we, natural enemies to God and godliness, should be so wrought upon as to become part of Christ's house, and be brought to that perfect service above, where neither sin, Satan nor the world can ever hinder again! May God enable us to "hold the beginning of our confidence and rejoicing firm unto the end."

---

---

### WAR ON GOD AND THE BIBLE

*Sermon preached by J.K. Popham at Galeed, Brighton, on Lord's day morning, October 2nd, 1927. This sermon, preached almost one hundred years ago, is as relevant today, if not more so, than it was then. It was preached in response to blasphemous comments by the then Bishop of Birmingham who was a vociferous evolutionist and who denied both the virgin birth, and physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

---

**Text:** "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24).

How the world came into existence, whether by the immediate creating word of God, "Let there be," or by what is called evolution – with this we are brought face to face. How man came to exist, whether according to Genesis, "And God said, Let Us make man," or whether there has been a development, a growth covering millions of years, so that from a bit of jelly (protoplasm) we have risen and risen and developed and come to be what we are today – is a question that is openly propounded, and I feel it behoves every minister called by grace and sent to preach, to set the trumpet to his mouth and blow an alarm with regard to these things.

"Science falsely so called," as the Apostle Paul speaks, is now very loud in its utterances and has become most daring in its opposition to

God. It starts, of course, with cutting away from us the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture. That inspiration is denied, and when a man denies the inspiration of this Book, he is at once adrift, and where he will go, how he will end, rests with God. The state today of this nation and of the whole world is terrible, and no wonder that the name of God no longer inspires reverence; no wonder that the inspired writers are regarded as ignorant men and as writing accordingly, and that Jesus Himself is accused of being a Jew speaking under the influence of Jewish prejudices. For there being no inspiration, there can be no proper regard for the Bible and no belief attaching to the writings.

And for you, my dear friends, especially for you young people, I have a strong feeling of sympathy. What God is to do with this nation is not for me to say, but we have this before us: "Shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" He has given us in this our beloved nation the greatest of blessings – the gift of the Reformation founded on His holy Word. He gave a race of ministers mighty in the Scriptures. But the Reformation is now forgotten or derided, and the Reformers and Puritans, mighty in the Scriptures, have passed away, and we are in an exceedingly-low condition.

Now as I see these things, there is a war being made on God and His inspired Word. Men in high places, religious teachers, are not afraid to speak of Him as if He were one of themselves, and of His Word as in parts unhistorical, contrary to fact, and therefore not to be relied on. Against this unbelieving attitude I speak to you, however feebly, and I take up the following positions:

1. First, I start with this, that *this Bible is inspired*, that it contains what the apostle speaks of to Timothy – "all Scripture," and that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." What is signified by inspiration is stated thus by Scripture itself: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1. 21). That is, the penmen of this Book were so instructed by the Holy Ghost as to express the very words of God; not to write in their own words the thoughts suggested to them, but to write the words given them (see 2 Sam. 23. 2; Acts 1. 16). And truly if they were, as the anti-Scripturist says, "ignorant men," how necessary was it that they should have the very words given them to write and not be left to express thoughts in their own language! Who could depend on the Bible if it were but a transcription of thoughts, and the words left to the choice of the writers? Here we stand this morning: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" – may we never despise doctrine; "for reproof" – God grant we may never turn our ears from reproof; "for correction, for instruction in righteousness" – how a man should live and how a sinner should be

made righteous – “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

2. My second position is, that *the infinite God created heaven and earth* and all that therein is, and the sea and all that is therein; that He rules in heaven and earth; that there is nothing hid from His gaze, nothing free from His control, nothing moving of itself absolutely; that God is “God only wise,” the “I AM THAT I AM.”

3. My third position is, that this God did for about thirty-three years walk on the earth in our own nature; that *the Man Jesus is this God and that He is now in heaven in that same nature*, even our own nature. And this God speaks in our text and says to His enemies: “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”

Now we are brought face to face with two facts, namely, God speaks, and there are men who speak against Him and against His Word. You cannot open your newspaper today without seeing that His name, His Word, His work, His glory are trampled under foot; and you, with myself, must more or less perceive that there is an imminent danger to us if we are left at all to receive the things which are taught by them of the Scriptures. Between us, as we hope, believers in the Word and in the Being of God, and the scientist preaching his “science falsely so called,” there is a great gulf. He cuts this Book away as to its inspiration; we believe it to be inspired. He derides creation work; we believe in it. He says we men have always ascended and are ascending. We say we descended in the Fall terribly; that man was made by the immediate operation of God in the image of God, his body formed out of the dust and his soul breathed into that body, so he became an immortal person, “a living soul.” Sin has destroyed the life of the soul, but not the immortality of its being; and the life of the body is destroyed but for a time, for the day is coming when God will raise the bodies of both the righteous and the wicked. I say, there is a great gulf between us and those who deny the inspiration of Scripture and its testimony.

Now this Man who walked on the earth a poor Man, a broken-hearted Man, but a Teacher, an anointed Preacher of righteousness (see Isa. 61. 1), having the law of God in His heart (see Psa. 40. 8) which He came to obey and fulfil – *this Man is the only begotten Son of God, and He is the Word*. You will find the same Person is spoken of as the Creator. In the first chapter of Genesis you read: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” In his gospel the Apostle John says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” In the Hebrews the apostle says, “God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He

hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” And of the same Person it is said, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” And again: “No man hath seen God at any time” – that is just what the Lord said to Moses, “There shall no man see Me, and live” – “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

His oneness with the Father, and therefore His eternity, are expressed in this gospel by the Lord Jesus Himself. When answering Philip’s request, “Shew us the Father,” He said, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” – we are so one, one in nature, only distinguished in Person; so one that you cannot see Me without seeing the Father. The question of apprehending and seeing Them both is another question which belongs to experience, but the fact, the truth, is that you cannot see Jesus Christ without seeing His eternal Father. And the Spirit is in Them both and proceeds from Them both.

Now it is a convenient point here for me to ask you and myself, Have we seen God in the Man Christ Jesus? Do not forget that in Scripture it is recorded that the Jews constantly opposed Him. They saw Him, and did not see Him; they heard Him and did not understand His words. They perverted and wrested them, and of Him they said, “He hath a devil.” They said He was “a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!” If you have a different, a right opinion of Him, if I have; if instead of regarding Him as a mere man, as an evil man and an evil-doer, we see Him to be almighty God, what monuments of grace we are! The badger’s skin of His sacred humanity, if I may use the word here, covers the glorious Person of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father. We believe that this great Being, eternal, on whom all things hang as it is written, “Upholding all things by the word of His power,” the eternal Son of God, was made Man by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost; that He was “made of a woman, made under the law.” So that when we read of the Lord Jesus, we read of almighty God in our nature. Unitarians say we worship a man; but if you have ever seen the eternal Deity that is in the Man Christ Jesus, you then saw and worshipped God in that Man, that He was and is the I AM THAT I AM who created heaven and earth. Though complex, His Person is one. The naked rays of Deity, the beams which would have been unbearable to us, are bearable in Him. Do we believe it? “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”

4. My next position is, that this Person speaking in the text, the almighty God, the I AM, “the Lion of the tribe of Juda,” the “Lamb as it had been slain,” *rules in heaven and earth*. Yes; you, myself, and all

creatures are under His eye, His control, His guidance. The Apostle John saw into heaven and heard a voice saying, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" The book was in the hand of the Father, and had regard to the covenant of grace and all the arrangements of that covenant. Who is worthy to approach the Father and take out of His hand that book which is sealed with seven seals? And John said there was found no man worthy to do it, and he wept. But an elder said to him, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda ... hath prevailed to open the book." And John said, "I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne ... stood a Lamb as it had been slain," and He approached His Father whose equal He was, and took the book, being worthy, and He loosed the seals and looked therein.

Then began the dispensation that is continued to this day, and will continue to the end of time. The seven seals were opened, and as you read in that wonderful Book of Revelation, different providences occurred – storms, earthquakes, thunders, lightnings, evils, scorching fire, all kinds of preserving providences over the church and judgments on her enemies. May we not disregard them. *They occurred as the Son of God loosed and opened the seals.* Then the trumpets were blown and the vials were poured out. Since that day, I say, there have been the trumpets sounded and the vials one by one poured out. How near are we to that word – or are we right in the midst of it? – that after the sixth vial was poured out there came from the bottomless pit three unclean spirits like frogs? "They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world" (Rev. 16. 13, 14). Very solemn! And men today, religious teachers, hold doctrines of devils which are coming forth from their lips.

5. My next position is this – *Do we believe that the glorious Person in heaven who approached the Father and took the book out of His hand, and who today is ruling in heaven and in earth, is the Speaker in the text, the Man Christ Jesus?* Very solemn it is to be under His control. Do not forget what He said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword"; "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?" Things are just working out according to divine determination (see Eph. 1. 11). God said to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity ... between thy seed and her Seed," the Seed of the woman. And Jesus said, "I am come to send fire on the earth"; "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law," and so on. And His word is being fulfilled. Do you believe in the Person who rules in heaven and earth,

the Man Christ Jesus? Do you believe this Book was inspired and that all that is here is true, that Jesus is fulfilling the very prophecies, the predictions therein, in the awful things that are now taking place? “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”

6. But why did He come forth, what brought Him to the earth, what made Him “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”? The Holy Ghost has told us this great mystery. It is said by Paul that *His Father “made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.”* The evangelical prophet Isaiah tells us the same thing: “The Lord hath laid on Him” – made to meet in Him – “the iniquity of us all.” He stooped, this Jesus stooped, coming from His Father’s bosom, and He came into this world to have His people’s sins laid on Him that He might bear them away, as the goat for the sacrifice for sin, and as the scapegoat to carry it away into the land of forgetfulness, the same Person answering to both these types.

It is an amazing thing to see Almighty God sighing human breath, to believe that the Lord of life experienced death. And if we believe it not, we shall die in our sins. The same Person who created the world, who made man, who rules now in heaven and earth – that same Person incarnate is before us in Holy Scripture as “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Having taken on Him all the responsibilities and debts and guilt of His people, He must bear them and receive into His human soul and body everything that was due to them as sinners. He must be dealt with as if He Himself were a sinner, because the sins of His people were imputed to Him. This is a cardinal doctrine; there is no salvation but in it, and no experimental salvation but by believing it. You will never be right with God unless you are right with Him in His Son Jesus Christ. He who made us must re-make us, so to speak. He who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life so that he became a living soul, must breathe eternal life into our dead souls that we may live. He who said, “Let there be light,” must say to us, “Let there be light of life in your consciences.”

This a great and grand truth. The perfections of Deity, the claims of justice, the honour of divine holiness, and the fulfilling of every threat as well as of every promise, you will find centring here, finding their life and their beauty and their glory in this Person. His enemies were saying, “Who is your Father and where is He?” They always were wrangling and cavilling and disputing with and hating Him. Now said He – and this is the point: If you do not believe that I AM THAT I AM, if you do not believe that I am the Substitute for all that shall be saved, that I have come to bear their sins in My own body on the tree, to deliver them from sin and make them righteous before God, you shall die in your sins.

Come then, dear hearers, to this point and ask yourselves – and I would press it on your attention: Do we as a congregation, as individual



persons, believe in the substitution of Christ, in the imputation to Him who is God of the sins of the church? Here is the hope of a sinner; here is the foundation on which God builds the church. And if men dispute it, then we may apply to them the wondrous, the majestic chapter which I read, Job 38: Where were you when God decreed to make this and that? Where were you when He laid the foundations of the earth? Say, where were you when He decreed that His beloved and only-begotten Son should become incarnate, and that He the eternal Father should impute to Him the sins of the chosen ones? Men before these questions must be dumb. And a believer is brought to say with his Lord and Saviour, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

7. Next, *if we do not believe that Christ really died, that He really offered Himself to God without spot, thereby putting away our sin, we shall die in our sins.* We must die in our sins unless Christ put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. Look then at this great question, face it dear friends: Do you believe in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ? They tell us today that this is an impossibility, and therefore that justification is an impossibility; that it would be unjust to punish an innocent person for a guilty person. But again we may say, Have they sought and found out the secrets of infinite love and wisdom and power? Shall the Almighty, the infinite God, be judged by a finite principle? Though it is impossible for us to do away with any man's sin, is it therefore impossible for God to put away the sin of the sinner and constitute him righteous? O judge not God by yourself! He silenced Job, He silenced Job's unwise friends, when He spoke out of the whirlwind. May He speak out of the whirlwind to any of you who may now not believe that He is the God that spoke to Job.

Do you believe that He died in the place of some men? That He by dying took away their sins? That He put them away so absolutely that they are in the sight of His Father and in His own sight, and in the sight of His good Spirit, spotless, without blame, without anything blameworthy, without "spot, or wrinkle or any such thing"? (Eph. 5. 27; see Col. 1. 22). Such must be the effect of Christ's death, or no sinful man can enter heaven. It was not an *attempt* to save that Jesus made when He died; it was a real salvation which He effected when He said, "It is finished," bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. This is foolishness with man and a stumblingblock to the Jew (see 1 Cor. 1. 21, 22). That He whom they looked for to be their King should be a poor, despised, crucified Man, was such a stumblingblock that they could not pass. They stumbled at that stumbling-stone, and there they are fallen as having stumbled. To the Greek what foolishness the cross is! But to all believers it is "the power of God unto salvation." Are we among the believers? If ye believe not that I am He on the cross, that I put away sin

once and for ever, that I then perfected for ever My people, that then I satisfied infinite justice and met all the claims of divine holiness – unless you believe this, you shall die in your sins, you shall bear your own sins. Come then to this point. Says Paul, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith,” or no. Are you in the faith? That is, not the grace of faith, but the doctrine of faith – are you in that doctrine? Can you honestly sing the hymn:

“Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,  
And then again at mine”? (H. 227)

Can you look up to God and humbly sing that? Then what a favoured person you are!

8. The next position I take up is this – that *this Person who gave up the ghost, who entered into paradise that day, is there today* and “ever liveth to make intercession for them,” “that come unto God by Him.” This Man, the God-Man, is there today. Said John – O wonderful sight! – “I beheld ... in the midst of the throne ... a Lamb as it had been slain.” It was a solacing sight to him; it dried up his tears, it filled him with a wonderful view of divine mercy and peace and with admiration. And if you get it, it will have just the same effect; it will dry your tears, raise your hope, comfort your heart, and bring strength and adoring love into your faith. “A Lamb as it had been slain.” The reason of that sight and the effect appears to me to be this – that He is there to intercede. It was as if it should be said, those wounds intercede; they say to the Father: The people for whom I had those wounds are Mine and I am to bring them to glory. They are dumb, for their guilt makes them dumb. They themselves are weak and they cannot come through their difficulties, but I now in heaven intercede, and I will send angels to be ministering spirits to them, and I will send the Holy Ghost to them, the Spirit of promise to be their Teacher. O guilty person! do you believe in the intercession of Jesus in heaven? Who can fail for whom He intercedes? Paul says to the Romans, “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.”

Now my friends, is this an encouragement for you? Can you cast anchor here, even into that which is within the veil, and feel at times that no matter how guilty, how polluted, how wandering, how foolish, how wicked you may be, here is an encouragement? Here is a Man, the God-Man, in heaven living “after the power of an endless life.” And His ability “to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,” is made to hang on this: “Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7. 25). Come, repenting sinner; come, poor, broken-hearted

believer, come you who have not a price to bring in your hand, nor a good feeling to boast of, nor a good frame to talk about on your knees; come with woes and wants and wounds and sins; and as you believe in this blessed Intercessor you will find your sins taken away.

9. "If ye believe not that I am He" in these particulars, "ye shall die in your sins." Then this follows – that when a man, *when a sinner does believe that Jesus is the I AM, that He is what the Scriptures declare Him to be*, that He did what the Scriptures say He did, that He is where the Scriptures say He is, and is doing what the Scriptures say He is doing, he shall be saved, *he shall not die in his sins*. The sinner that by precious faith – faith which stands in the power of God, fixes here, stands here, casts himself down here before the God-Man Jesus Christ, he shall be saved, he shall not die in his sins. And this is according to the apostle's word: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Well, that is a kind word respecting some of us, is it not? We go to Him by necessity, by choice, by attraction, and this threefold cord cannot be broken. We go as lost sinners to call on the name of this great God-Man, the Lord Jesus; and remember – the Lord help you to remember, that the gospel is for sinners. It is the sinners' gospel; we are undone without it. Take this Man away and we are all undone; but He abides in this blessed Book. The testimony of Him and for Him is here. He abides in heaven, and He abides in the church. Yes, He abides as the Saviour, as the Prophet, as the King, as the Priest. He abides with His people, and their faith brings them more or less distinctly to abide in Him. "Abide in Me, and I in you."

And may I in conclusion say again what I have already said – that He and His Father are so one that though distinct in Person, They are not different in nature. No division in the divine nature. And therefore when He is with a sinner, the Father is with a sinner, and the Spirit proceeding from Them both is also in the sinner. "I in them," and how? "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." What an amazing mercy – the Trinity in a sinner! The Trinity loving a sinner, saving a sinner, blessing a sinner, guiding a sinner, and ultimately taking a sinner to be with Himself!

So far I have set before you, as God I hope has helped me, fundamentals gathered up into one fundamental. We are face to face today with the most appalling infidelity, but let all the many that stand on the side of that terrible word uttered by a bishop in Westminster Abbey, "*If there be a God*" – let them approve of evolution and the destruction of theology, we have this *Book*, and we believe some have the Holy Ghost who spoke by holy men of old. We have His Word for our teacher and our guide. Stand here, dear friends. Young people, you have much to meet with, much to contend against, if you fear God; but stand fast by

this, and remember one thing if you can – that when the Lord Jesus was tempted of the devil He said, “It is written, *it is written*.” Say that also if and when you are tempted. If a subtle argument is brought to you, reply, “It is written.” This Book is written; these instructions are written. This Jesus is given; God sent Him. He freely came; He lovingly came. He freely, lovingly died; He rose again; He is in heaven. “It is written.” That, if you are enabled to hold it, will keep you. The word of Jesus’ patience will keep you, and you will keep it; and in the end this will be your blessed, happy lot: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Now I have delivered what was in my mind. Last Monday morning when I saw the terrible thing that the Bishop of Birmingham said to boys in Westminster Abbey, O how I felt for those boys! I felt such indignation and sorrow in my soul that made me cry to God to arise and vindicate His name and honour. And my mind has been with you young people more or less all the week. I have felt for you, and I feel for you. It may be that as I am an old man, God may remove me before the terrible day that is coming; but depend on this – you will meet with much “opposition of science falsely so called,” and if you have faith you will need it. Christ said to His disciples, having taught them many things: “Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” As if He should say: “When I am weak, when I am crucified, when I seem to have no power, then remember I have taught you these things.” God help us to believe and to remember.

---

## IT IS GOOD TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD

*By Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)*

---

“But it is good for me to draw near to God” (Psa. 73. 28).

How can a man but be near to God, seeing He filleth heaven and earth: “Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?” (Psa. 139. 7). He is present always in power and providence in all places, but graciously present with some by His Spirit, supporting, comforting, strengthening the heart of a good man. As the soul is said to be *tota in toto*, in several parts by several faculties, so God, present He is to all, but in a diverse manner.

Now we are said to be near to God in diverse degrees:

First, when our *understanding is enlightened; intellectus est veritatis sponsa*; and so the young man speaking discreetly in things concerning God, is said not to be far from the kingdom of God (see Mark 12. 34).

Secondly, *in minding*: when God is present to our minds, so the soul is said to be present to that which it mindeth; contrarily it is said of the wicked, that “God is not in all his thoughts” (Psa. 10. 4).

Thirdly, *when the will upon the discovery of the understanding comes to choose the better part, and is drawn from that choice to cleave to Him*, as it was said of Jonathan’s heart, it was knit to David (see 1 Sam. 18. 1).

Fourthly, *when our whole affections are carried to God*, loving Him as the chief good. Love is the firstborn affection. That breeds desire of communion with God. Thence comes joy in Him, so the soul pants after God, as the hart after the water springs (see Psa. 42. 1).

Fifthly, and especially, *when the soul is touched with the Spirit of God working faith*, stirring up dependence, confidence and trust on God. Hence ariseth sweet communion. The soul is never at rest till it rests on Him. Then it is afraid to break with Him or to displease Him. But it groweth zealous and resolute, and hot in love, stiff in good cases, resolute against His enemies. And yet this is not all, for God will have also the outward man, so as the whole man must present itself before God in word, in ordinances; speak of Him and to Him with reverence, and yet with strength of affection mounting up in prayer, as in a fiery chariot; hear Him speak to us; consulting with His oracles; fetching comforts against distresses, directions against maladies.

Sixthly, and especially, we draw near to Him *when we praise Him*; for this is the work of the souls departed, and of the angels in heaven, that are continually near unto Him. And thus much for the opening of the words. The psalmist here saith, “It is good for me.” How came he to know this? Why, he had found it by experience, and by it he was thoroughly convinced of it.

---

---

### THE LORD REIGNETH

*Address given at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham,  
on Wednesday, March 18th, 2020*

---

**Text:** “The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The LORD is great in Zion; and He is high above all the people” (Psa. 99. 1, 2).

When King Solomon got up to pray on that momentous occasion at the dedication of the temple, he was undoubtedly inspired by God the Holy Spirit in that prayer which he uttered before the Lord. And it is very instructive to notice that the very things that Solomon prayed for, came to pass in the history of God’s ancient people. In other words, the

Holy Ghost, directing his prayers almost in a prophetic sense, knew that a day would come when, for example, as we have before us in our own day at this very moment, there would be these pestilences and plagues. Solomon was led to ask the Lord that when such a day should come, when the plague would visit the land and the pestilence cause its terrible damage, that if God's people would turn to Him in humility, in confession and in wrestling prayer, then the Lord would hear their prayers. "Hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place: and when Thou hearest, forgive."

The very fact the Holy Ghost guided Solomon to pray like that gives us two sides to the matter. One is that these things do come to pass. The Word of God tells us, and Solomon's prayer confirms it. But, on the other hand, when they do come to pass, there is always a throne of grace for God's people to approach. There is always that door of mercy which they may knock at, as Solomon did again and again. "Hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place: and when Thou hearest, forgive." And every time, dear friend, the Lord hears your voice in prayer, He needs to forgive, doesn't He? You come as a poor sinner. That charity that covers "the multitude of sins" – how we need that when we approach the throne of God's grace!

There are four things that I would bring before you, very briefly, this evening which are in these two verses which exactly meet the need of the church of Christ in the nations at this time. The first thing we have is the Lord's majesty. "The LORD reigneth." And, because the Lord reigneth, "let the people tremble." We read on the Lord's day evening those words in Isaiah 26: "When Thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see." In other words, God will, in His own way, make it very apparent as to why these things have come to pass. And not only will the godly acknowledge the hand of their God, but even the ungodly will have to say like Pharaoh did, "This is the finger of God." As the late Mr. Joseph Short used to say, "God only has to lay His little finger on man, and he is down." That is just what God has done on the nations of the earth at this time. He has laid His little finger on them, yet how great it is! What confusion, what helplessness, what impotence has man in the face of this! "Let the people tremble." The Lord has risen up out of His holy temple. He has risen up to speak to the nations: to speak to this nation; to speak to us by way of judgment, by way of reproof and by way of rebuke. It will be our mercy to hear the rod, "and who hath appointed it."

So, first of all then: the *majesty* of God. Here we have God speaking from His throne. He speaks every day in the rising and the setting of the sun, and every year in the changing seasons. He speaks in His providential dispensations. He speaks through His Holy Word. He

has spoken to us through His dear Son. But, dear friends, for the most part, men are blind, deaf, indifferent and even at enmity to the voice of God. But He will be heard. Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?" God gave him the answer under the waters of the Red Sea. There are those in our generation who say, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?" Friends, God is giving them the answer in that solemn way as He did to Pharaoh. Oh, how we need to lay these things to heart! "Let the people tremble." Those who know a little of God's holiness will be like Moses who feared and quaked when he meditated on the absolute holiness, the penetrating holiness of Almighty God.

Here we have then, divine majesty. "King of kings." "Lord of lords." "Prince of princes." Ruler of rulers. There is none greater than He. Here is the first thing: we should tremble. "The LORD reigneth." The mercy is that He does reign. These things have not surprised Him. They have not overtaken Him by surprise. He knew about them. Indeed, dear friends, I think we may say that He has even ordained them for divine chastisement upon this nation and upon the nations of the world. Whatever may come to pass, do not lose sight of this truth: there is a throne, and it is not empty. The Lord God omnipotent sits on it, and,

"Not a single shaft can hit,  
Till the God of love sees fit." (H. 64)

The Lord reigns; not prime ministers, not kings, not queens and not governments. "The LORD reigneth." It would be the mercy of the governments of this world to remember that, and to be seeking wisdom from that throne of this great God, who is ours.

But He says here, "Let the people tremble." Yes, the Lord can make sinners tremble. He made Isaiah tremble. He made John tremble on the Isle of Patmos. He made Daniel tremble. He made Moses tremble. Dear friends, has He made you tremble under a sense of the curse of God's holy law against your sins and your just deserts of eternal misery, unless He kindly intervenes with His grace? Friends, it is a mercy to be a trembling soul. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." May God make us sensitive. Our sins harden us, and when we are in that state, we come to hardened conclusions. We just take, as it were, our natural wisdom, even our religious wisdom, and try to come to conclusions. Friends, it will not do. We want to be exercised at the footstool of mercy. "Lord, what wilt Thou have us to do, Thou divine Majesty?" "The LORD reigneth."

The second thing is that, wonderfully, there is *mercy*. Where does He dwell? "He sitteth between the cherubims." The cherubims were upon the ark of the covenant. They overshadowed the mercy seat. The

mercy seat was sprinkled with blood. It was called the mercy seat because this God – this same majestic God – communed with Moses from above it. “There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee.” This great God, looking down upon this sprinkled blood, and Moses beneath it! And, dear friends, that is how we come to God this evening hour. His dear Son is the mercy seat. His dear Son’s sprinkled blood has been taken into the holiest of all – not the blood of another – His own blood. As we approach the holy majesty of God, we approach through His dear Son, and He looks down upon us in mercy through the blood and the righteousness, the name and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, He is a majestic God – far, far more than we ever realise. But He is also merciful. “Power belongeth unto God,” but also mercy. Dear David said, “But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.”

Time and time again, in the history of God’s ancient people, when they acknowledged the justice of the rod and humbled themselves under it, the Lord came to their aid and brought the trial to an end. He put the fires out and calmed the storms. And He is the same God today. It is not too much for us to ask that He would stop this plague. It is nothing with God; He could do it, if that was His holy mind and will. It does not seem to us that that is His will at the moment. It seems to be taking its course. But the Lord could say to it, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” Would we deserve it? No! On what ground would it come? On the ground of mercy. So, the second thing is mercy. Firstly, there is majesty, then there is mercy.

Thirdly, there is *movement*. “Let the earth be moved.” As I thought of this, I thought of good William Cowper’s words. “God moves.” Men are striving in so many ways to try and stay this plague, and means must be used; please do not get me wrong. It would be foolish and would be tempting providence not to listen to those who are seeking to help in this matter. But remember it is God who moves.

“God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.” (H. 320)

And God has moved in this way of judgment. He has moved. And when God moves, men are made to see. It is a great mercy when, under the movements of God, we may come to the same conclusion that William Cowper came to. What was that?

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.” (H. 320)



Friends, when He moves in your life – in affliction, bereavement, disappointment, discouragement, opposition or persecution – if He moves in that way, do remember *He* is the Interpreter of it. “He will make it plain.”

And not only does He move in that way, but He moves in the way of deliverance. What did He say to Moses when the chariots of Egypt were thundering up behind and the Red Sea was before him? “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” “Stretch out thy rod, Moses. Divide the sea.” Could Moses do that? No, but Moses’ God could, and He did. “He led them on safely.” Lovely word! “And He led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.” We recently sang those words:

“Safety on earth, and, after death,  
The plenitude of heaven.” (H. 117)

It was very sweet to me. “Safety on earth,” whatever the Lord’s will is.

“Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe on His gentle breast.”

Secure in His purposes. “God moves.” And if you need God to move for you in some way this evening hour, whether it be in providence or in grace, body or soul, plead this great, this mighty arm. It is an almighty arm. And when God moves, even the devil himself has to give way.

Finally, we have what I might call the *mastery*. I use that word because God will have the last word. God will have the last word, because He is God; because of where He is: He is on the throne. He looks on His dear people through the mercy seat. It is He who is moving. “I will work, and who shall let it?” “God moves.” He has the mastery of it. He is the Master of all the assemblies and the Master of all His divine dispensations. He is the Master of all events on the face of this earth. He is overruling. It is really summed up in that beautiful word in Romans 8, just so suitable for our present need. “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.” “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Look up, then, you trembling soul. You may be among those who are trembling (and may you be so). But look up. Yes, He is a God of justice, but He is a God of mercy. Yes, He is a God of righteousness, but He is a God of peace. Yes, He is that omnipotent God, but He takes care of the sparrow and numbers our hairs, blessed be His holy name! “The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The LORD is great in Zion; and He is high above all the people.” The Lord bless and make good His Holy Word. Amen.

---

## ON THE GRADUAL INCREASE OF GOSPEL ILLUMINATION

---

Dear Sir,

The day is now breaking: how beautiful its appearance! how welcome the expectation of the approaching sun! It is this thought makes the dawn agreeable, that it is the presage of a brighter light; otherwise, if we expect no more day than it is this minute, we should rather complain of darkness, than rejoice in the early beauties of the morning. Thus the life of grace is the dawn of immortality; beautiful beyond expression, if compared with the night and thick darkness which formerly covered us, yet faint, indistinct and unsatisfying, in comparison of the glory which shall be revealed.

It is, however, a sure earnest. So surely as we now see the light of the Sun of righteousness, so surely shall we see the Sun Himself, Jesus the Lord, in all His glory and lustre. In the meantime, we have reason to be thankful for a measure of light to walk and work by, and sufficient to show us the pits and snares by which we might be endangered; and we have a promise, that our present light shall grow stronger and stronger, if we are diligent in the use of the appointed means, till the messenger of Jesus shall lead us within the veil, and then farewell shades and obscurity for ever!

I can now almost see to write, and shall soon put the extinguisher over my candle. I do this without the least reluctance, when I enjoy a better light; but I should have been unwilling half an hour ago. Just thus, methinks, when the light of the glorious gospel shines into the heart, all our former, feeble lights, our apprehensions, and our contrivances, become at once unnecessary and unnoticed. How cheerfully did the apostle put out the candle of his own righteousness, attainments and diligence, when the true Sun arose upon him! (see Phil. 3. 7, 8). Your last letter is as a comment upon his determination. Adored be the grace that has given us to be like-minded, even to "account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

While I am writing, a new lustre, which gilds the house on the hill, opposite to my study window, informs me that the sun is now rising: he is rising to others, but not yet to me; my situation is lower, so that they enjoy a few gleams of sunshine before me; yet this momentary difference is inconsiderable, when compared to the duration of a whole day. Thus, some are called by grace earlier in life, and some later; but the seeming difference will be lost and vanish when the great day of eternity comes on. There is a time, the Lord's best appointed time, when He will arise and shine upon many a soul that now sits "in darkness," and "in the region and shadow of death."

I have been thinking on the Lord's conference with Nicodemus: it is a copious subject, and affords room, in one part or other, for the whole round of doctrinal or experimental topics. Nicodemus is an encouraging example to those who are seeking the Lord's salvation. He had received some favourable impressions of Jesus, but he was very ignorant, and much under the fear of man. He durst only come by night, and at first, though he heard, he understood not; but He, who opens the eyes of the blind, brought him surely, though gently, forward. The next time we hear of him, he durst put in a word in behalf of Christ, even in the midst of his enemies (see John 7. 50, 51); and at last, he had the courage openly and publicly to assist in preparing the body of his Master for its funeral, at a time when our Lord's more avowed followers had all forsaken Him, and fled. So true is that, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD"; and again, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

Hope then, my soul, against hope: though thy graces are faint and languid, He who planted them will water His own work, and not suffer them wholly to die. He can make a little one as a thousand; at His presence mountains sink into plains, streams gush out of the flinty rock, and the wilderness blossoms as the rose. He can pull down what sin builds up, and build up what sin pulls down; that which was impossible to us, is easy to Him, and He has bid us expect seasons of refreshment from His presence. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

I am, &c.,

John Newton

---

---

## THE TRINITY

---

October 24th, 1952

*To Mr. J. Delves*

Dear Friend,

Since hearing your discourse, I have felt a desire to write to you. As you said, dear friend, it was a profound subject; for, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." And it is an amazing thing to such poor souls as we that it should please the Father to make known these wondrous things unto babes; "For so it seemed good in His sight." As the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said when upon this earth: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

As you were helped in speaking of the oneness of the Trinity, three Persons in one God, blessed for evermore, my mind was carried back to

years ago when the Lord was pleased to make known to me that sacred truth by revelation. I was lying on a bed of affliction, and all at once in the darkness of the night there appeared unto me the Lord Jesus and Philip talking together, and the Lord answering Philip's request: "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" (John 14. 8-10).

As I thus lay and beheld, I said, "Lord, that is two Persons, Father and Son; but are there not Three?" Immediately the scene was changed to when the Lord met the man who was born blind (to whom He gave sight); after he was cast out of the synagogue, the Lord went to him and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and he said, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Jesus said to him, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." I now saw the Holy Ghost revealing the Lord Jesus Christ to that poor man; but it was still the Lord Jesus Christ. As I thus beheld, the words came: "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell"; even "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 1. 19; 2. 9). I felt to worship in Him God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; three Persons in one God.

You spoke of Him as the Word, the Word of God; God the Father speaking unto us by His Son. Some years ago, in the days of espousals, I was favoured to lie down in green pastures and to be led by the still waters, having much communion with the Lord, in which He said some very precious things to me concerning my soul's eternal welfare; one of which was,

"Thou shalt see My glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done;  
Partner of My throne shalt be;  
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?" (H. 968)

During that season, on one occasion the enemy came to me with an awful suggestion. He said, "You may find when you get to heaven that the Father will not be in agreement with the Son in what He has said to you." It seemed almost to wither all life in my soul, and brought me into such distress that I knew not what to do. But the dear Lord appeared for my help and deliverance, saying, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

You may rest assured, dear friend, that your discourse was by no means dry to me.

My Christian love and best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

F.J. Prickett

## THE ENGAGED HEART OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE

---

*Daniel Rowland experienced violent opposition to his ministry in North Wales, but by God's grace was enabled to press on despite the opposition. The following is part of a remarkable sermon he preached which the Lord greatly used to extend His kingdom in North Wales during the revival there in the middle of the 18th century.*

At Penmorfa, near Porthmadog, he was severely threatened, being assured that if he preached, his bones would be broken so small that they might be placed in a bag. He ignored the threats. He continued to Lley, where he met with some kind friends. A request was made for him to have the church at Llanmellteyrn, in that he was an ordained clergyman, but it was refused. He preached from the mounting-block at the cemetery gate. His text was Jeremiah 30. 21, "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? saith the LORD." In his sermon, he proved that none but Jesus had so fully committed his heart to that degree of perfection required by God. He then depicted Justice displaying beforehand to Jesus the sufferings He would have to undergo, if He was to proceed with paying the debt of sinners.

"Know," said Justice, 'that though Thou dost come to Thine own, yet Thou wilt have only an animal's home to lodge, a manger for a crib, and swaddling clothes to wear.' But instead of retreating, the Saviour answered, 'I am content with that treatment, for My elect's sake.'

"If Thou dost face a world that is under the curse, Thou wilt have no place to lay down Thine head; yes, Thou wilt be the target for the worst anger and malice of men, those very men who are being sustained by Thyself, every moment of their lives.'

"O, My pure Law, I am content with that!"

"Thou wilt also sweat drops of blood on a cold night, and wilt have them spit on Thy face, and crown Thee with thorns; and Thy disciples, after having seen so many of Thy miracles and heard so much of Thy heavenly doctrine, will leave Thee in Thy direst hour; yes, one of them will sell Thee; another will deny Thee, blaspheming and swearing that he never knew Thee.'

"Though this is so hard," said Jesus Christ, 'yet will I not turn back. No change of heart will be Mine.'

"As a result, Justice and the Law testify together:

"O Thou, the Object of the praises of all the angels of heaven, and the true delight of the Jehovah Father, if Thou dost venture upon this incomparable suretyship all the powers of hell will attack Thee, and the unmitigated wrath of Thy heavenly Father will fall upon Thy sacred body and soul upon the cross; yes, if all is to be said, Thou wilt have to suffer the shedding of Thy last drop of blood.'

“Now who can think, without amazement and wonder, of that glorious Surety committing Himself, in the face of such storms, to undertake such a burden, and in the face of all shout out, ‘Content!’”

He could not proceed with his sermon, because one great, victorious shout of weeping and thanksgiving burst forth, like the alabaster box of old, filling the place with its perfume. Many were never to forget this occasion for the rest of their lives.

---

---

### A LETTER TO ONE ABOUT TO BE BAPTIZED WITH HER MOTHER

---

My dear Mary

I have thought much of you and your mother since your very sad trouble and bereavement, and now I cannot tell you how it has rejoiced my heart to hear that the many prayers put up to the Lord for you and yours in your heavy affliction have been answered, and you have been constrained to come forward and tell of His merciful dealings with you. What a special joy to your dear mother, and I hope you both may be favoured to feel the Lord’s approving smile. May He help you to speak for His honour and glory and with humble boldness to tell to listening sinners “what a dear Saviour you have found.”

You will no doubt have many fears and Satan suggests much to oppose, but may the Lord under whose wings you have come to trust, take your hand and lead you beside the still waters. Though the promised path to the Celestial City is a rough and thorny one for the most part, yet I believe He will give you a few spots and places in the journey, where He will enable you to rejoice in Him as your All in all, the Chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely in your heart’s affections. This is to sit down under His shadow with great delight and find His fruit sweet to your taste. These seasons are rare, and I believe they usually come while in a furnace of affliction, but they are an earnest of heaven.

I have not heard when the baptizing is to be; how I should love to be there, but I shall think about you both, and I hope you may be sweetly favoured with His presence and sit down to the Lord’s table, “not like a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home.”

The Lord bless thee and keep thee, make His face to shine upon thee, and give thee *peace*, is the earnest desire of my heart.

With very kind love to you both,

Yours affectionately,

Auntie Katie

Goosey, Abingdon, Berks.

May 17th, 1951

## THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING EXPERIENCED

*Extract from the diary of Mary Grace Banfield (1859-1905)*

---

December 10th: I have been thinking lately what a wonderful mercy it is to have had at any time in one's experience some testimony from the Word of God sealed home upon the heart, whereby has been opened up to the understanding in some particular way, the way of salvation in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of which the soul has been enabled by faith to hang alone upon Him for life and salvation, as our pastor has sometimes put it, "To fall off from self on to the Lord Jesus Christ, feeling persuaded that He, and He alone, is sufficient to bear the weight of the immortal soul, with all its eternal interests." I believe this has been the effect produced by those never-to-be-forgotten words, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." For though they did not come at first with any remarkable power, yet they have seemed to grow in my heart, as the Holy Spirit has opened up to my understanding from time to time, "Here a little and there a little" of the precious atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The beauty and blessedness which I have seen in it, and the love and peace with which my soul has sometimes been filled with the sweet feeling of interest in it, I could never put into words.

I have looked upon this as the rallying-point in my little history. Often when fears have for a time prevailed, and I have been in my feelings ready to faint, feeling the battle to be against me, the blessed Spirit has set before the eye of faith this precious standard of redeeming love in the Person and work of a crucified Saviour, sometimes by an inward teaching in secret, and often and in a special way through the ministry. So that as faith, hope and love have, as it were, gathered round this glorious standard, my spiritual strength has been renewed, and I have been enabled to go forward once more in the path of tribulation, relying alone on the all-sufficient arm of the Lord, both to support and to give the final victory.

I felt this very sweetly to be the case last Wednesday evening. I went to chapel very much cast down through a temptation of the enemy, which had cast a terrible gloom upon my spirit. I believe the Lord mercifully restrained his power, but it prevailed so far as to rob me of much of the comfortable enjoyment I had been favoured with. Only the Sunday week previous, I had had such a good day in hearing, especially in the evening, that I felt when I came out of chapel, if it were not for appearing peculiar, I should have liked to have gone at once to bed, with the sweet feeling that I had Christ in my heart the hope of glory, and I wanted nothing more. Oh, the sweet peace I felt as I lay down to sleep that night, and the two or three nights following, not anxious as to whether I should wake up again in this world or not, feeling all was well

between God and my soul. I believe I could in a little measure understand the language of the apostle, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And then, O how sweet it was to look forward to the end, and how bright was the prospect of spending an eternity in blessing and praising a Three-One God!

But this sweet feeling gradually left me, and on the Saturday morning a most horrible suggestion was suddenly thrown into my mind, which seemed to threaten to sweep away the very foundation of my hope, and filled my mind with the most gloomy forebodings. Instead of looking forward with hope and expectation to the end, the very thought of a dying hour now made me tremble, and for some time after I got into chapel on Wednesday, such fear and trembling seized me, and so weak and ill did I feel in body, that I thought I could not remain during the service. But while our pastor was speaking on Sunday last from the verse preceding the text, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet. 1. 2), the change which was produced in my feelings I know not how to describe, but, as I said before, it was just as though this glorious standard of the redeeming love and blood of a precious Jesus was set before the eye of my faith, at the sight of which my soul was so strengthened that I felt I could say, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.”

---

## GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND

### 14th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Report of the Meeting held online via Zoom Webinar  
(due to Covid 19 restrictions) on April 24th, 2021*

---

The meeting commenced with prayer by Mr. G.E. Hadley (Pastor, Stotfold). In his opening remarks the Chairman, Mr. M.D. Ridout, then commented on Psalm 107. 1: “O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever,” and Psalm 115. 1: “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake.” He mentioned that looking back over the past two years – the 2020 AGM did not take place – he recorded the Lord’s mercies to Bethesda in the answers to many prayers and placing a “wall of fire” around the Bethesda Homes and Flatlets. He referred particularly to the early months of 2020 when the staffing levels at the Harpenden Home were critical and he expressed his thanks to many who supported the Manager and staff at this anxious time.

He acknowledged the dedication of the General Manager, Home Managers and their staff and many others who stepped into the breach ensuring the



well-being and safety of the residents. The response by the Home Managers and staff in complying with and administering the additional workload, particularly with the often limited time scales surrounding the changing government policy with the Covid 19 regulations, had been much appreciated.

The Chairman then mentioned that during 2019 a system was introduced to ensure that the budgets were realistic and affordable. Additionally, rigorous financial management and control processes were implemented. Negotiations were instigated with local authorities to ensure that the full fees were paid to the residents requiring funding from them, and he was pleased to report that the relevant local authorities, remarkably in view of their own financial constraints, had agreed to meet their obligations.

He then turned to the future structure of Bethesda and referred to the open meetings which were held in November 2019. He mentioned that the trustees were very conscious of the impact that any future plans, in the fear of the Lord, would have on the residents, staff and many others with an interest in Bethesda. He emphasised that currently no decision had been made on future residential care provision and the trustees were continuing to seek the Lord's direction in this important matter.

Moving to the current structure of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund charity, the Chairman reminded the subscribers and supporters that it was proposed by the trustees to move the existing structure of an unincorporated charity to an incorporated one. The trustees felt that this proposal was prudent as Bethesda would then have its own legal entity with capacity to enter into commercial contracts and would also provide greater protection to the trustees. At present this did not apply. He mentioned that as there were some sensitivities surrounding the issue, it was anticipated that a series of further open meetings would be arranged, subject to the Lord's will, to explain further these proposed changes.

The Chairman then made special mention of Mr. Trevor Scott who was standing down as a trustee. In various capacities he had given over thirty-one years' service to Bethesda, including over twenty years as General Secretary. He was appointed a trustee on retiring as General Secretary, and became Chairman of the Harpenden Home Support Group which he has agreed to continue for the time being. His experience, support and wisdom will be missed by the current trustees.

There was then a short prayer meeting and a number of brethren engaged in prayer.

The General Manager (Mr. A.J.H. Topping) then presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2020. He made mention of the Covid 19 issues that had affected all the Homes for most of 2020 and also acknowledged the Lord's preserving mercies to both staff and residents.

At the end of the year the occupancy at the Brighton Home was seventeen, with Mrs. Elizabeth Burgess joining the residents, whilst Mr. Kenneth Warren, Mr. Peter Cornwell, Mrs. Betty Stewart and Mrs. Isobel Ford all sadly passed away during 2020.

He mentioned that at the Harpenden Home the occupancy was eight, with Mr. David Keeling joining the Home at the beginning of the year and after only a short time sadly passing away. Additionally, Mrs. Marjorie Crowter, Mrs. Sheila Haddow and Mrs. Joan Harrison also passed away.

The General Manager then referred to the Studley Home where the occupancy stood at seven with Mrs. Mary Pearce and Mrs. Mary Cooke coming into the Home. During the year Miss Marion Julian, Mr. John Burrows and Mrs. Jessie Painter passed away. He mentioned that currently there were thirty-two residents with twenty-eight vacancies across the three Homes.

At the Redhill Flatlets at present there were two residents, and one at Harpenden out of nine potential places.

Turning to financial matters, the General Manager mentioned that the overall income from charitable activities, donations, legacies, investments, a grant from the Piggott Charity and government grants relating to Covid 19 infection prevention was £1,839,087. Compared with the previous year, this was an increase of £221,244. But with overall costs at £1,863,897, this was a reduction of £24,855 compared with the preceding year. He emphasised that although the financial position had substantially improved, there was an overall deficit of £24,810, with only the Brighton Home making an operating surplus, of £85,000. Both the Harpenden and Studley Homes had substantially reduced their operating deficits.

He then mentioned the impact of the Covid 19 virus and the effect it had had on the Homes. Although there was no substitute for the personal attendance in the Lord's house for worship services, we were able to relay the regular morning readings from Brighton and Studley which would have normally been conducted by visiting ministers, deacons, etc., using the Mixlr facility on the Bethesda website. This was in addition to the usual services being continued to be relayed to each of the Homes. Together with the Home residents, this has also been much appreciated by those outside of the Homes and, if the Lord will, when the morning readers are once again able to go into the Homes, it is hoped that this remote broadcasting will be continued.

Sadly, we were unable to provide the usual short stay facility for those requiring respite care due to the ongoing coronavirus restrictions for most of the year.

The General Manager reported that we continue to receive very positive feedback from visiting health professionals and CQC inspectors.

Turning to residents' fees, it was mentioned that the annual review of fees now takes place on January 1st each year and for 2021 there was a small increase of 0.87% in line with inflation.

He then thanked the many friends and members of the Home Support Groups who had continued to provide much valuable support during the past year with all the coronavirus restraints in place.

The General Manager reminded the friends that Bethesda would welcome additional subscribers and supporters. Those interested could obtain a form from the General Office or this could now be done online via the website.

In closing, he acknowledged the practical help and prayerful support of the trustees through the year.

A few written questions had been received. Three related to the proposed change from an unincorporated charity to an incorporated charitable company.

The Chairman, in replying to these, stated that it was hoped to arrange a further series of meetings together with a detailed paper which had been prepared by the trustees. He felt that the explanations given then would avoid any

potential misunderstandings and allay any fears that subscribers and supporters may have had. It was also explained that although the current meeting was remote for the Annual General Meeting, for a question and answer session it was felt that a face to face presentation/meeting would be preferable.

The next question related to the composition of the trustees, and it had been suggested that female trustees should be appointed. The Chairman stated that the General Manager and trustees valued the assistance and support of many female subscribers and supporters, and additionally the trustees had considered the wider involvement with those (both male and female with particular expertise) to ensure that the trustees had the relevant information relating to the care requirements for future residents. He added that during 2020 the board of trustees had been strengthened by a GP joining them.

The last (written) question related to viability of independent living accommodation, when currently there were many empty flatlets at Redhill and Harpenden. The Chairman referred to the information which was presented at the open meetings in November 2019. The concept of independent living accommodation was compared with the current existing flatlets and it was felt by the trustees that the benefits of having this facility would be in line with the preferred approach of local authorities to provide care in this way. With potential funding to assist, those who wished to remain in their own independent accommodation would be able to do so.

There was another question relating to the current role of Bethesda subscribers. The Chairman replied by saying that further details would be available at the planned open meetings, subject to the Lord's will, where the role of subscribers and supporters would be explained in detail in relation to the proposed changes to an incorporated charity.

Another supporter expressed his appreciation and thanks for all that the trustees had done during a year of unprecedented challenges.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on April 12th, 2019 were then proposed by the Chairman using the Zoom poll function. This motion was carried fifty-one for, none against and six abstentions. A resolution was then put to approve and adopt the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended December 31st, 2019. Again this was proposed from the Chair and the motion carried, fifty-two for, none against and three abstentions. A further resolution was then put to the meeting to approve and adopt the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended December 31st, 2020. This was proposed by the Chairman and the motion was carried, fifty-three for, none against and two abstentions.

The General Manager then declared the result of the secret ballot relating to the election of trustees. 233 ballot papers had been issued, 164 were returned (70%) and each trustee standing for re-election had received at least 88% of the votes. Messrs. A.J. Collins, S.B. Cottingham, M.D. Ridout, D.F. Stevens and R.W. Woodhams had consequently been elected for three years, commencing April 2020.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance, and Mr. D.J. Christian closed the meeting with prayer.

A copy of the verbatim Minutes is available on the Bethesda website.

## THINGS WHICH ARE DESPISED HATH GOD CALLED

---

*The account that follows illustrates the sovereignty of God in whom He calls by grace, and the method by which it is accomplished. John Banks was what we call "a tramp," having no settled address. Although the Free Presbyterian order of worship differs from ours in some respects, yet the fundamental truths of salvation by grace alone are the same truths we love, as the conversion and life of John Banks powerfully show.*

The ancestors of John Banks belonged to the nobility of England. His father, John Banks, held the position of a commissioned officer in the British Army. For some misdemeanour he was discharged. This affected his mind so seriously that, for the rest of his life, he became a poor, wandering pedlar. The story is told that he visited a brother of his in England, and that his brother placed £1,600 in gold on a table, took John into the room, and offered him all that money, providing he would settle down in a home of his own. John put forth his hand and took four coins, saying at the same time, "This will do for me; keep thou the rest." He met a pedlar woman in his travels and married her. They continued in their life of wandering through the country to the end of their earthly pilgrimage.

John Banks was born in the year 1847, in a tent on the shore of the Kyle of Sutherland, to the south of Ardgay, in Ross-shire. His father taught him to read and write. He could speak the Gaelic language very well. The correctness with which he spoke English did much credit to the erudition of his father. But it seems poor John lost both his mother and father while he was a young lad, so that he continued a tramp all his days.

He came often to the hospitable house of that eminently-godly man, James Matheson, Clash-nan-cnamh. On a certain day he came and went out to take a look round. He saw a new wheelbarrow that Mr. Matheson had just got from a joiner a few days before. He took the barrow up to the top of a steep brae at the back of the house, and pushed it with all his might down the brae, with the effect that it was broken to splinters against the back wall of the house. When James heard the crash he went out, and saw his new barrow in pieces. He asked John Banks, "What made you do this, John?" He answered, "Satan made me do it." To this James replied, "I believe you are telling the truth." James' housekeeper made a shake-down for John as usual in the corner of James' bedroom. She noticed that James went out after family worship three times, as she understood, to pray. When he came in the third time he said to her, "I will sleep on the shake-down, and John will sleep in the bed." When she

objected to this, he said, "John will be for ever with Christ in heaven, whatever will become of me." However, she prevailed on him to sleep in his own bed. This is a clear proof of the Scripture, which says: "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him," for John Banks continued a careless sinner many years after this incident, and after James Matheson went to his everlasting rest.

The first time the writer saw John Banks was at a communion at Lairg, in connection with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland after 1893. He lodged during that solemn season, as he often did, in the very hospitable house of Mr. Donald Mackay, Saval. It was then that the Holy Spirit shined the light of the glorious gospel of Christ into the heart of John Banks. His joy was so great that he could not conceal it. He told them that, since yesterday, he was enjoying peace of conscience and joy of heart in believing that he was now a saved man.

A few years after this, he came before the Kirk Session, at the time of the Creich communion. After he was examined, the Session decided that, as they were fully satisfied with the knowledge and experience of John, he should be admitted to the Lord's table on the morrow for the first time. When he was informed of this decision, he asked the writer to speak to him privately. He then said that he had been a slave to giant lusts, but that, with the exception of one of these lusts, the Lord had subdued them, and gave him the victory by His grace over them. "Do you not think," he said to the writer, "that until I will see whether the Lord will conquer in me this lust, it would be better for me not to sit at the Lord's table, for fear I may bring a scandal on His name and cause?" The writer answered that he would agree with this on condition that he would let him know how he felt at the time of the Lairg sacrament. To this he agreed. This took place at the tent in godly Helen Logan's croft, on the Saturday of that communion season.

At Lairg that year, on Saturday, after the session had distributed tokens\* to intending communicants, John requested the writer to speak a word or two. He then told the writer that the "giant lust" of which he was so much afraid was now subdued, and then said, "What shall I do now?" To this the answer was returned that he should go there and then for a token, and sit at the Lord's table on the morrow. He did, and sat on the Sabbath there at the Lord's table. Each year after that to the end of his life he attended the communion at Lairg. On the Friday of a communion there, he was asked to speak to the question\*\* for the first

---

\* Tokens are distributed to those wishing to partake in the communion, on the Saturday before the service which takes place on the Sabbath morning

\*\* On Friday morning of a communion season, a fellowship meeting is held when the minister gives a text as a subject to be meditated and commented upon by various men in the congregation. This is called "speaking to the question."

time. He said, "I will be comparing the struggle between the flesh and grace in the souls of the converted, to Esau and Jacob. Esau was a strong fellow, covered over with red hair, while Jacob was a thin, sinewy, bare fellow. Esau made a desperate effort to murder Jacob before they were born; but notwithstanding Jacob's want of strength, he had a very tenacious grip. He got a hold of Esau's heel, came into the world holding on to it, and he never let go his grip till he overcame Esau. He took from him his birthright, and overcame him at last, the night he wrestled with the Lord till break of day, and received the name of Israel. Such, in my opinion, is the struggle between grace and the flesh, and such will be also the end of the struggle."

He was in the habit, after his conversion, of holding meetings in the outlying places of Sutherlandshire. We have not heard of how he handled the Word of God at these meetings, but, judging by what he said in speaking to the question, his discourses would be original, experimental, thoughtful and scriptural.

During his last years he often expressed his great sorrow that he did not work for his living while he was young; but that he had got so heavy and stiff in his old age that he could not work, and so had to continue going about among friends to the last.

He was on his way to attend the Lairg Communion in the year 1907, when an attack of influenza seized him at Brimsdale, in the parish of Kildonan, Sutherlandshire. After suffering for three weeks, he passed away to his everlasting rest on the 25th day of May, and in the sixtieth year of his age. His mortal remains were buried in the burying ground of Kinbrace, at the head of Kildonan Strath, and in the near vicinity of the Kinbrace railway station. He will, at the blast of the last trumpet on the great day of Christ's second coming to judge the quick and the dead, lift up his head with joy, and will ascend to meet the Lord in the air, and to be for ever with the Lord.

The case of John Banks shows the sovereignty of God's grace, as it is written: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.... That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

**Rahab: Woman of Faith**, written and illustrated by Mark Philpott; 48 pages; price £5 plus postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from Harpenden bookroom and agents.

This is another excellent book for young children in the *Faithful Footsteps* series. It tells the history of Rahab, her faith, deliverance from the ruins of Jericho and her subsequent acceptance in Israel. It is copiously and attractively illustrated alongside the narrative which keeps close to the Scripture. As in the Bible, no direct comment is made on the lie she told as to the whereabouts of the spies. It is however a question that enquiring children will ask, and parents and teachers should be ready to discuss but not condone her actions in this regard. This said, the book is highly commended.

**An Exposition of the Last Words of David**, by Martin Luther; 200 pages; price £11 plus postage; published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, and obtainable from Harpenden bookroom and agents.

This is a work taken from the last volume of the four-volume set of *The Select Works of Martin Luther*, translated by Henry Cole in the 1820s. This was his last work, completed not long before his death.

Taking the precious last words of David, in 2 Samuel 23, as his subject, Luther faithfully and vigorously defends the doctrine of the Trinity, and the distinctive office and work of each of the three sacred Persons in salvation. In common with the times in which he wrote, in places his style is somewhat harsh regarding his opponents. It would probably be unfair to say that Luther was anti-Semitic, although some of his language would be interpreted as such by some in our generation. However, when dealing with the precious doctrines of grace, it is readily seen that here is a man speaking from the heart of truths he has tasted, handled and felt of the Word of life. There are excellent explanatory notes from the original translation by Cole, and an excellent foreword by Henry Sant.

It is remarkable to see how far Luther had advanced in the doctrines of grace since his separation from the Roman Catholic system which he constantly and rightly berates along with other false religions. It should be noted that Luther used his own translation of the Scriptures.

This book is warmly commended to our readers.

---

## REJOICE THE SOUL OF THY SERVANT

When my prayers are a burden and task,  
No wonder I little receive;  
O Lord, make me willing to ask,  
Since Thou art so ready to give.  
Although I am bought with Thy blood,  
And all Thy salvation is mine;  
At a distance from Thee, my chief good,  
I wander, and languish, and pine.  
Of Thy goodness of old when I read,

To those who were sinners like me,  
 Why may I not wrestle and plead,  
 With them a partaker to be?  
 Thine arm is not shortened since then,  
 And those who believe in Thy name,  
 Ever find Thou art Yea, and Amen,  
 Through all generations the same.

While my spirit within me is pressed  
 With sorrow, temptation and fear,  
 Like John I would flee to Thy breast,  
 And pour my complaints in Thine ear.  
 How happy and favoured was he,  
 Who could on Thy bosom repose!  
 Might this favour be granted to me,  
 I'd smile at the rage of my foes.

I have heard of Thy wonderful name,  
 How great and exalted Thou art;  
 But ah! I confess to my shame,  
 It faintly impresses my heart:  
 The beams of Thy glory display,  
 As Peter once saw Thee appear;  
 That transported like him I may say,  
 "It is good for my soul to be here."

What a sorrow and weight didst Thou feel,  
 When nailed, for my sake, to the tree!  
 My heart sure is harder than steel,  
 To feel no more sorrow for Thee:  
 O let me with Thomas descry  
 The wounds in Thy hands and Thy side;  
 And have feelings like his, when I cry,  
 "My God and my Saviour has died!"

But if Thou hast appointed me still  
 To wrestle, and suffer, and fight,  
 O make me resigned to Thy will,  
 For all Thine appointments are right:  
 This mercy, at least, I entreat,  
 That knowing how vile I have been,  
 I with Mary may wait at Thy feet,  
 And weep o'er the pardon of sin.

John Newton (1725-1807)

My dear wife and I thank all the many friends who sent good wishes to us at the time of our Golden Wedding, and also for the many prayers for my wife during her recent illness. We have proved, "The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him" (Nah. 1. 7).

G.D. Buss (Interim Editor)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
SEPTEMBER 2021

---

---

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

---

---

THE PLEASANTNESS OF CHRIST'S NAME  
TO THE BELIEVER

---

“Sing praises to His name; for it is pleasant” (Psa. 135. 3).

One of the most significant marks of grace in a believer is the preciousness of Christ in the soul. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2. 7 that: “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious” (margin reading: “an honour” or “one held in high esteem”). As we painfully are aware that the old nature neither esteems Christ nor desires so to do, thus wherever there is a sincere love to Christ it must be in a nature in which the Holy Spirit is at work.

Thus, to a child of God the very names of Christ are pleasant to his awakened ear, and it is one of his chief joys to meditate on them. When God is first revealed in His holy majesty at Sinai, there is a solemn dread as Moses himself confessed. “I exceedingly fear and quake.” But when he was put in the cleft of the rock – the type of the Rock Christ Jesus – and covered by God’s hand, it was a pleasant name to him. The poet puts it so beautifully:

“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just and sacred Three,  
Are terrors to my mind.

“But if Immanuel’s face appear,  
My hope, my joy begins;  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His grace removes my sins.” (H. 1095)

In Matthew chapter 1 verses 21, 23 and 25, we find two names of the Saviour mentioned, as the birth of the Babe in Bethlehem’s manger is announced: “JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (verses 21, 25); and, “Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (verse 23). The name of Jesus sets forth His office as the Saviour, in His spotless humanity, whereas the name Emmanuel sets forth His essential deity which He possessed as the Son of God from eternity, and of which the psalmist spoke when he said, “From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God” (Psa. 90. 2). How pleasant are these names to those who feel their sinful state under the law, and their helplessness in

delivering themselves from its just curse and condemnation! He who was made under the law, as the guiltless Man, Christ Jesus, takes the place of the guilty to redeem those who are under its curse. As truly God He satisfied all the claims of divine justice both in obedience and atonement, thus giving infinite virtue to all He has done as the Man Christ Jesus. His one offering is pleasant to His Father, who is well-pleased with Him, and pleasant to the coming sinner who has no other plea but this.

“The Father’s co-eternal Son,  
The Friend of sinners (though undone);  
The Portion all believers crave,  
He’s Man to suffer, God to save.”

Then how precious and pleasant are the offices He holds as Prophet, Priest and King.

His name as the Word confirms that His words are the express mind of the Father as His Prophet. No wonder Jeremiah could say, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jer. 15. 16). And the psalmist said, “How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psa. 119. 103).

Then there are the two Joshuas in the Old Testament (which name has the same meaning as Jesus): the one who led Israel into Canaan, as their king, a type of King Jesus; and the one in the Prophecy of Zechariah who was the high priest for the returning captives from Babylon; in that office he was a type of our great High Priest. It must be said, however, that Christ had no filthy garments as Joshua had, except those of His church which were imputed to Him according to 2 Corinthians 5. 21: “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.”

Throughout the Old Testament these two offices were to be kept separate, until the Lord Jesus Christ came who is both King and Priest to His people. This is what was revealed to the dying thief, and on which ground he fled for mercy. How pleasant was the name of Jesus as Prophet (through the promise of that day entering Paradise with Christ). He proved that Christ was Priest (as atoning for his sins) and King to him (in admitting him into His kingdom). Likewise, the faith of the wise men led them to the young Child, their gifts anticipating what the dying thief saw of Christ on the cross.

Christ’s name is also precious as its virtue is poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit. Solomon says, “Because of the savour of Thy good ointments Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee” (Song 1. 3). This was wonderfully expounded in John 12 when the alabaster box of spikenard was poured over the head of the Saviour, by Mary, “and the house was filled with the odour of the

ointment.” The broken box prefigured the breaking of the body of Christ, and the odour the sweet savour of His sinless life and atonement poured out through His opened wounds. The Lord Jesus promised that the savour of that act of love would remain as a gospel sermon until the end of time.

How sweet is His name to the convinced sinner when, as the balm of Gilead, it is poured onto his guilty heart and conscience.

The Lord's people are often led, little by little, into the preciousness of Christ's matchless names. The man born blind spoken of in John 9 is a wonderful example of this. He firstly confessed that his Healer was “a Man that is called Jesus” (verse 11). Then he acknowledged Him as a Prophet (verse 17). Then he acknowledged that He was of God (verse 33). Finally, he worshipped the Lord Jesus as the Son of God (verse 38). These names were all pleasant because He had proved them to be so, even as the name Jesus of Nazareth was pleasant to the ear of blind Bartimaeus, as he sought for mercy from the Son of David.

No wonder that the psalmist in Psalm 135 declares: “Sing praises unto His name; for it is pleasant.” Sadly, as Peter declares in 1 Peter 2. 8, this name is a stumbling-block to the unbeliever. It is only those who have tasted that God is gracious, being built up as lively stones on Him, the living stone, who find the real sweetness of His name.

Paul tells us in Philippians 2. 9-11 that it is a name that is above every name, and that at His return every knee shall bow and declare this to be so, to the glory of God the Father. Those who have found His name sweet and pleasant will rejoice with joy unspeakable, but what of those to whom this name means nothing? It will be a terrible moment for them when they hear that irrevocable word: “Depart from Me for I never knew you.”

May the Holy Spirit make the incomparable name of Jesus precious to us by saving experience of its virtue.

---

---

## BELIEVER'S BAPTISM EXPOUNDED AND HINDRANCES TO IT REMOVED

*Sermon preached by R.J. Morris, at Zion Chapel, Prestwood, on  
Friday, August 23rd, 1957*

---

**Text:** “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8. 36, 37).

This scripture speaks of the Ethiopian prince who had been to Jerusalem to worship God. He held a very high office under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians. But it was not the state papers he was reading,

nor matters pertaining to the queen's business, but the holy Scriptures were in his hand. He was a seeker after truth – one that sought to know God's great salvation. The Scripture says, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Although he read in the prophet Esaias, he confessed that, as yet, he did not understand the things which he read. And God sent Philip to him, honoured him in his seeking after the truth, and sent His servant to help and to teach him.

For the most part awakened sinners do not understand things clearly at the first. When Jesus spoke to the woman at Jacob's well about that living water, how little did she understand Him! She said, "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." But He, who had graciously taken her in hand, revealed His precious truth to her. So the eunuch said, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" So little did he understand that Esaias spoke of Christ. He desired Philip that he would sit with him in the chariot and explain the Word of God to him.

"The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before His shearer, so opened He not His mouth." Why was His judgment taken away? Because He had engaged in covenant love to bear the sins and guilt of His people. He was silent and opened not His mouth because of that great engagement whereby the punishment of all their sins should be laid upon Him. He died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." And Philip, beginning at the same Scripture, "preached unto him Jesus." Jesus was the one theme of his preaching, Jesus who, in His infinite grace, came to earth and became Man, that God-Man Christ Jesus, that in His flesh He might suffer, suffer that these people might be saved by Him and that His precious blood should make atonement for all their sin. So Philip preached Jesus.

My dear friends, how do things stand with you? Were your sins laid upon Him? We read these solemn words together: "He bare the sin of many." Do you ever fall before Him in secret and say, "Lord, didst Thou bear my sins?" I must tell you this, sinner; if Christ did not bear them, you must bear them for ever and ever in the torments of hell. You may not like what I say, but I speak as the servant of God. O that the spirit of grace and supplication might be poured out upon you, that you might mourn for Him as those who pierced Him, and be in bitterness for Him as one is in bitterness for his firstborn.

"The chief concern of fallen mankind,  
Should be to enjoy God's favour,  
What safety can a sinner find,  
Until he finds a Saviour?"

(H. 814)

He “preached unto him Jesus,” how that He died for sinners and rose again for their justification, how He walked this earth perfectly keeping all the law of God, in every jot and tittle of it, yielding a perfect obedience. He then “offered Himself without spot to God,” the sinners’ Surety, the sinners’ Saviour. “Love moved Him to die,” and it is well if you can say, “On this I rely, my Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why” (H. 161).

He “preached unto him Jesus,” how that the eternal Son of God was made flesh, became incarnate and walked amongst men. In eternity His “delights were with the sons of men.” He rejoiced in eternity in the habitable part of God’s earth, that earth where in due time He was to suffer, the Son of God for sinners. He preached Jesus unto him, how that He died and rose again for our justification, and how He ascended to that heaven from whence He came and is at the Father’s right hand, ever living to make intercession for these poor sinners who trust in Him. They are poor. You talk to them and you will find they think nothing of themselves, but Christ is everything to them. All the praise, and thanksgiving and glory must redound unto Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood.

Now, in preaching unto him Jesus, he preached baptism. One good man tells me, as a pastor, he never mentions baptism in his preaching. It is evident Philip did. He set before this eunuch, this prince, the ordinances that the Lord has left us, the ordinance of believer’s baptism and the ordinance of the Lord’s supper.

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Now, I must come briefly to my text. First, “See, here is water.” This part of God’s Word makes the ordinance of believer’s baptism and the mode of it very plain. It says, “They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” Afterwards it speaks of their coming up out of the water, thus showing that the true mode and manner of baptism was by immersion in water. “See, here is water.” These things were done in the days of the early church, in those first times when the Spirit was poured out upon them according to the prophecy of Joel.

And then, amongst us as a people, it may be said, “See, here is water.” If we are Baptists and hold the doctrine of believer’s baptism, “See, here” – amongst us – “is water.” We would not slight or disregard so solemn an ordinance. But it seems today that there are some who profess to hope in the mercy of God who yet seem indifferent as to their obedience to His command. But the water is here, and the Lord says, “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

With the eunuch it was like this: his heart was exercised about the water. Many another has been, since his time, under this deep exercise of heart concerning baptism. The water is, so to speak, before him. And if you could have followed them as they went and knelt in secret before God, you would have heard them say, "Lord, and may I venture in this solemn ordinance?" It was with them day by day, "See, here is water." It is Thine own command, Thine ordinance. Lord, may I venture? may such a worthless sinner as I walk in Thy commands? O the going to and fro! Sometimes, Lord, I feel a little encouragement; sometimes I feel I may venture, but I am so weak, so poor, so worthless! But, get away from that water he cannot. God has laid it upon his heart; he is exercised about it. There is trouble of soul, until he is brought to that place where he is brought to say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only."

Others may, perhaps, slight that ordinance. That is a solemn thing. First, people say there is a right time and you are therefore sure to be baptized at the right time. But my dear friends, there are some people who are baptized before the right time and there are many who tarry beyond the right time, I am sure of it. But here is the soul exercised: O Lord, do not let me venture unless Thou hast indeed raised up a "good hope through grace" in my soul, nor let me tarry nor be ashamed to confess Thee if Thou hast so blessed me.

Secondly, I shall notice briefly what this baptism sets forth. It sets forth first the cleansing. Here is the hope of a poor sinner that he has been cleansed from all his sins in the precious fountain of Christ's blood. A cleansing —

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
 Lose all their guilty stains." (H. 160)

And, my dear friend, unless your sins are so cleansed away in the fountain of the blood of Jesus, you can never come to heaven. They who enter that glory are sinners who have been washed. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."

But baptism also signifies a being immersed by living faith into the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus. Do you know anything of it, my dear friend, what it is to look in some small measure to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus and His death, and to feel a hope that He laid down His life for you? The greatest, the most gracious of preachers could never tell you but a little of those great sufferings that He endured when He

bore the curse and wrath of God. Solemn things are these! "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

"On His dear head, O what a storm  
Of awful vengeance fell." (H. 1093)

By faith sinners are baptized into Christ's sufferings and into His death. And their rising from the water, sets forth their rising in His resurrection – grace to serve the Lord in the newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. And one who is brought to know and believe what is set forth by the ordinance of baptism desires to fall before the Lord and to own His precious name. He feels he must profess that gracious Lord who bore so much for him, so much shame and reproach and ignominy and suffering.

"And O may this my glory be,  
That Christ is not ashamed of me." (H. 427)

And then you come to this: "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" My badness, my sinfulness? No. That old heart of yours never will be better, you who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. It will only get worse and worse. But if you are Christ's, God has given you a new heart which cannot sin. So that through life there will be those two contending principles – the old man of sin and the new heart of grace. The sinner says, Though I am such a wretch, I hope in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus; and worthless as I am, that must not hinder me to be baptized. Sometimes it is put to one of these people, O but you know very little of divine things. Well, there is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." We must be babes first, such as those to whom Peter wrote, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" – little ones in Christ's kingdom. But though you feel to know so little, if God has brought you to feel yourself a sinner and to repent before Him, and brought you to hope in Jesus Christ for salvation, then your lack of knowledge must not hinder you.

I can go back now to just upon fifty years and I thought at that time, "O I know so little of divine things; I cannot be baptized" – a poor, troubled youth of eighteen years, feelingly knowing so little. Yet one felt one must venture in love to keep the Lord's commandments. There may be persecutions, but that must not hinder you. O for grace to be willing to endure, as many have had to endure, all manner of persecutions for Christ's sake. "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" – as though the Lord should say, as He did to Peter, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me." May we seek for grace to endure all things for Christ's sake. I feel for our younger friends, because I fear that times of much persecutions may be before them. There will be a sifting, and that which is real will

be sifted from that which is not real, but only carnal and nominal. Very solemn times are coming over us soon, times when those who fear God will need His power to keep them and to preserve them. But whatever persecutions may come, "It shall be well with them that fear God."

"What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Then lastly, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That is to say that Philip contended for a heart work. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Before this he had baptized Simon the sorcerer, who professed to believe, but never believed with his heart. It must have been a great grief to Philip that he should have baptized him when he merely professed to believe. There was no heart work in Simon the sorcerer. When he comes to speak to this great prince in his chariot, he contends for heart work.

"If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," and I believe our dear friend has been brought to believe that God is holy and just and good, and has been brought to know that he himself is sinful and utterly worthless and dependent wholly upon God's grace, standing in dire need of that mercy of God which flows through Jesus Christ. Moreover, he has been brought to hope and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered for him. He is his blessed Surety and Saviour. He has been brought to renounce all hope in himself, brought to renounce all goodness of his own as before a heart-searching God, and brought to trust alone on the merits and righteousness of a dear Redeemer.

"And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." As Paul wrote to Timothy, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Here the eunuch's heart was fixed, here he trusted, and I believe it is thus with our dear friend who now desires to follow the Lord in the solemn ordinance of believer's baptism. The word has said, "Them that honour Me I will honour." "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." So sometimes there is a clearer manifestation after baptism than there is before.

May God add His blessing. Amen.

*This sermon was preached at the baptizing service of the Lord's servant Mr. Harry Wallis.*

---



## **GOD'S HANDWRITING IN THE BELIEVER'S HEART**

*By William Crouch of Pell Green (1790-1861)*

---

A believer is much like a fine piece of furniture, which requires much and often rubbing, or it will get very dusty. He is also much like a good piece of money, which may get very much tarnished; nay, the very superscription may be defaced; yet with good rubbing, it will become bright, and the name appear plain again. Cornelius had the handwriting begun while he was giving alms and offering up his prayers, but Peter must be sent for to tell him words whereby himself and his house might be saved; and when the Holy Ghost came down upon them the handwriting was plain indeed. In the character of this man there may be seen several footsteps of many in their first setting out in the ways of God. First, he feared the Lord; secondly, he was very liberal unto the poor; thirdly, he prayed to God always, and not to the virgin Mary, nor yet to the saints; he did not do as the foolish virgins did, who said to the wise, "Give us of your oil," &c.; and he was very devout; his very heart was engaged in these things.

So again, at Macedonia, when the man of that country appeared unto Paul, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," Paul assuredly gathered that there was something to do, and so there was; for after he had been at Philippi some days, on the Sabbath they went unto the river side, and spake unto the women that resorted thither, and there was a woman whose name was Lydia that received the word, and this blessed name was written upon her and her household. And it is to this, in one sense, that Moses speaks, when he says, "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

---

## **THE CHRISTIAN IN CAPTIVITY**

*By Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843)*

---

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we are sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy (Psa. 137. 1-6).

Israel was a typical people. In their bondage in Egypt, in their deliverance by the hand of Moses, in their passing through the Red Sea, in their journeying through the wilderness, in the manna that fed them

and the smitten rock that gave them drink, in their unbelief, in their falls, in their victories, in their Jordan, and in their Land of Promise, in all of these, from the beginning to the end, Israel was a typical people. They were typical of God's church in all ages of the world. And they were typical of the soul of every individual believer. Every believer has been in bondage in Egypt, has been brought through the Red Sea of the Redeemer's blood, has been led through the wilderness, fed with manna and water out of the rock, and is yet to pass over Jordan into a land of eternal rest.

And even God's dealings with Israel after having entered into Canaan are typical of His dealings with the believing soul. They were not able to destroy all the Canaanites, but they made them hewers of wood and drawers of water. Does not this remind you, Christian, that you have never cast out all God's enemies in your soul, that you have only brought them into bondage, that sin does not reign in you? Again, Israel and Judah were carried away captive because of their sins. Does not this remind you how often you are led captive, brought into a strange land, and into darkness by reason of sin?

This psalm is composed for Israel in her captivity. Let us go over it, taking its typical meaning.

1. *When a believer is in captivity he has a sorrowful remembrance of Zion.*

So it was with God's ancient people: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion" (verse 1). In 2 Chronicles 36. 14-20, we find the melancholy tale of Judah's captivity. Many of their friends had been slain by the sword; the house of God was burned; the walls of Jerusalem were broken down; and they themselves were captives in a foreign land. No wonder that they sat down and wept when they remembered Zion.

So it is often with the believer when led captive by sin; he sits down and weeps when he remembers Zion. Zion is the place where God makes Himself known. When a poor, awakened sinner is brought to know the Saviour, and to enter through the rent veil into the holiest of all, then he becomes one of the people of Zion: "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." He dwells in Zion; and the people that dwell therein are forgiven their iniquity. But when a believer falls into sin, he falls into darkness – he is carried a captive away from Zion. No more does he find entrance within the veil; no more is he glad when they say to him, "Let us go up to the house of the Lord." He sits down and weeps when he remembers Zion.

*Some are hearing me who remember Zion with tears.* Some of you may remember a time when you were dwellers in Zion, when you were forgiven your iniquity. Perhaps you may remember in the days of your

youth that you were much affected with the things of eternity. Perhaps you remember a godly parent that prayed over you. Perhaps you remember the first time you partook of the Lord's supper, how your heart was filled with joy when the Word came with power upon your heart, when you were brought into the bonds of the covenant. Some of you may remember the love of your espousal, your first love when the sun shone more brightly on Sabbath days than all other days besides, when the gates of Zion were dearer to you than all the dwellings of Jacob. But these days are fled with you. You have fallen into sin. You have been carried away captive, and now you sit and weep when you remember Zion.

Do you really weep? Do you really feel it was better with you then than it is now? Do you really feel that you have been forsaking your own mercies? Ah, then, your very weeping shows that you are one of the captive children of Zion. It is only the true children of Zion that weep in their captivity. Do not say, then: There is no hope – no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go. If you be mourning, there is hope. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help"; "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the LORD."

Do not sit and weep. Rather be like the bride: "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth." Seek Him in the Word, seek Him by prayer, seek Him by His ministers; but do seek Him. "Seek His face evermore."

2. *The world derides the believer in his captivity.*

So it was with ancient Israel: "We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion" (verses 2, 3).

The Chaldeans were cruel conquerors. God says by His prophet: "I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." Not only did they carry them away from their temple, their country and their homes, but they made a mock of their sorrows. When they saw them sit down to shed the bitter tears by the rivers of Babylon, they demanded mirth and a song, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

So it is with the world and the captive Christian. There are times when the world does not mock at the Christian. Often the Christian is filled with so strange a joy that the world wonders in silence. Often there is a meek and quiet spirit in the Christian, which disarms opposition. The soft answer turneth away wrath, and his very enemies are forced to be at peace with him. But stop till the Christian's day of darkness comes, stop till he is shut out from Zion, and carried afar off, and sits and weeps; then will the cruel world help forward the affliction. Then will they ask

for mirth and song; and when they see the bitter tear trickling down the cheek, they ask with savage mockery, Where is your psalm-singing now? "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." Even Christ felt this bitterness when He hung upon the cross.

*Some of you may be feeling this just now.* You have gone away from Christ, and are shut out from the light of God's countenance. You have lost all the joys of Zion, the sweet comforts of God's holy place. You shed the bitter tear when you remember Zion. But there is still another bitter, bitter dreg in your cup. The world sneers at you.

Your worldly friends deride you. There is the good of being too religious, they say; there is the end of it. It ends either in melancholy or madness. "Come, sing us one of the songs of Zion." Do you ask, Why must I bear all this? This is the hedge of thorns to drive you back to Christ: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that My fear is not in thee."

*Some hearing may be the cruel spoilers that mock at the distressed Christian.* Some of you who are fathers may mock at your godly children; brothers, at your godly sisters; sisters, at your godly brothers. Alas! ye know not what ye do. Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones that believe in Christ. It were better for you that a millstone were hanged about your neck, and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. Remember it is written: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." Read here your doom, ye that cruelly mock at the Christian: "Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

### 3. *The Christian cannot sing in captivity.*

So it was with ancient Israel. They were peculiarly attached to the sweet songs of Zion. They reminded them of the times of David and Solomon, when the temple was built, and Israel was in its greatest glory. They reminded them, above all, of their God, of their temple, and the services of the sanctuary. Three times a year they came up from the country in companies, singing these sweet songs of Zion, lifting their eyes to the hills whence came their help.

But now, when they were in captivity, they hanged their harps upon the willows; and when their cruel spoilers demanded mirth and a song, they said, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" So it is with the believer in darkness. He hangs his harp upon the willows, and cannot sing the song of the Lord.

Every believer has a harp. Every heart that has been made new is turned into a harp of praise. The mouth is filled with laughter, the tongue with divinest melody. Every true Christian loves to praise; the holiest

Christians love it most. But when the believer falls into sin and darkness, his harp is on the willows, and he cannot sing the Lord's song, for he is in a strange land.

*He loses all sense of pardon.* It is the sense of pardon that gives its sweetest tones to the song of the Christian: "O LORD, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, yet Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." There is a peculiar melody in the song of a forgiven soul. It is far sweeter than the song of angels, whether sung in earth or in heaven. It is called a new song: "Thou ... hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Do you know how to sing this new song? Then happy are you. But when a believer is in captivity he loses this sweet sense of forgiveness, and therefore cannot sing.

*He loses all sense of the presence of God.* It is the sweet presence of God with the soul that makes the believer sing. It is for this reason that believers love the house of God so much. God is present there, meets with them there. Is it not so, Christians? It is not the psalms, nor the prayers, nor the preaching, nor any of the creatures that make the house of God precious – it is the presence of your God. This is Bethel, the house of God. It is that which makes you sing. But when that presence is away, the Lord's house is but a howling wilderness; and you say, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

*He loses sight of the heavenly Canaan.* The sight of the everlasting hills draws forth the heavenly melodies of the believing soul. The land of promise in sight fills the heart with joy. Hence dying saints have the sweetest song, because they stand on the top of Nebo, and say, All, all is mine. But when a believer sins, and is carried captive, he loses this hope of glory. He sits and weeps, he hangs his harp upon the willows, and cannot sing the Lord's song in a strange land.

O believers, would you keep your song? Then keep your Saviour. Would you have the harp always in tune? Then keep in sight of Christ and of glory.

4. *The believer in darkness still remembers Zion, and prefers it above his chief joy.*

So it was with Israel in captivity. They were now captives in a glorious land. The broad stream of the Euphrates was flowing past them, better than all the waters of Israel. The noble city Babylon was before them, with its tower reaching to heaven, its wonderful walls, its hanging gardens, and its thousand delights. Yet they looked upon all only to turn from it with a sigh, saying, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (verses 5, 6).

So it is with a believer in darkness. He often finds, when he has fallen into sin and captivity, that he has fallen among worldly delights and worldly friends. A thousand pleasures tempt him to take up his rest there, and to say, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." But if he be a true child of Zion, he never will settle in a strange land. He will look over all the pleasures of the world, and the pleasures of sin, and say, "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand"; "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

Learn from this, that a true believer never can forget Jerusalem. Have you ever had the joys of pardon and a new heart? Then you never can forget them. Have you ever tasted the sweetness of God's favour? Then you will always remember it, and seek it above your chief joy.

Some hearing me live without one thought of Jerusalem. Some of you promised fair in days gone by. You were moved by the wrath of God, you were won by the love of God; you trembled, like Felix; you were almost persuaded to be Christians, like Agrippa; but where are you now? You are living in the busy world: in the world, and of the world; you partake of its pleasures and of its sins, and you never think of your former seriousness – you forget Jerusalem.

Ah! it is too plain that you never were a child of Zion, else you could not forget it. Oh! it is too plain that the doom of Babylon will be yours: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit.... Therefore shall her plagues come in one day ... for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her"; "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Christians, learn to long for the heavenly Jerusalem. Do not forget it. Here we are in a strange land; be not taken up with anything that is there. But yonder is our continuing city, the heavenly Jerusalem, with its pearly gates and streets of shining gold. Let the chief of your desires be to be with Christ, which is far better. When the world is at the brightest, when friends are at the kindest, when your sky is at the clearest, still lift up this sweet song: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

---

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isa. 3. 10, 11).

## GOD'S THOUGHTS OF LOVE MADE KNOWN TO HIS PEOPLE

*Extract from a sermon by John S. Green*

We would, as helped, look a little at God's thoughts, God's purposes, as set forth in His Word. One thing is very clear, that God has a chosen people, a people whom He loves with an everlasting love. But the all-important thing as we read the sacred Scriptures is, am I one of that favoured number whom God has chosen in His dear Son? Am I one of those whose unworthy names are written in God's book of life, never to be erased? These are the solemn questions that arise from the hearts of God's people, and it is not easy to get the spiritual satisfaction we may desire. We may have to seek a good while before the Lord makes known His thoughts towards us in this particular, that we are amongst His chosen. Sometimes it comes up in this way as we read the Scriptures, as we listen to God's servants, and there is a good deal of self-examination. We are enabled to trace a little mark here, a little mark there, and we feel this is the work of the Spirit in our hearts.

God does not always come in the heart of one of His dear people and say, "I have chosen thee; I have loved thee; thou art Mine." We are exhorted by the apostle to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and that is very profitable work. The way to work it out, my dear friends, is by prayerfully reading the sacred Scriptures, and by coming to God's house prayerfully and exercised about your standing for eternity. Now this is the way the Lord may make known His thoughts towards you: gently, here a little, there a little, line upon line. Now you will be enabled to gather these things together, and the Lord blessing them, you will be favoured to read your own election, and to feel that these exercises never came from the flesh, but that they are the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart. Now these are good and profitable hearing times, and though there is not that real satisfaction yet, that sinner possesses a sweet hope that he is one of the living in Jerusalem, one graciously exercised.

---

It is our safest course in every affliction to lodge the adequate cause of it on our own deserts. *John Owen*

True grace will make head against the corruptions of the heart, as well as the excursions of the feet. *Thomas Brooks*

If our religion is all public, there is something wrong with us.

*F.L. Gosden*

## VALIANT FOR TRUTH: DONALD DUFF

*By Murdoch Campbell*

*Donald Duff was a close friend of the famous John Kennedy whose ministry in his day was greatly used by God, to the awakening of many sinners and the edification of the people of God in the way of faith in the Highlands of Scotland.*

Mr. Donald Duff, who laboured in Dingwall for twelve years as Dr. Kennedy's catechist, was a recognised worthy in his day. Yet in his own eyes no one was more of a babe in Christ than he. Born not far from Kingussie, in Inverness-shire, he was brought up in a home where the Lord was unknown. For many years the sturdy young pagan went his prayerless way, wholly unconcerned about eternal things. There was, indeed, one occasion in his youth when confronted with physical danger he instinctively cried, "O God, help me!" Strangely enough help came at once, but Donald forgot his Deliverer as soon as the danger was over.

It was through a sermon preached by Dr. John MacDonald that he was first awakened to a measure of soul concern. He was then eighteen years of age. For a season he felt "a warmth of the affections," and becoming outwardly reformed, he deceived both himself and others. Like another he "received the word with joy," but with the first encounter with adversity he sank into a state of cold compromise. He then sought to make the best of both worlds.

When harvest time came round Donald, by pipe and dance, revelled in the annual "Harvest Home." On the following Saturday, however, when he tried to attach himself to a number of the Lord's people at a meeting of prayer, he was excluded as one "whose conduct was not consistent."

His natural pride recoiled before this rebuff, and for six years he plunged headlong into a life of open defiance of all which belonged to God. He never ceased to marvel at God's forbearance with him during those years of sour rebellion.

It was through the reading of Thomas Boston's *Fourfold State* that an arrow from the King's bow pierced his adamant heart. For weeks he writhed in mental anguish with this one cry: "Lord, give me a new heart!" Let him tell the rest of the story in his own words.

"Being in a wood one evening, I bent down and repeated my usual prayer, when all at once I felt as if I was in the presence of God, and that He spoke to me in these words: "What although you should get a new heart! I could not receive you for the sake of your new heart." I was overpowered and self condemned when in a little these words seemed to follow: "You must be accepted in Another"; and then there was opened up to my view the glorious Person of the Son of God, in power and glory



at the Father's right hand! My very soul leaped for amazement and joy, and then and there I received Christ as my Saviour and Lord."

It was inevitable that after such deliverance and spiritual vision, and after enjoying such a taste of the love which though old is ever new, he should be subjected to many doubts. His powerful mind, with its metaphysical cast, Satan assailed with such questions as, the finality of God's sovereignty; the permission of evil; and the freedom of the will. These high questions are not solved by an argument, least of all in an argument with the devil! So like a wise man apprehensive of danger he went to pray.

"I turned," he said, "into a field to confess to the Lord my helplessness, and when I was bewailing my case before the all-seeing One it appeared as if all at once the tree of the knowledge of good and evil stood before me, and as if a voice said, 'If the tree had stood there until now, is there not in your breast something that would move you to stretch out your hand to its forbidden fruit?' This humbled me, for I saw that the soul of man freely of its own will took on the guilt of sin. I also got a melting view of the grace that did not destroy the sinner because of disobedience, but provided a way of forgiving transgressors to the praise of His mercy and love."

The next "fiery dart" directed at his new-born soul was the suggestion that because he was unweaned from his sin, his second attempt to live godly would end more miserably than the first. But no, for he could say then, "There is in God, and only in Him, that which will satisfy all my desires."

From this time he grew in his knowledge of God's Word, of his own heart, and of "the depths of Satan." Having lived, for a time, the life of a hypocrite himself, he could never afterwards endure before his eyes any resemblance to that loathsome creature! Where he found his trail or saw his mark he would employ all his weapons to lay him low.

Donald Duff had his Bethel seasons, and one of these was at the Creich communion in the summer of 1872. On that occasion the Lord's people present were so sensible of the gracious Spirit of God in the ordinance, that one old man from the parish of Reay prayed publicly on the Monday morning for grace to endure the pain of separation. "The Lord was there." The services on that Sabbath began at eleven in the morning and, with an interval of one hour, continued till half past nine at night. After the services the people refused to disperse, and continued in praise and prayer till midnight. The following day they gathered again at seven in the morning. The Highlands has since had few days like these, when the Lord shone gloriously out of Zion.

Perhaps the next most memorable communion ever held in the north was at Dornoch about the year 1831. The following quotation describes the heavenly power which melted down many of those who were present.

“The fourth table, which held sixty communicants, was wholly filled by young converts from Tarbet, Ross-shire, who had been brought to the knowledge of God in a spiritual revival a year or two before. When the service was over the linen cloth was wet with their tears, as though it had been taken out of the sea. Soon afterwards a deadly plague of cholera broke out at Portmahomack and made almost a clean sweep of this crop of young converts. Angus Murray, Dornoch, said of them that the Lord took them away with Him to heaven ‘soft and warm as they were!’” But we are speaking of Donald Duff.

As may be seen from the following extract from one of his letters, his own quiet, meditative exercises also brought him much blessing. “I was meditating lately on that passage where the bride of Christ compares her Beloved to an apple tree among the trees of the wood, and speaks of herself as sitting under His shadow. She found a shadow in His incarnation and humiliation, a shadow in His obedience and sufferings, and a shadow in His intercession. ‘And His fruit was sweet to my taste.’ She tasted the sweetness of a word of pardon dropped into her guilty conscience, the sweetness of a word of love dropped into her trembling spirit.”

How Donald himself stood in the estimation of his contemporaries may be inferred from the following incident that has come down to us. In 1878 he was at the Dornoch communion. Dr. Kennedy opened the Question on the Friday. It was based on the words, “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind” (Rom. 7. 23). The doctor offered an opening exposition in his usual profound and comprehensive manner; but afterwards he and others would give the palm to Donald Duff for an unusual insight into the nature and motion of original sin as it stands in the light of God’s law, and as it affects the new man whom God had saved by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

The word “consecration” had not been introduced into the Christian vocabulary of his day; but this is how he defined a Christian. The Bible, he said, speaks of four classes of men. There are the men of Belial. For them to live is sin. There are the “men of the world,” and for them to live is the world. The third class are those who may be outwardly religious, but self-interest or self-esteem is the spring of all they do. For such to live is self. The man who had passed out of these states, leaving even the garments which clothed him behind, is the man in Christ. To this man Christ is so precious that he counts all else as dross for the excellency of His knowledge. For such to live is Christ.

Having in his own words lived “in four countries,” he became acquainted with the most eminent of the “men.” The man who attracted

him most was David Steven of Bower, Caithness. He looked upon David as the "last rose of summer," or as a green branch which the sea had carried high up on the beach, and which could give one an idea of how high the tide of true godliness had once risen in Caithness.

The writer once met a Christian lady in Stratherrick who remembered Donald. One day she observed him looking over a wall, watching a cat that brought all its feline cunning into play so as to catch an unwary bird which flitted among the ferns. Donald was fascinated and remarked, "That is how the evil one catches souls."

A minister in the north was anxious to hear a sermon from the words, "My God shall supply all your need." On a Monday of a communion in a certain parish, he read the chapter which contained those words at family worship. Donald was present and prayed. In his prayer Donald touched on the needs of the poor in spirit, and the unsearchable riches which are in Christ for such. Later in the day this minister intimated that Mr. Duff would preach in the evening. To his joy he took the words as his subject. As he spread his wings to this great theme, it was evident that he was on the eve of entering in to possess his inheritance above. That, in fact, is the last glimpse we get of him in his public ministry.

Donald Duff passed away early in 1885. A friend who ministered to him in his last hours told him that many of his friends had written to enquire for him. As their names were mentioned he tearfully remarked, "I feel their prayers around me." When asked if he had a message for them he said, "Tell them that I find it is well that I have not now to begin to seek the Lord; for the time of trouble is assuredly not the acceptable time." He spoke very tenderly of the sufferings of the saints, and how many of them entered the river rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God. For many hours he lay in a state of unconsciousness, but a few moments before he entered heaven he opened his eyes. They shone with the bright lustre of an unearthly light as if he saw beyond the earthly scene the fringe of that eternal world of glory for which he had longed. It was left to his friend, Mrs. Auld, of Orlig, to give poetic expression to the great blank which the death of this prince with God had caused. Here are two of her verses:

Our shepherd, our father,  
Hast gone to his rest.  
Oh, Death, will naught serve thee  
But that which is best?  
Thou hast ravaged our Highlands;  
Thy scythe has cut down  
Our princes, our nobles,  
And men of renown.

Then sure there is reason,  
 We sit sad and lone;  
 Amid the world's music  
 Ariseth our moan.  
 Those stars, where was mirrored  
 Jehovah's own light,  
 Have departed for ever –  
 And left us in night.

---

## THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD CONSIDERED

*By Thomas Boston (1676-1732)*

---

1. Beware of drawing an excuse for your sin from the providence of God, for it is most holy, and is in no way any cause of any sin you commit. Every sin is an act of rebellion against God, a breach of His holy law, and deserves His wrath and curse, and therefore cannot be authorised by an infinitely-holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity without detestation and abhorrence. Though He has by a permissive decree allowed moral evil to be in the world, yet that has no influence on the sinner to commit it. For it is not the fulfilling of God's decree, which is an absolute secret to every mortal, but the gratification of their own lusts and perverse inclinations, that men intend and mind in the commission of sin.

2. Beware of murmuring and fretting under any dispensations of providence that you meet with, remembering that nothing falls out without a wise and holy providence, which knows best what is fit and proper for you. And in all cases, even amidst the most afflicting incidents that befall you, learn submission to the will of God, as Job did, when he said upon the end of a series of the heaviest calamities that happened to him, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1. 21). In the most distressing case, say with the disciples, "The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21. 14).

3. Beware of anxious cares and diffidence about your through-bearing in the world. This our Lord has cautioned His followers against: "Take no thought" – that is, anxious and perplexing thought – "saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Never let the fear of man stop you from duty (see Matt. 10. 28, 29); but let your souls learn to trust in God, who guides and superintends all the events and administrations of providence, by whatever hands they are performed.

4. Do not slight means, seeing God worketh by them; and He that hath appointed the end, orders the means necessary for gaining the end.

Do not rely upon means, for they can do nothing without God (see Matt. 4. 4). Do not despair if there be no means, for God can work without them, as well as with them: "I ... will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen" (Hos. 1. 7). If the means be unlikely, He can work above them. "He considered not his own body now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb" (Rom. 4. 19). If the means be contrary, He can work by contrary means, as He saved Jonah by the whale that devoured him. That fish swallowed up the prophet, but by the direction of providence, it vomited him out upon dry land.

Lastly, happy is the people whose God the Lord is: for all things shall work together for their good. They may sit secure in exercising faith upon God, come what will. They have good reason for prayer, for God is a prayer-hearing God, and will be enquired of by His people as to all their concerns in the world. And they have ground for the greatest encouragement and comfort in the middle of all the events of providence, seeing they are managed by their covenant God and gracious Friend, who will never neglect or overlook His dear people, and whatever concerns them. "For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13. 5).

---

---

### AN ECHO FROM THE PAST

*By Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)*

---

Truth wrapped up in vague, general declarations is the sword in the scabbard which, as it wounds no conscience, so it pierces no error. Clear, plain, positive statements of divine truth are the two-edged sword which pierces "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." This naked sword discovers the foundations of error unto the neck. How, for instance, John Wesley wrapped up his free will till Toplady unmasked him, and how the legalists and the Jacobins in Mr. Huntington's day all held in secret their different errors till that vigorous thresher winnowed them in his sieve and drove them off the floor before his fan! The same thing is going on in our day. There are gross and grievous errors in the churches, and these will be undetected till the sieve and the fan come into the barn floor. If we are forbidden to hide our talent in a napkin, much more are we prohibited to wrap up the sword of the Spirit in a cloth; and this is done when men, through fear or carnal policy, wrap up naked truth in general statements, that they may please all and offend none.

All will subscribe to the general statement that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, because each puts his own interpretation upon that

expression. The Socinian, the Arian, the Pre-existerian, the Sabellian, all will allow that He is the Son of God in their sense of the term. But when you come to a more clear, precise and positive declaration that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by eternal generation, that He is truly and properly His only-begotten Son as the very mode of subsistence in the Godhead, then the error of those who deny this foundation truth is discovered, an error previously existing but working unseen, undermining the churches like a gangrene, but covered up with a form of godliness.

The consequence of this has been strife and confusion. Seeing this, many who love peace at any price and would sooner have the church seemingly united even if it involved the sacrifice of truth and a good conscience, look on with regret if not anger that such questions should ever have been brought forth to distract the churches. "We were peaceful before, but now we are all strife and confusion!" Yes, but what sort of peace was it? Was there ever any real union of heart and spirit between the lovers of truth and the lovers of error? Was there ever any vital agreement between those who mourn and sigh as chastened for their sins, and those who reject the doctrine of chastisement for transgression?

Much that passes for union in a church is merely natural feeling of friendship and regard as worshippers in the same place, and as from time to time brought together in a kind of social, religious intercourse. Real soul union is one of the rarest things in the world. There may be much warm shaking of hands, kind enquiries, and friendly looks and expressions, a few words about the sermon or general soul matters, where the Holy Ghost has neither given spiritual life nor cemented spiritual union. When God means to sift a church in His sieve, and search Jerusalem with candles, He brings to light heresies hitherto concealed. This is the first snap which begins to break to pieces the false bond of union.

Another prominent evil is the loose Antinomian spirit so widely prevalent in Calvinistic churches. This denial of practical godliness appears:

1. Under a resting upon mere doctrinal truth in a vain confidence of interest therein, without any vital experience of its liberating power or sanctifying effect manifest in the walk and life. Books, periodicals and sermons are coming continually under our eye, sound in letter of truth, in which there is not the faintest attempt to enforce vital, practical godliness, either in its experience in the heart or in its influence on the life. The highest doctrine is set forth in the most decided, unflinching way; free will, so called, is chased over hill and dale; the Arminians and Pharisees, soundly rated as the most weak and foolish of men, and shouts of victory are pealed forth to the triumph of sovereign grace. But there

it begins and ends. A little shallow experience may be named; but of fruit, inward or outward, a godly life, a Christian walk, not a syllable. Is fruit generally insisted upon as the mark of union with Christ? Such fruits as self-denial, crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts, labouring to know and do the will of God, repentance and godly sorrow for sin, mourning and sighing over a backsliding heart, a prayerful, meditative spirit, and that sweet spirituality of mind which is life and peace – are not these vital realities positively ignored and not even named, much less insisted upon?

It would almost seem, from the general neglect of enforcement upon believers of practical godliness, as if the elect might do anything they liked, and that we are saved not *from* sin but *in* sin; delivered from the curse of the law, not to walk in the obedience of the gospel, but almost to do any abomination in which the carnal mind delights! (see Jer. 7. 10). If a man is not himself living under the influence of the Spirit and seeking to know and feel the power of divine truth in his own heart and life, he cannot and will not insist upon vital, experimental godliness in others. And if the leaders in the church and congregation are sunk into carnality and death, they will cover up their own misdeeds by resenting all practical preaching as a departure from the truth, and will rather hurl back the arrow than allow it to stick in their conscience.

2. Another phase of this loose, Antinomian spirit, is a resting in the doctrine of man's thorough helplessness and in a knowledge of sin, without any deliverance, and scarcely any desire after deliverance from it. How many old professors there are in almost every congregation where truth is preached, who never rise beyond a confession of their sinfulness and helplessness! Were this deeply felt and groaned under, were there in the midst of this conviction, a spirit of prayer, a sighing and crying for help and deliverance, there would be good ground of hope that there was life at the bottom, and that the Lord would in due time appear, but when we know that an enlightened judgment and the convictions of a natural conscience, with repeated disappointments in the attempts to break the bonds of sin, are amply sufficient to produce this sense of sinfulness and helplessness, we cannot ascribe that to the blessed Spirit which is but another form of Antinomian carelessness.

But how little is this evil seen and faithfully exposed! On the contrary, what pillows are sewn under armholes, and poor, dead, carnal professors pitied and patted as dear children of God, weak indeed in faith, but precious souls! Is it not a solemn fact that many preachers of doctrinal truth are well satisfied if their hearers are not Arminians, and set down the reception of the truth into the mind as a sure evidence of divine life? Have such teachers ever seriously thought, or ever deeply felt, that men might cease to be Arminians to become Antinomians; that

a change of creed is not necessarily a change of heart; that there is a form of godliness whilst denying the power; that a man may be called a Christian and rest in the gospel, and make his boast in God; may know His will in the letter and approve of things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law; may be confident that he himself is a guide of the blind, a teacher of babes; may have all the form of knowledge and of the truth (see Rom. 2. 17-20), and yet with all this confidence, all this knowledge, and all this profession, be but a servant of sin and Satan? It will be found in that great day that not only “many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first,” but, more solemn truth still, that “many be called, but few chosen” (Mat. 19. 30; 20. 16).

Thanks be to God, He has still in this land a seed to serve Him, still a people whom He has formed for Himself and who show forth His praise. He still has His hidden ones who, through much tribulation, are entering the kingdom; still His sighing, mourning people, who love and long for His appearing. He has not left Himself yet without witnesses, for here and there He has faithful ambassadors who shun not, as far as they are acquainted with it, to declare all the counsel of God, and we trust He is raising up others to take their place when they are called out of time into eternity. For the consolation of such, and of all who desire to know Jesus and the power of His resurrection, the Lord has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” And to encourage us as we feel to sink in our weakness, He graciously added, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” May we bear in mind that there is no healing for sin but by His precious blood; no shelter for the guilty and self-condemned but His glorious righteousness; no salvation but by His grace; and no sanctification but by His Spirit.

---

## ELECTION: GOD’S METHOD OF SALVATION

---

If there is one doctrine which is most bitterly opposed by those to whom it has not been revealed, it is the doctrine of election. But all the bitterness of the opposition to this sacred truth can never alter it or diminish the fruit that flows from it. The natural man hates it because it is totally alien to his fallen mind, that God should be sovereign in this great, eternal matter of salvation. Such animosity flows from the first infidel suggestion put by Satan to Eve, that she could be as a god – in other words, a repudiation of the reign of her Creator. Whatever freedom of will our first parents had in the Garden of Eden, it was lost when they listened to the serpent rather than their God. It is the lack of true knowledge of the Being of God, and we as being unworthy of His notice,



that makes it impossible for fallen man to accept the sovereign right of God to save whom He will, in the way He has ordained. Viewed aright, election is God's way of saving sinners. Far from being a hindrance to salvation, were it not for election no sinner would ever be saved. It is essentially the doorpost on which the gospel stands.

The well-known words of the Saviour confirm this. The doorpost is, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me" and the door itself is, "and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Another way of looking at it is that election is God's magnet to draw sinners to Himself. A magnet only draws iron, not wood for example. So, while we are in an unregenerate state there is nothing in us by nature which is drawn by the gospel magnet. However, when grace enters the heart, immediately there is something which will be drawn by the truth that is in Jesus. It is the sovereign goodness of God which "changes the heart, renews the will and turns the feet to Zion's hill."

This in no way excuses the wilful inability of the old nature to fall under the truth. It is a sinful inability which the Fall brought upon all men. Those who are born of God will recognise this solemn truth and will look back with sad regret on the years which the locust ate, when the hours of their life were given over to the Prince of Darkness in preference to the Prince of Life. But they will admire the grace which has savingly changed them, and acknowledge that but for that grace they would still be on the broad road which leads to destruction.

---

---

## THE LONGINGS OF A LIVING SOUL

*By Charles Bridges (1794-1869)*

---

"Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD; even Thy salvation, according to Thy Word" (Psa. 119. 41).

A prayer at all times suitable for a sinner, who needs mercy every moment, and has been taught to look for it only in the Lord's "salvation." Out of Christ we know only a God of justice and holiness. In Christ we behold a just God, and yet a Saviour (see Isa. 45. 21) and in "His salvation," which "is nigh them that fear Him ... mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psa. 85. 9, 10; compare Rom. 3. 26). Therefore general notions of the mercy of God without a distinct apprehension of His "salvation" can never be a warrant of faith to a sinner; and can only have their origin in presumption, such as God abhors. Can there be any communication of mercy from an unknown God? Can there be any intercourse with an angry God?

“Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee” (Job. 22. 21) – the Lord’s mercies, even His salvation.

This prayer, however, is peculiarly suitable to the believer, longing to realise that which sometimes “through manifold temptations” is clouded to his view – his personal and individual interest in the Lord’s salvation. It is not a distant or general apprehension that he needs. Let Thy mercies not only be known, or reported; let them be applied; let them come, so that I can say, This is mine – and rejoice in it. I see Thy salvation come to others. Who needs it more than I? Let it come also unto me. I would not be satisfied with description, however accurate. Let it come to me. “Look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy name” (verse 132). “Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation; that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance” (Psa. 106. 4, 5).

Now, are we seeking the assurance of this salvation in prayer? Are we waiting to realise the present power of it, saving us from sin, Satan, the world, ourselves, and blessing us “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”? Should a trial of faith and patience be ordained for us, yet in the end we shall doubtless find that God by these dispensations with us has been secretly storing us with experience, which will be a rich treasury to us throughout our pilgrimage. That He has kept us from turning our backs upon His ways, when we had no comfort in them, that He has upheld us with secret supplies of strength – what is this, but the working of His own Spirit within, and the pledge that the work shall advance to perfection? That He has enabled us, against all discouragements, to continue “instant in prayer,” is surely an answer to that prayer, which in our apprehensions of it had been cast out. That in the exercise of waiting upon Him, we have been restless in the possession of worldly consolation, is an assurance that the Lord Himself will be our soul-satisfying and eternal Portion. And who is there now in the sensible enjoyment of His love, who does not bless that divine wisdom, which took the same course with them, that has been taken with us to bring them to these joys? When did a weeping seed-time fail of bringing a joyful harvest? (see Psa. 126. 5, 6).

But let not the word of promise be forgotten: “According to Thy Word” – that it shall come fully, freely, eternally, to him that waiteth for it. “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways” (Isa. 64. 5). The same desire of earnestness and faith will again come before us: “My soul fainteth for Thy salvation: but I hope in Thy Word” (Psa. 119. 81). Many indeed are satisfied with attainments far too low in spiritual enjoyments. It is

comfortless to live at a distance from our Father's house, when we might be dwelling in the secret of His presence, and rejoicing in the smiles of His love.

But sometimes, alas! days, weeks and even months, pass by without any heart-searching enquiries as to the reasons of this deprivation. Let us not charge this dull and dishonourable state of mind upon the sovereignty of the divine dispensations. Let us rather trace it to its true source – want of desire, want of faith, want of prayer, want of diligence. Let us be excited to a sense of our need of heavenly influence. Let us be encouraged by the recollection that earnest prayer will bring a sure answer: if not in the immediate fulfilment of our desires, at least in their enlargement. And how can our desires be too large after the mercies of God's salvation?

---

### A PRESSING CASE AND A SILENT SAVIOUR

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

---

“But He answered her not a word” (Matt. 15. 23).

Mark, my soul, this feature in thy Redeemer's conduct towards the poor woman that so long and so earnestly entreated Him: Jesus “answered her not a word.” And yet, from the close of the subject, nothing can be more evident, than that the Lord had determined, not only to grant her petition, but to throw the reins of government concerning herself into her hands so completely that it should be as she would. Learn then from hence how to interpret silence at the throne upon every occasion of thine. In every dark providence, under every dispensation of grace, never forget that Jesus' love is the same. What though He answereth not a word; yet His whole heart is towards His redeemed. Whatever frowns there may be in outward things, there can be none in what concerns the real happiness of His people. Jesus may try, as in the instance of this poor woman, the graces He gives. Faith may be hard put to it, and silence at the throne may make temptation and exercises of every kind more sharp and painful. But Jesus is the same, His love the same, the merits and efficacy of His blood and righteousness the same. These speak *for* thee, my soul, when they may not speak *to* thee. That is a precious thought; never forget it.

And remember, moreover, covenant mercies are not suspended upon our deserts. The free grace of God in Christ depends not upon the will or the worth of man, according to the beautiful account by the prophet of the rain or dew of heaven, which waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men. Henceforth, therefore, my soul, do thou learn to wait

at the mercy seat as cheerful, and with as lively actings of faith, when Jesus answereth not a word, as when thy petitions are all complied with. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint," saith one that could not be mistaken. Oh, for grace and faith to take God at His word, and like Job to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

---

---

## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 124)*

---

Having already considered at some length the office of the ministry, a brief word is required concerning the position of ministers in the gospel church state. Allusion has been made to the fact that apostolic power and authority ceased on the demise of the apostles, and that the especial gifts of healing, etc., ended soon after. And although in a restricted sense every true gospel minister may be called a prophet of the Lord, ministerial prophetic status then discontinued. To the church, which is Christ's body (see Eph. 1. 23), the ascended Lord gave "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers ... for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4. 11, 12).

### *The pastorate*

In an organised gospel church, the ordinance of the ministry of the Word, with the spiritual rule, is committed to the *pastor*. In holy Scripture different names are given to this one office which we designate the pastorate. Christ, in the Spirit of prophecy, had long ago promised (see Jer. 3. 15) to give pastors according to His heart, which should feed His people with knowledge and understanding. Again and again the Old Testament speaks of Jehovah's one Servant, His Shepherd – the Lord Jesus Christ, to be incarnate – and of the raising up of shepherds to feed His Israel (see Psa. 80. 1; Ezek. 34. 23; Zech. 13. 7; Jer. 23. 4; etc.). Paul, sending for the *elders* of the Ephesian church, thus charged them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*" (see Acts 20. 17, 28). This same title *overseer* is translated *bishop* in 1 Tim. 3. 1, 2; Tit. 1. 7; Phil. 1. 1, and other places. Peter (1 Pet. 5. 1, 2) exhorts "the *elders* which are among you ... feed the church of God which is among you, taking the *oversight* thereof." In Hebrews 13. 7, 17, Paul says, "Remember" – obey – "them which *have the rule* over you" (margin, are the *guides*); thus pointing out the office and work of the undershepherd, in distinction from, and yet in relation to, the "great Shepherd of the sheep." From the above and other passages of Scripture, it appears that the titles bishop,

elder and overseer, are interchangeable, and substantially indicate the office and work of the *pastor*: the same word in the original Hebrew and Greek being translated variously "pastor" and "shepherd," in the Old and the New Testament.

We find no warrant in the Word of God, which is our sole rule, for such titles or offices in the church of Christ, as Archbishop, Diocesan Bishop, Dean, Canon, Archdeacon, Pope, Cardinal, Father, etc., or for the various ranks, Reverend, Very Reverend, Right Reverend, Most Reverend, etc. Such ostentation, often accompanied by a display of sacerdotal vestments and gaudy ecclesiastical millinery, ill becomes professed followers and ministering servants of the lowly Lamb of God. The dignity of the angels [messengers or pastors] of the seven Asiatic churches consisted in their being in the right hand of the Lord Jesus (see Rev. 1. 16, 20).

The pastor's duties are explicit, and they are arduous.

1. To feed the church of God; that is, to break the Bread of Life to the hungry sheep: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." "Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (2 Tim. 2. 15; Matt. 24. 45, 46; Acts 20. 28). In this connection the pastor will prove the absolute necessity of receiving for his own soul continual fresh supplies of truth through the unction of the Holy Spirit. For he is not to bring before his hearers truth rough and undigested, but is himself to be "first partaker of the fruits" (2 Tim. 2. 6); his words are to be "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2. 13); the provender is to be "clean ... winnowed with the shovel and with the fan" (Isa. 30. 24). The gifts and grace and constant gracious experience requisite for this, must be received from the Fountain Head: for only as a minister is favoured to carry with him the unction of the truth upon his own heart through fresh contact with the Lord Jesus, will his ministry be profitable.

2. To take the oversight (rule, guide) over them. The manner and the motive are stated: "Willingly ... of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5. 2-4). This oversight embraces a "watching for the people's souls as they that must give account"; "taking heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine"; "reproving, rebuking, exhorting, with all long suffering and doctrine"; "charging them that are rich in this world that they be not high minded"; an insistence on the practical fruits of the

gospel in the lives of the members; and an “instructing those that oppose themselves, if God will peradventure give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”; a “diligence to know the state of the flock,” which is a gracious, affectionate interestedness and not interference and busybodying; a visiting and praying with the sick; a tender solicitation for the feeble-minded; a restraining of the rash and an encouraging of the humble; a rebuking of the unruly and disorderly, a guiding of the doubtful, an instructing of the ignorant, a stimulating of the fearful, a comforting of the sad, a befriending of the solitary.

In innumerable ways the overseer of a church will prove his serious need of continual renewings in the “inner man” with communications of grace, strength, patience and love; and of the “harmlessness of the dove” combined with the “wisdom of the serpent.” Nor will this office be properly sustained without much prayer for the people of his charge. Love for their immortal souls will inculcate this, and most of the difficult cases he will handle on his knees in prayer. In his own sphere he may require to ask Paul’s question, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4. 16). For them his travail will again be very heavy, “until Christ be formed in them.” Some cases will evoke the glad tribute, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you ... for your fellowship in the gospel” (Phil. 1. 3-5). The peace of the flock, its health and growth, the addition of new members, the making of converts, will engage the pastor’s anxious attention and prayers. This *ruling* and *oversight* will include the presidency at church meetings whereat the pastor’s gracious guidance – without domination – is desirable in important decisions: e.g., the admission of new members, the discipline of refractory members, etc. Ever must it be remembered that the pastor is not a “lord over God’s heritage,” although he be given a ruling position to which the people are obliged to submit as under God. This authority is best sustained through the ministry by the unctuous power of the truth in the hearts of the members. This will produce from the godly a willing yield of hearty submission, together with a loyal support of the pastor against the unruly. Timothy and Titus were enjoined not to let any man despise them, by which the apostle seems to have intended, Seek that the unction of the Spirit of God in your ministrations invest your position with power and authority in the hearts of the people for the ruling of the church by love that there may be a standing “fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil 1. 27).

*(To be continued)*

---

The outward call of the gospel may make a professor, but the inward call makes a possessor.

*Thomas Watson*

## BOOK REVIEW

---

**Worship and Witness in Crisis**, edited by Matthew Vogan and Matthew Hyde; paperback; 290 pages; £10.95 plus postage; published by Ettrick Press and available from their web site, [www.ettrickpress.co.uk](http://www.ettrickpress.co.uk), or 98 The Brow, Brighton, BN2 6LN.

In one way this is a remarkable book – a collection of essays from those in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland (continuing), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and Strict Baptists in England, yet written without contention and often with much heart-searching. And the reason? Because God has been pleased in judgment to bring upon the whole world a deadly pandemic, and in the United Kingdom the government has passed laws bringing in restrictions on public worship which affect all religions, and Christians particularly, in ways we have never known before. The suddenness of the lockdown which started in March 2020 caught us all unawares, and the varying responses were not often thought through biblically. Many churches streamed their services online who would never have considered this an option previously, yet questions have arisen, especially regarding the differences between online services and the biblical principle of gathering together for worship, and even whether the government has a right to restrict public worship in the way it has. The essays in this book seek to address some of these issues.

If there is one lesson which is apparent, it is that when faced with difficulties which have affected our ability to worship God publicly in the way we have been used to, there has been much more unity of spirit in our mourning before the Lord on account of our loss, which, as in this book, has brought Christians together. And yet there is also the potential for serious disagreements even between churches in one denomination over minor matters, such as the use of masks in public worship and the singing (or otherwise) in services. The second essay in the book, “How may the church preserve unity in the midst of disagreement?” gives a solemn, yet gracious warning in this context. It relates occasions in the past, particularly among the Scottish churches, where dissensions arose, even when apparently contending for biblical principles, which ended up with godly men on opposite sides becoming a laughing stock to the ungodly world around them. And we as Strict Baptists can look back on the “God-honouring movement” in the 1930s which started from an honourable desire to contend for the truth of the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus, but in the end resulted in dissension and strife even between those who believed the same doctrines. Sadly we each have to learn we are only safe as the Lord keeps us, and sometimes even contending for the truth in our own wisdom can lead us a long way from “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4. 3).

The last chapter in the book, by the two editors, entitled, “How can we move on from this crisis?” summarises these dangers well, and yet shows, if the Lord is pleased to humble us under His mighty hand, what a blessing might yet result from His chastening hand upon us in this pandemic.

We commend the prayerful reading of this book. The reader may not always see eye to eye in every detail, but there are lessons for us each. May we each be preserved from thinking, “Last time we were caught on the hop; now next

time we will know what to do.” Rather may we be given grace to humble ourselves before God, and seek to walk in His fear. Joseph Hart’s hymn is very apposite.

“False lights delude the eyes,  
And lead the steps astray;  
That traveller treads the surest here  
That seldom sees his way.” (H. 308)

John. A. Kingham, Luton

## THE SINNER’S WELCOME AT THE MERCY SEAT

Who is it knocks at mercy’s door,  
And pleads on humble knee?  
A sinner, Lord, as vile and poor  
As ever came to Thee.

Say, what’s the cause of all thy grief?  
What is it thou would’st have?  
Lord, of all sinners I’m the chief,  
But such Thou cam’st to save.

My wants, my wounds and wretchedness,  
Are all before Thine eye;  
O let Thy mercy meet my case,  
And every want supply.

I dare not plead before Thy face,  
That better days I’ve seen,  
Alas! I sprang from Adam’s race,  
A leper all unclean.

Yet, as I passed beside Thy door,  
I saw it written there,  
The sinner wretched, blind, or poor,  
Receives a welcome here.

Lo, such I come, and at Thy feet  
Receive Thy mercy free;  
O love untold! my soul repeat,  
Why me, O Lord, why me?

John Kent (1766-1843)

## NOTICE OF DEATH

**David Oldham**, for many years pastor at Stamford and later Evington, passed to his eternal rest on Lord’s day, July 18th, 2021, aged 91 years. “The memory of the just is blessed.”



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
OCTOBER 2021

---

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

---

**“LET HIM TAKE HOLD OF MY STRENGTH”**

---

In this mysterious chapter (Isaiah 27), the Lord is speaking of His church in Isaiah’s day as a vineyard, over which He kept peculiar care, to guard it from harm, and root out the brambles and briars which so often hinder the fruitfulness of God’s people. The words of our subject are particularly encouraging as they are a sacred invitation to the church of Christ in all ages, not just Isaiah’s, to seek strength from the only source from which help must come in the pathway of faith.

Who is the Lord’s strength?

We are left in no doubt when we consider the following scriptures:

“I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people” (Psa. 89. 19).

“His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory” (Psa. 98. 1).

“The Son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself” (Psa. 80. 17).

Of whom is the prophet speaking? None other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, God manifest in the flesh.

How wonderful that God in the Person of His dear Son should permit, vile, unworthy sinners to lay hold of Him!

We have several precious examples of those who have obtained seasonable help by literally laying hold.

Jacob would not let the Angel of the Covenant go until he had been blessed. The woman with the issue of blood, whose touch of the Saviour’s hem brought instant healing. Thomas, who was commanded to touch the Saviour to dispel his unbelieving spirit.

But then in a spiritual way, did not the dying thief lay hold of Christ as he sued for mercy on the cross? Likewise, the man full of leprosy who pleaded both Christ’s sovereignty and His ability to gain his cure.

We are told by Paul of the blessings that belong to those “who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them” in a precious Christ, our Forerunner.

So what strength is it that faith gains when it lays hold of Christ?

Firstly, faith gains a righteousness, which we could never have had the strength to produce. The obedience of Christ is a robe wrought out by the strength of God incarnate. As such it satisfies all the demands of

God's holy, just law by way of justifying all who have fled for refuge to lay hold on this sacred refuge.

Secondly, faith gains a full and complete atonement for sins, past, present and future, something neither our tears nor our zeal could have accomplished had they flowed for ever! Only He who "bore all incarnate God could bear," had the strength for such an undertaking.

Thirdly, faith obtains strength for the race in which it is engaged. How often do we have to relearn the lesson Paul learned in 2 Corinthians 12, that Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness? But how precious is the declaration which gave Paul the ability to live with his thorny path: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

So, this sacred word is one of the "lets" in Scripture which are left on record for needy souls. Words such as "Let him that is athirst come ... let him take the water of life freely." So, the "let" in this meditation is for those weak and helpless ones who have come to the end of their own strength in the battle against the world, flesh and devil, and whose thorny path daily reveals their impotence to continue in their own strength.

The peace which ensues from laying hold on this strength, can only be obtained in this way. This is what Isaiah meant in the previous chapter. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (margin reading: Rock of Ages) (Isa. 26. 3, 4).

How precious then are the confirming words of peace conveyed to the fearing disciples by our Lord on the eve of His sufferings. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14. 27).

---

---

## PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING

*Sermon preached by John S. Green at Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London, on Lord's day morning, June 14th, 1970*

---

**Text:** "Partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3. 1).

We have set forth in God's holy Word several different callings. There is a general calling which is very clear right the way through the sacred Scriptures. We are not placed here on earth as animals, but we all have a conscience and we all know so far what God requires of us. Although we are a nation so solemnly sunken in sin, yet some of us remember when there have been times of calamities, like in the last two wars, when things seemed black against us; then people knew what God

required and how many would flock to places of worship. There was the general call, and I believe, my friends, it is for the good of any nation and any individual to obey the general calling there is in God's holy Word.

Now wilfully to disobey this calling must bring with it solemn consequences in the end. God has spoken to people other than by way of His grace. He has made them so far to know what He requires of them and they have sometimes very wilfully gone the very opposite to God's call, against light and knowledge. They have disobeyed God's Word, they have been guilty of doing what they full well know is wrong, and sometimes have omitted to do what God has justly required of them.

Now this general calling, we see very clearly in the case of the Israelites of old, that vast company. It was necessary that God should give them certain commandments and laws, and it was necessary for their good that they should obey those commandments of God. Now God's law still stands true, it is unalterable, and it is a good thing when a nation or individual persons hearken to this general call that God makes.

We need to be very careful in our remarks here, to differentiate between this general calling and what our text speaks of as a "heavenly calling." Now to set this general calling before people and to exhort them to do those things which God requires is quite right, and it becomes people to obey this general calling; if they do not, then the consequences will be very solemn. But to suggest or intimate that by observing this general calling and obeying what God has generally commanded, there is any salvation in these things, is wrong. We must not give the least intimation that there is any salvation in our observing and obeying this general calling.

We see in the first chapter in the Proverbs the solemnity of not observing this general calling: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof." Now people may have looked at such a scripture as this and come to some conclusion, perhaps, that it is possible for God to give an effectual calling to a sinner and they be able to refuse that calling; now that is wrong. But this Scripture deals with this general calling and thus some have come into some providential trouble, or a nation into national trouble, and then in their time of necessity they have sought God's intervention on their behalf. But He may say to them what He has said in this chapter: "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD."

Now God has called people by a general call to do certain things for Him or for His church. You take for instance the case of Cyrus. When

the Children of Israel disobeyed God and they were in captivity in Babylon, God raised up and called Cyrus by a general calling to be their deliverer. And God said, "I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." He never knew God savingly; he had that outward call and he had to do what God required him to do, but he never knew the Lord. Now this may make some of us tremble, it may search us out; how a person may do much for the cause of God and be but mere scaffolding as it were, never part of the building. The dear Lord Jesus Himself said, "Many are called, but few are chosen" – searching words.

We find that Judas was called, called to be a disciple at least nominally, but you see my friends he never received a heavenly calling. He so far obeyed for a time that calling; although he was a thief, an unrighteous and an ungodly man, yet he was called with an outward calling by the Lord Himself. So these things are left on record for our instruction.

Now there are those who may hear the outward calling of the gospel, and they may so far seek to obey the word they hear preached. Their life may become so far upright and so far naturally sincere, and yet they may be a complete stranger to the heavenly call that is mentioned in our text. You take for instance the young man of whom we read in John 18; the Lord told him what was required by this outward calling and he said, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." He was what we should call a very honest, straightforward young man in every particular, but what did Jesus say to him? In spite of his carefulness regarding these outward things, "Yet lackest thou one thing." How very solemn those words.

Now my dear friends, we need to be careful in our ministry lest we may persuade men so far to keep the moral law, and they consider that they are safe for eternity. It is our duty to keep that law; it is our duty to do those things outwardly that God has commanded us. It is our duty to refrain from doing those things which are not lawful. But, you see, a person may so far do their duty and yet be strangers to this heavenly calling. The Lord Jesus said in the last day, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" And He will say, "Depart from Me; I never knew you." They merely trusted in the outward call; they merely trusted to their outward obedience.

Now I say this is good, it is to be commended, this obedience so far to God's Word and His commands; but to trust to anything we may do,

will be fatal at last. By putting our confidence in this outward call alone, we shall be weighed in the balances and found wanting. But on the other hand, it is God's general calling, and in their ministry the apostles in the early church did rightly exhort sinners to repentance and exhorted them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now their ministry itself was but an outward calling, not that those dear men in the early church for one moment believed that sinners spiritually considered, being dead in trespasses and sins, were capable of doing these things, but there was that general calling. And their express hope was that God would bless that general calling and accompany it with divine power, enabling their hearers to give heed to these things, and God did. O what blessings and what power attended the ministry of those servants of God in the early church! To a certain extent they used a general calling in their ministry.

And so today we do not know whom God's dear people are or where they are; we know not to whom we may be speaking, but we are quite sure of this, that no sinner by any strength of their own are capable of truly repenting after a godly sort. It is the divine influence of the Holy Spirit that enables them to do this.

Now it is a very narrow margin between this general calling and this heavenly calling. "Who is sufficient for these things?" we may ask, but we hope "our sufficiency is of God." We sometimes sing,

"When wisdom calls, they stop their ear,  
And headlong urge the mad career;  
Judgments nor mercies ne'er can sway  
Their roving feet to wisdom's way." (H. 76)

We may quite rightly, according to the ability we have, warn the ungodly, preach to the ungodly; it becomes us so to do, and many may hear us and yet not regard what we say. To a certain extent they may even fear and tremble under the searching word that is preached by God's servants (although they are but poor, sinful men). You remember how it was with one when the apostle preached; he certainly feared and trembled, but he bade him go and said he would hear him at a more convenient time. The truth was, you see, he did not want the truth; he did not wish for the truth; he had no appetite for it. Now how very sad and solemn it is when people are in such a state and condition. But we do believe this, that that call which by the Holy Spirit reaches the hearts of God's people is effectual, irresistible; there is no doubt about that.

My text speaks of this being a heavenly calling, and it also sets forth that these Hebrews were partakers of this heavenly calling. Now you see, a person might sit at a well-spread table, but they might not partake of anything. That is exactly how it is with some when they come to God's house. There may be a spiritually well-spread table; there may be a beholding of these things, but not a partaking of them. A person may

observe those who are made partakers of this heavenly calling and see a complete change made manifest in their hearts and lives, and yet they themselves never be a partaker of it. Now this is a most essential part of religion. Without it, though we may obey and observe many outward things in religion, we are far off, infinitely far off from the kingdom of God. So we believe there is a time that God has appointed.

“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)

The time comes when God’s people are called from nature’s darkness into His marvellous light, when they are called, some of them, from a mere fleshly profession of religion to know the truth in the innermost parts of their hearts.

Now God has various ways of calling His dear people, but Peter exhorted those to whom he was writing to be very diligent about this matter: “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Now whether we be ministers or whoever we may be, if we are called by grace we shall spend a good deal of our time in seeking to give this diligence to make our calling and election sure. There will be many an errand to the throne of grace that the Holy Ghost will confirm that we are partakers of this heavenly calling. There may be times with some of you when you painfully feel,

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

Through the trouble you are in, O the concern manifest in your hearts: What if I only have an outward call in religion? What if it has only yielded outward obedience that can never save me? Don’t you find sometimes in secret you have to wrestle hard with God, that He will assure you that you have come in by the “wicket gate,” that you have come in by the door of regeneration into the sheepfold?

This calling is a heavenly calling. God has used His servants to this end. Some have heard a voice far more powerful than the voice of the minister; the voice has penetrated the hidden recesses of their hearts; it has discovered to them their sinnership and their perilous state by nature. And this heavenly calling may be known by those things which attend it, or, as the apostle says, “Which accompany salvation.”

“Partakers of the heavenly calling.” Now those who are made partakers of the heavenly calling are blessed and called to true repentance; not reformation only, no, but called to repent from their very hearts before God, on account of their sins. O my dear friends, have you, have I received this heavenly call? Have we mourned over our sins, the

heinousness, the blackness of them, and feared that we should never reach heaven on account of our sins, and felt deep down within, that we have sinned against heaven and in God's sight? Now this is being made a partaker of the heavenly calling. This is not, my friends, merely to look at spiritual things, but to be made partakers of them.

Another evidence of being a partaker of the heavenly calling is that such sinners are blessed with true confession of their sins. They acknowledge in prayer their sins before the great God. My dear friends, have you and I been called to humble confession and acknowledgement of our sins? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." These who receive and are made partakers of the heavenly calling are called to prayer, not mere external prayer, but to pray from their very heart, like Saul of Tarsus when God dealt effectually with him. God said, "Behold, he prayeth." And all who are effectually called by God's grace will be taught to pray. You see how contented Saul was in his old religion, how he excelled many, but though he had so far an outward calling, he renounced all that; he attached no importance to that whatsoever; he had something far greater, far more essential than that. When he received this heavenly calling, though he may have made so-called prayers before, but now he was made a partaker of true prayer, real prayer before God. Now do we, through grace, know something of this?

Now this heavenly calling will be a light in us that cannot be hid. When God calls His dear people by His grace, He calls them out of an ungodly world; He calls them away from the world that lieth in wickedness. He says by His servants, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate ... touch not the unclean thing; and I will ... be a Father unto you." We believe, then, this call is effectual, and also it does not lead to licentiousness in any way; but this heavenly calling will lead to a humble, gracious and consistent life before the Lord. And the more grace we have, the more consistent will our life be before God and before the church.

Now there were some in the apostles' days who were partakers of the heavenly calling, and he said, "Ye are our epistle ... known and read of all men." "Partakers of the heavenly calling," these sinners are called to be God's children, sons and daughters of the most high God. What a wonderful calling, what a precious calling this is – poor, sinful creatures, hell-deserving sinners, called to be the children of the living God. His sons and daughters have union with Him who has given them the heavenly call, the dear Lord Jesus Christ. My dear friends, there is not a greater honour that can be conferred upon a poor sinner on earth than to be made a partaker of this heavenly calling. They are called to be God's friends, and God is their Friend.

Thus if we had grace and time to look further into it, we should see what a wonderful calling this is, and all this to fit and prepare these sinners for heaven. "Partakers of the heavenly calling," convinced of sin and called by precious faith, and enabled by that faith to consider the Person and work of the dear Lord Jesus. Called to have our sins forgiven, it is a heavenly calling, the Lord Jesus alone can forgive our sins.

Now my dear friends, have you and I received this calling? Have we been made partakers of it? It is a heavenly calling, and these sinners are called in a heavenly way to know the dear Lord Jesus as their blessed Saviour. They are called to trust alone in His sacred merits. They have no confidence in the flesh or anything they may do, but their confidence is in what the Lord Jesus is, and what He has done for them. Now can we trace tonight some marks that we have been made partakers of the heavenly calling?

There is another part to this, and that is being called graciously unto obedience, obeying in a loving, gracious way what the dear Lord has commanded us, relative to the ordinances of His house. Now I would say to a person if they have not had this heavenly calling to obedience, you stay where you are, but when the Lord comes and blesses one of His dear people, they receive in their heart this heavenly calling. Things are made clear and plain for them. They are not influenced by man, but they get this calling from God Himself. They may seek to have it sweetly confirmed, and the Lord confirms it. So they are called by this heavenly calling to loving obedience; they are called to the Lord's table to show forth the Lord's death till He come.

Then there is also a heavenly calling regarding the ministry. Not everyone that has preached has had a heavenly calling. Some godly people, I believe, who may have been very useful in the church, have more or less spoiled their lives by presuming they have a heavenly calling for the ministry. We should not expect a graciously-taught man to advance anything erroneous, but on the other hand there would be no authority in one's ministry, if these did not receive from God a heavenly calling for the ministry. Some are persuaded by men, and I feel they do a lot of harm, by persuading men to go out into the ministry. I would seek sweetly to feel one has been made a partaker of the heavenly calling. We have several in the Scriptures and it is very clear they had a heavenly calling for this work. You take Isaiah and Jeremiah; you take the Apostles Peter, James and John; they had a heavenly calling. They were called by Jesus Himself to this solemn, and yet blessed work, partakers of the heavenly calling. Thus flesh has no hand in this really at all. A man exercised regarding the ministry will seek to get his credentials clearly from God Himself, although it is right for the sake of order for one to exercise their gift before the brethren. They will not object to that,



if they have received and have been made partakers of the heavenly calling.

But there is one more call that is to come, to everyone who has been made a partaker of the heavenly calling, and that call will come when a work of grace is accomplished in us; that call will come when we have done God's will here on earth. And that call, my dear friends, will be a welcome home, a welcome to heaven to be for ever with the dear Lord Jesus, and to be for ever with His dear people; to be then completely freed from sin and all the effects of sin for ever and for ever. Many we have known and loved on earth have received this heavenly calling; they have been taken from us, taken to their eternal rest; they were fitted and prepared for that change by the dear Holy Spirit. They were amongst those who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and so they are for ever with the Lord. A blessed and wonderful calling this will be to all those who have been made partakers of the heavenly calling, in being called from the world, that state of ignorance they were in, to know and love and serve and fear the Lord. Called to repent of their sins and to acknowledge them; called from an ungodly world that at last they may be called into heaven itself by the dear Lord.

May the dear Lord bless to us these things and exercise our hearts to see how matters really stand with us for eternity. And may we be prevented from trusting to any general call in religion, and be preserved from trusting to anything we may do of a religious nature. May we each be brought to trust alone to the dear Lord Jesus and His finished work. Amen.

---

---

## COMMUNION WITH GOD

*By John Owen (1616-1683)*

---

*That the saints have communion with God – 1 John 1. 3 considered to that purpose – somewhat of the nature of communion in general.*

In the first Epistle of John chapter 1 verse 3, the apostle assures them to whom he wrote that the fellowship of believers “is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,” and this he doth with such an unusual kind of expression as bears the force of an asseveration [assertion, declaration]; whence we have rendered it, “Truly our friendship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

The outward appearance and condition of the saints in those days being very mean and contemptible – their leaders being accounted as the filth of this world, and as the offscouring of all things – the inviting others unto fellowship with them, and a participation of the precious

things which they did enjoy, seems to be exposed to many contrary reasons and objections: What benefit is there in communion with them? Is it anything else but to be sharers in troubles, reproaches, scorns and all manner of evils? To prevent or remove these and the like exceptions, the apostle gives them to whom he wrote to know (and that with some earnestness of expression), that notwithstanding all the disadvantages their fellowship lay under, unto a carnal view, yet in truth it was, and would be found to be (in reference to some with whom they held it), very honourable, glorious and desirable. For “truly,” saith he, “our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

This being so earnestly and directly asserted by the apostle, we may boldly follow him with our affirmation – namely, “That the saints of God have communion with Him.” And a holy and spiritual communion it is, as shall be declared. How this is spoken distinctly in reference to the Father and the Son, must afterward be fully opened and carried on.

By nature, since the entrance of sin, no man hath any communion with God. He is light, we darkness; and what communion hath light with darkness? He is life, we are dead; He is love, and we are enmity; and what agreement can there be between us? Men in such a condition have neither Christ, nor hope, nor God in the world (see Eph. 2. 12); “being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them” (Eph. 4. 18). Now, two cannot walk together, unless they be agreed (see Amos 3. 3). Whilst there is this distance between God and man, there is no walking together for them in any fellowship or communion. Our first interest in God was so lost by sin, as that there was left unto us (in ourselves) no possibility of a recovery. As we had deprived ourselves of all power for reparation, so God had not revealed any way of access unto Himself; or that He could, under any consideration, be approached unto by sinners in peace. Not any work that God had made, not any attribute that He had revealed, could give the least light into such a dispensation.

The manifestation of grace and pardoning mercy, which is the only door of entrance into any such communion, is not committed unto any but unto Him alone in whom it is, by whom that grace and mercy was purchased, through whom it is dispensed, who reveals it from the bosom of the Father. Hence this communion and fellowship with God is not in express terms mentioned in the Old Testament. The thing itself is found there, but the clear light of it, and the boldness of faith in it, is discovered in the gospel, and by the Spirit administered therein. By that Spirit we have this liberty (see 2 Cor. 3. 17, 18). Abraham was the friend of God (see Isa. 41. 8); David, a man after His own heart; Enoch walked with Him (Gen. 5. 22); all enjoying this communion and fellowship for the substance of it.

But the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest whilst the first tabernacle was standing (see Heb. 9. 8). Though they had

communion with God, yet they had not a boldness and confidence in that communion. This follows the entrance of our High Priest into the most holy place (see Heb. 4. 16, 10. 19). The veil also was upon them, that they had not freedom and liberty in their access to God (see 2 Cor. 3. 15, 16, etc.). But now in Christ we have boldness and access with confidence to God (see Eph. 3. 12). This boldness and access with confidence the saints of old were not acquainted with. By Jesus Christ alone, then, on all considerations as to being and full manifestation, is this distance taken away. He hath consecrated for us a new and living way (the old being quite shut up), "through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10. 20); and "through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2. 18). "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (verses 13, 14). Of this foundation of all our communion with God, more afterward, and at large. Upon this new bottom and foundation, by this new and living way, are sinners admitted unto communion with God, and have fellowship with Him. And truly, for sinners to have fellowship with God, the infinitely-holy God, is an astonishing dispensation.

To speak a little of it in general: communion relates to things and persons. A joint participation in anything whatever, good or evil, duty or enjoyment, nature or actions, gives this denomination to them so partaking of it. A common interest in the same nature gives all men a fellowship or communion therein. Of the elect it is said, "Those children partook of" (or had fellowship in, with the rest of the world) "flesh and blood" (see Heb. 2. 14) – the same common nature with the rest of mankind; and, therefore, Christ also came into the same fellowship.

There is also a communion as to state and condition, whether it be good or evil; and this, either in things internal and spiritual, such as is the communion of saints among themselves; or in respect of outward things. So was it with Christ and the two thieves, as to one condition, and to one of them in respect of another. They were under the same sentence to the cross (see Luke 23. 40). They had communion as to that evil condition whereunto they were adjudged; and one of them requested (which he also obtained) a participation in that blessed condition whereupon our Saviour was immediately to enter.

There is also a communion or fellowship in actions, whether good or evil. In good, is that communion and fellowship in the gospel, or in the performance and celebration of that worship of God which in the gospel is instituted, which the saints do enjoy (see Phil. 1. 5); which, as to the general kind of it, David so rejoices in (see Ps. 42. 4). In evil, was that wherein Simeon and Levi were brethren (Gen. 49. 5). They had communion in that cruel act of revenge and murder. Our communion

with God is not comprised in any one of these kinds; of some of them it is exclusive. It cannot be natural; it must be voluntary and by consent. It cannot be of state and conditions, but in actions. It cannot be in the same actions upon a third party, but in a return from one to another.

The infinite disparity that is between God and man, made the great philosopher conclude that there could be no friendship between them. Some distance in the persons holding friendship he could allow, nor could exactly determine the bounds and extent thereof; but that between God and man, in his apprehension, left no place for it. Another says, indeed, that there is a certain fellowship between God and man; but the general intercourse of providence is all he apprehended. Some arose to higher expressions, but they understood nothing whereof they spake. This knowledge is hid in Christ, as will afterward be made to appear. It is too wonderful for nature, as sinful and corrupted. Terror and apprehensions of death at the presence of God is all that it guides unto. But we have, as was said, a new foundation, and a new discovery of this privilege.

Now, communion is the mutual communication of such good things as wherein the persons holding that communion are delighted, bottomed upon some union between them. So it was with Jonathan and David; their souls clave to one another in love (see 1 Sam. 20. 17). There was the union of love between them, and then they really communicated all issues of love mutually. In spiritual things this is more eminent: those who enjoy this communion have the most excellent union for the foundation of it; and the issues of that union, which they mutually communicate, are the most precious and eminent.

Of the union which is the foundation of all that communion we have with God I have spoken largely elsewhere, and have nothing farther to add thereunto.

Our communion, then, with God consisteth in His communication of Himself unto us, with our reparation unto Him of that which He requireth and accepteth, flowing from that union which in Jesus Christ we have with Him. And it is twofold:

1. Perfect and complete, in that full fruition of His glory and total giving up of ourselves to Him, resting in Him as our utmost end, which we shall enjoy when we see Him as He is; and,

2. Initial and incomplete, in the firstfruits and dawnings of that perfection which we have here in grace; which only I shall handle.

It is, then, I say, of that mutual communication in giving and receiving, after a most holy and spiritual manner, which is between God and the saints while they walk together in a covenant of peace, ratified in the blood of Jesus, whereof we are to treat. And this we shall do, if God permit; in the meantime praying the God and Father of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath, of the riches of His grace, recovered us from a state of enmity into a condition of communion and fellowship with Himself, that both He that writes, and they that read the words of His mercy, may have such a taste of His sweetness and excellencies therein, as to be stirred up to a farther longing after the fulness of His salvation, and the eternal fruition of Him in glory.

*(To be continued)*

---

---

### THE CHARACTER OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN

*Extract from a sermon preached by John Fawcett at Accrington, Lancashire, on December 25th, 1783*

---

**Text:** "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psa. 34. 19).

No one, perhaps, was ever better acquainted with the afflictions and deliverances of the righteous than the royal psalmist, whose words we have now read, as the subject of our contemplation on this mournful occasion. He might well say, "Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down"; "I was brought low, and He helped me." He was caused to sing of judgment and mercy. His life was made up of dangers and deliverances, troubles and reliefs, till at length he was made to triumph over all, and possess the pleasures which flow at God's right hand for evermore.

This stratagem succeeded. And yet we should find it difficult to justify David in this part of his conduct. It seems, like Abraham's denying his wife, to have been owing to a weakness in his faith.

However, the sweet singer of Israel, when retired, had his thoughts divinely composed and happily employed. This psalm, which like some others is alphabetical, has not only much ingenuity in it, but the true spirit of piety and devotion. The psalmist begins by exciting himself and others to praise God for the instances of His mercy and kindness, which they had experienced.

It is observable that in the strait into which he had been brought, he had, as at other times, made the divine throne his refuge. And in so doing he had found comfort and relief. "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." He owns his meanness and poverty, and wonders that the Most High should look favourably upon him. "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." He makes grateful mention of the ministry of angels, exhorts the saints to a steady adherence to God, and assures them that their needs shall be supplied.

He turns himself to young people, and gives them the best advice: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD." His hands were full of business, and his heart of cares; yet a tender concern for the rising generation made him willing to undertake the instruction of youth. He enforces his admonitions by pointing out the destruction of the wicked, and God's care of the righteous. His face is against them that do evil, to cut them off; but the righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them. He is nigh unto them, and His eyes are upon them for good. He owns, as in our text, that the righteous man hath many afflictions; "but the LORD delivereth him out of them all."

The person spoken of in these words is a righteous man. That which is affirmed of him is, that he hath many afflictions. Yet how many soever they be, he is delivered out of them all. And the Author of his deliverance is the Lord.

We shall consider, through divine help, what is essential to the character of a righteous man.

This seems highly necessary, since the promised deliverance belongs only to the righteous. It will go ill with the wicked at death, judgment and to all eternity. If we mistake our character, and think we are something, whilst in reality we are nothing, we deceive ourselves, and the consequences of that deception will be awful indeed. The following hints, I hope, will direct us in forming a judgment of our state.

1. The righteous are partakers of God's salvation: "The salvation of the righteous is of the LORD" (Psa. 37. 39). It may be justly asked, "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" since we are positively assured that, "There is none righteous, no, not one." The answer is at hand. It is God's salvation that makes him so. Our natural estate is a state of bondage, pollution and guilt. But saving grace recovers us therefrom. Salvation is of the Lord, in its contrivance, procurement, application and completion.

That part of salvation which we have now in our view, is the renewal of the soul by regenerating grace. For, "If any man be in Christ" – i.e. be a righteous man – "he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The understanding, the will and the conscience are renewed. There are new desires, fears, sorrows, hopes and joys; there are new purposes, intentions and aims; there are new entertainments, new friends, new enemies, new attendants, new employments, a new way, and a new end. He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21. 5).

Of this divine change the apostle speaks when he says, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"; and when he assures us that it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but

according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." By His gracious operations, the mind is formed after the image of God. The divine law is written on the heart. The sinner laments his past follies. He is ashamed of all his former iniquities, and desirous for ever to have done with sin, and to live to Him that died for him, and rose again.

This gracious change is necessary to constitute us righteous. There may be a reformation in our outward actions, there may be the "form of godliness," but the power of it cannot exist in the soul without regenerating grace.

Salvation by Christ is not a repairing the ruins of the Fall. It is a laying a new foundation. We "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Christ is formed in the soul. The beauty of the Lord our God is upon us, Himself being the glorious pattern according to which the draught is taken. This is essential to the character of the righteous. He is possessed of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

2. The righteous adhere to God as their only refuge and rest. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. 18. 10). The name of the Lord is all that by which He is known – His infinite wisdom, His almighty power, His everlasting mercy, and His steadfast truth and veracity. Here the righteous run for relief and safety. Their "defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart." The name of the Lord is their city of refuge from the avenger of blood, the stings of conscience, the curses of the law, and the wrath and vengeance due to them for sin. Deeply sensible of their danger, they run here for protection. Starving with hunger, like the prodigal, they run here for supply. Sunk in misery and wretchedness, they look here for salvation. Disappointed of rest in creatures, they seek it only in God, where alone it is to be found. They hear the Saviour's tender invitation and, through grace, obey His heavenly call, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

3. The righteous are made so by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God. Perhaps a more important question can scarcely be proposed than that in Job. 9. 2: "How should man be just with God?" No acts of obedience performed by us can constitute us righteous. For, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" in the sight of God. The reason is plain. Our obedience is every way, and in every point defective, and comes "short of the glory of God." "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Were our obedience answerable to the requisitions of the law, that law would exhibit no charge against us; we should be justified by it. But since we have violated its precepts in ten thousand instances, we must necessarily be condemned by it. For, "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them

who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Guilty we all are; and as such condemned. The curse of a broken law falls upon us (see Gal. 3. 10). For the law can never pronounce us righteous when we are not so. That implies a contradiction.

By what expedient, then, can we be made righteous? I answer, the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith. It was wrought out by our Lord Jesus Christ, in His life and death; and that not only on our account, but in our room and stead. He was “made under the law, to redeem them that were under” it. He was “obedient unto death” for our sakes. He “gave Himself a ransom” for us. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.” He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people.”

It was thus that a precious Redeemer brought in everlasting righteousness. It was thus that He magnified the law, and made it honourable, and the Father declared Himself “well pleased.” His righteousness is emphatically styled, “the righteousness of God”; and is said to be “unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3. 22). It is made over to us as our portion; it is put upon us as our clothing. Thus, by an exchange which will excite wonder in heaven through eternal ages, Christ was “made ... sin for us, who knew no sin,” and we are “made the righteousness of God in Him.” The name by which He is called, is, “The LORD our righteousness.” And “all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” The complete work of our atoning Saviour, being every way answerable to all that the righteous law could demand, and we being thus interested in it, “there is” – there can be – “no condemnation” to us. Who can forbear to admire the wisdom, the justice and mercy of God, displayed in the contrivance of this amazing expedient? It is honourable to God in every view; and it is no less safe for man. “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.”

This is the leading truth of the blessed gospel, a truth of the greatest moment for our safety and comfort; and as such, a truth revealed in the divine records, with the greatest clearness and precision. What can be plainer than the apostle’s account of this matter? “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5. 18, 19). The way in which sinners are made righteous before God, and as such, finally saved, is here plainly laid open. A perfect righteousness is accepted at Christ’s hands for them; and that, not barely because it is



perfect, answerable in every respect to what the divine law demands, but also, because it was by the appointment of God, wrought out for them. "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD," may the believer in Jesus say, "my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isa. 61. 10).

4. The righteous man is in God's way, and holds on therein. "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17. 9). The religion of Jesus, in its own nature, requires that we should renounce every vice, and practise every virtue, that we should aim at universal purity, be making continual progress, and being found in God's way, should persevere therein; and then only stop in our course when we arrive at the happy regions of perfect purity. The righteous man lives in the practice of continual self-denial. By the power of divine grace, he governs his passions, he mortifies the flesh with its affections and lusts, and lives devoted to God. He hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and is often praying, "O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!" Reverence, love, humility and hope animate his devotions towards God; and uprightness, fidelity, charity and benevolence influence his conduct towards men. He walketh in uprightness; he worketh righteousness. It is thus the Holy Spirit describeth a righteous man. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous," i.e. he proves himself to be a righteous person, renewed by divine grace, and clothed in the righteousness which is unto, and upon all that believe.

Sincerity is the grand characteristic of a righteous man. "O Lord ... Thou hast proved mine heart; Thou hast visited me in the night; Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." He is conscious of continual imperfection. This is his grief and burden, and makes him often cry, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

The righteous is a man of an excellent spirit. He is more excellent than his neighbour, both in principle and practice. He is a partaker of God's salvation; he adheres to God as his only refuge and rest; he is made righteous by the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God; and he is in God's way, and perseveres therein.

I fear what we have been saying cuts off from the list of the righteous a great number of those who compose this audience. My brethren, let us not deceive ourselves. They who are not made saints in the estate of grace, shall never be saints in glory. As the stones were wrought and prepared in the mountains for building the temple of

Jerusalem, so those who are designed for the glorious temple above, are hewn, polished and prepared for it here. Holiness is no less necessary to salvation, than if it were the procuring cause of it. For without it no man can be finally saved. And yet salvation is wholly by grace.

---

## REFLECTIONS ON PSALM 23

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

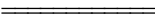
---

Hail! Thou great Shepherd of Israel, Thou that ledest Joseph like a flock! May I not humbly look up, and call Thee, blessed Jesus, my Shepherd also? Surely Thou hast been sent and appointed by the Father, to take upon Thee the sheepfold of all Thy redeemed, whom Thou hast purchased with Thy blood. And dost Thou not gather every one of them out of their state by nature, before that they are brought within Thy fold? Dost Thou not go after every wanderer into the mountains, to seek and search them out, whither they have been scattered in the dark and cloudy day? And when Thou hast found them, blessed Shepherd, dost Thou not lay them on Thy shoulders rejoicing? And when Thou bringest them home, dost Thou not cause Thine angels to rejoice with Thee over them that were lost? Surely, Lord, Thou hast done all this for me; Thou didst seek me out, for else never should I have sought Thee. Thou hast brought me into the fold of Thy church, and never, never shall I want.

“Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon!” Yes, Thou wilt feed me in wholesome pastures, even Thy blessed Word, and by Thine ordinances; Thou wilt cause me to drink of that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; Thou wilt heal me when diseased; Thou wilt bind me up when torn; Thou wilt defend me from the lion’s den, and the mountains of leopards; Thou wilt clothe me with the garment of Thy righteousness; Thou wilt separate me from the goats, and the unclean; Thou wilt cause me to lie down, with present joy and safety, upon the green pastures of Thy glorious Person and glorious work, Thy covenant righteousness, relations and characters; and I shall lie down hereafter in Thy bosom, where Thou puttest the lambs of Thy flock.

Yes! yes! Thou almighty Shepherd, all this, and infinitely more, wilt Thou do for me, and in me, and by me, until Thou bringest home all Thy flock into one fold; when every one shall pass again under the hand of him that telleth them, to manifest that of them the Father hath given Thee none is, or can be lost; that none of Thy sheep can perish, nor any pluck them out of Thine and Thy Father’s hand. And at length, blessed Jesus, Thou wilt bring Thy whole fold around Thyself in glory, where Thou wilt

lead them to fountains of living waters, and all tears, shall be wiped away from all eyes.



## BENJAMIN

*By Henry Law (1797-1884)*

Benjamin! Thoughts of love are quickly kindled by the very name. Affection folded Benjamin in its embrace. He closed the line of Jacob's sons, and thus no younger rival moved him from his fondled place. He was endeared, too, as the expiring Rachel's child. She died when he began to live. Thus all the feelings which have softest sway enshrined him eminently in his father's heart.

When then this tribe appears, our minds anticipate much tender favour. And it is so. A designation of endearment is adjoined: "Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord."

Reader, here pause. A wondrous truth refuses to be put aside. Give it glad welcome. Listen fully to its cheering tale. Imbibe the precious draught of its delight. Let its sweet fragrance perfume all your hours. The truth is this. The name pertains to every member of God's family: "Beloved of the Lord." Each child of God is loved, as a Benjamin, in heaven's palace.

What! loved of God! Love is the soul of feeling. It is the blazing of the heart in warmth. It is a current of resistless strength. It places a dear object above self. It is intense desire for fellowship. It weeps, and joys, and thrives, in unison with another's sorrow and delight. It is the strongest impulse of the breast. It holds the rudder of the life. It is the principle which many waters cannot quench, neither can floods drown it (see Song 8. 7).

Is there such feeling in the realms of light towards denizens of earth? Yes, verily. Each of the heaven-born seed is loved with perfect love by the Triune Jehovah.

The Father loves – and writes His loved ones in the book of life, and chooses them to be the spouse, and crown, and glory of His Son, and sends His Christ to buy them out of ruin's grasp – to cleanse their filth in efficacious blood – to meeten them to dwell as partners of His throne.

Jesus so loves, that He puts on our flesh, and takes the place of the condemned, and bears in His own body all the just penalties of sin, and undergoes the uttermost of wrath, and drinks the very dregs of anguish. Attend Him through His painful walk on earth; approach the garden mysteries; stand by the shameful cross; mark all the signs of infinite distress; hear the deep groans wrung from His agonised mind. The language of these sufferings reveals how much, how truly, and how

constantly He loved. Next raise the eye of faith, and see Him now at God's right hand. Whence those incessant prayers, those mighty pleadings, that watchful eye, those outstretched hands, that life devoted to one cause? His present acts repeat, that He still loves.

The Spirit loves. It must be so. This feeling draws Him to a sinner's heart. He ever finds that spot all ice, all death, all enmity to God. But still He enters in, and works a saving change. He exerts renovating might. He creates new life, and light, and holy powers. He discloses the activity, the vileness, and the end of sin. He thus stirs up the trembler to flee unto redeeming arms. He gives him faith to take the title deeds of heaven. He leaves not, nor forsakes, till grace expands into full glory. Such is the Spirit's work. And is not every part a manifest display of love?

Thus God is love. He never was, and never will be, but one ocean of eternal love. The truth, then, is most clear. Each real believer ever was, and ever will be a Benjamin. His is the title, "Beloved of the Lord."

Believer, ponder the value of this fact. Its preciousness exceeds worlds upon worlds of treasure. Our present scene is full of change, of coldness, and of hate. Friends die, or kindly feeling withers. A frown may freeze, where smiles were wont to cheer. But here is our solace. We look above. Heaven's love knows no eclipse. In that unfailing brightness we forget surrounding gloom. Here, too, we find a mighty magnet drawing us to holiness. We must love Him, who so loves us. We cannot love, and not desire to please. Hence His pure law becomes our true delight. The slavish chains fall off, and willing service is our joyful walk. Sense of God's love thus cheers and sanctifies.

Through this prelude we approach the blessing assigned to Benjamin. It proves that God's love is a vast treasure of gracious gifts. It shows a threefold front. It strikes a triple cord. It brings the pledge of safety, constant shelter and fellowship with God.

1. *Safety*. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him." Survey the picture. It is lovely in repose. We seem to see a child without one care seated securely by a parent's side. No anxious fears disturb. Undoubting trust spreads its calm influence. A father, strong and watchful, is at hand. An arm is ready to defend. The happy son knows it, and confides.

The image tenderly depicts the true believer's blessed state. He sits in peace beside his God. Faith's wings have borne him upwards. His heart and thoughts have settled in a tranquil realm. The restless wanderings of former days are past. There was a time when he was tossed about on stormy waves. He wandered hopelessly in search of peace. But now he rests in God. His home is by his Father's side. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him."

This seat is safety. For think, how high it is upraised! It is with God. What foe can now assail? Satan's darts are very many, and impelled with mighty force. His arms, too, have exceeding skill. But these are heights above his reach. The arrows from his strongest bow have but restricted wings. The shafts fly not to those lofty seats, where God's dear children cluster. They dwell in safety, for they dwell by Him.

A tender voice is ever heard, "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" (Isa. 41. 14). Again it sounds, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10. 28, 29). Each tranquil Benjamin may realise, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8. 31). They dwell in safety by Him.

2. *Constant shelter.* This is a sweet phase of safety, and this is thus graphically promised: "The Lord shall cover him all the day long." The warrior is sheltered, whom a broad shield surrounds. The sword may deal fierce blows, the spear may roughly thrust, all weapons may attack. But the assaults touch not. He stands unhurt. The inmates of a well-built house are screened. The hurricane may rage. The hail may beat. The rain may pour down floods. But the roof spreads a sheltering defence. The strife of elements is warded off. So when the feathered mother spreads her sheltering wings, the hawk may soar above, the gathering clouds may menace, but the downy refuge covers. The young birds nestle free from harm.

Thus for each Benjamin a constant covert is provided. He needs it. No warrior is more sorely pressed. The whole artillery of hell seeks his destruction. No traveller is more exposed. Satan without, the world around, a treacherous heart within, assail his path. No infant bird is more beset with perils. A preying beak is ever ready to devour.

But he defies this multitudinous array. How is it? Is he not weak in self? Yes. His strength is feebler than a bruised reed. Alone he cannot face one single foe – much less the myriads of earth and hell. Here is his shelter: "The Lord shall cover him all the day long."

It would have been abundant favour to have given some shield, or to have raised some roof, or to have spread some wing. But mercy provides more for Benjamin. The Lord Himself is the constant covering. The Lord, whose arms are infinite, ever secretes him in Himself. "Our life is hid with Christ in God." Who, then, can injure? "All the day long," the enemy may watch. "All the day long," the shelter screens.

But the believer is more than sheltered from these perils. He is, moreover, covered from the condemning eye of God. His life must always be a mass of sin. What hateful filth defiles him! But this may all

be buried from God's sight. O my soul, ever realise the covering robe, which Jesus wrought and proffers. It is righteousness perfect, spotless, divine. This He delights to cast around you. Adorned with this, you fearlessly may meet Jehovah's scrutiny. No blemish can be found. This imputed beauty makes you fairer than angelic purity. Put on by faith this precious mantle, and then sing aloud, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psa. 32. 1).

3. *Fellowship with God.* Benjamin's lot has this especial blessing. "He shall dwell between his shoulders." The shoulders are the borders, the outward coasts, the confines of the land. Thus, "They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west" (Isa. 11. 14). Here, then, it is pledged, that Benjamin's land shall just contain God's earthly courts. What the Lord says shall surely be. Therefore in appointed time the temple, that hallowed structure, rose on the mount, which skirted this tribe's line. Such is the literal fulfilment. This promise then, in its first sense, assigns the position of the consecrated house.

But the grand import of this word is spiritual. The temple is the symbol of a present God. In it true worshippers drew near. In it God met the souls which sought Him. The pledge, then, of this dwelling in Benjamin's domain promises access to God. It pictures prayer ascending, answers returned, constant communion. And is it not the saint's delight to have this heavenly union! This is his constant feast. He dwells in God, and God in him; he is one with God, and God with him.

This fellowship is based in Christ. He is the connecting link. He is the Daysman. He has a divine hand, which touches God. He has a human hand, which man may touch. Thus He unites the holy Father and the holy flock. This intercourse is very paradise. It is the antepast [foretaste] of heaven. It passes the veil, and penetrates the inner sanctuary. Faith, leaning on Christ's arm, lives in this happiness. With filial confidence it brings each trial, trouble, sorrow, need, affliction, doubt, distress, to a Father's ear. And God is near to cheer, to bless, to wipe the weeping eye, to soothe the wounded heart, to raise the drooping spirit, to send the pilgrim singing on his way. As the temple was in the lot of Benjamin, so God is in the midst of Zion's sons. "He shall dwell between his shoulders."

Reader, do not you long to be an heir of Benjamin's large portion? Do you not feel that it must be the crown of bliss to be thus safe, thus covered, thus free to heavenly intercourse! This becomes yours, when you are one with Christ. Is such your case? If not, why linger in peril, an unsheltered outcast? Draw near in faith. Wrestle in prayer. Invite Him to come in. He will not hesitate, and His entrance brings Benjamin's triple blessing – safety, constant shelter, fellowship with God.

## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Continued from page 286)*

### *Evangelists*

“He gave some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4. 11). Every pastor is an evangelist, but there are evangelists who are not pastors, as Philip (Acts 21. 8). In the public ministry when members of a particular church meet in a mixed congregation, the pastor will both exercise his office of pastor and “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4. 5). As pastor of the church, his chief care is the souls of the members: he will seek to give a portion suitable “to seven, and also to eight,” according to their spiritual condition and stature (Eccles. 11. 2; see 1 John 2. 12-14). But he will be solicitous also of the souls of the congregation other than church members, some giving signs of the grace of God, others apparently unregenerate. Those, he will seek ministerially to “nurse”; these, he must warn. He does not indeed preach two gospels, but he is concerned to be “pure from the blood of all men” (Acts 20. 26). It is therefore incumbent upon him to “warn every man and teach every man in all wisdom”; “rightly dividing the Word of truth”; “if by any means he might save some of them” (see Col. 1. 28; 2 Tim. 2. 15; Rom. 11. 14). Some imply that a gospel minister must not preach the law, but to infer that in a general congregation there are none who are unconvicted of their state is unwarrantable; and the purpose of the law being to communicate a knowledge of sin (Rom. 3. 20), without it there can neither be any desire for nor any knowledge of Christ and His gospel. “I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died”; “I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal” (Rom. 7. 9; Deut. 32. 39). Both these – the pulling down and the building up – the Lord often graciously effects by means of the preaching of His Word; sometimes by different ministers, occasionally by the same minister in the same person. James and John were surnamed Boanerges, the “sons of thunder”; Barnabas was the “son of consolation.” Each had his own appointed work. Doubtless the consolatory preacher received more human smiles, but possibly “Boanerges” received as many divine ones – an adequate compensation.

The case of the two worthy Highland ministers may bear recalling. A complaint being made that many of the congregation from one place were attending at the neighbouring church, the minister whose congregation was thus increased kindly called to commiserate with the minister who had lost so many hearers, assuring him that it troubled him, and that he had not influenced them to leave their former church. The reply was this: “When God called me to preach, He gave me a quiver full

of arrows; when He called you He gave you a cruse of oil. My quiver is not exhausted, and your cruse is not empty. I will continue flinging my arrows and you continue pouring out your oil.” If the repetition of this story has no other effect than to manifest how far in this jealous and degenerate age we have declined from such dignified self-effacement, it may not be unprofitable.

As mentioned above, Scripture plainly shows that a man may be divinely called to preach the gospel and yet not be a pastor of a particular church; but the inference that some have been willing to draw from this undoubted fact – that it is immaterial whether a church have a pastor or no, is unwarrantable. We submit that a gospel church is incomplete without a pastor. Others there are who suggest that the scriptural order of *evangelists* warrants the supply system; that is, the system of carrying on of churches without the pastoral office, by a continual round of itinerant ministers year after year, the rule and oversight of the church being left in the hand of the deacon. This is not scriptural, and the apparent *satisfaction* of some deacons and church members with this state of affairs, is an evil. It is sadly admitted that owing to the depletion of many churches with the consequent difficulty of financially supporting a pastor, the question today is very acute. A more serious difficulty is the scarcity of men divinely equipped for the office. God forbid that we should place any stumbling block before those who honestly desire to act in the fear of God and according to His will, for the true good of Zion. But we deem it to be an evil thing to misconstrue acquiescence in an unsatisfactory condition into submission to the will of God. Rather let all who desire to fear Him and who long for the true, spiritual prosperity of the cause of Christ, earnestly wait upon Him in prayer concerning this urgent matter; seeking first the *causes* for the breaches in Zion’s walls and of the Lord’s breach of promise with regard to the gift of pastors; and then a purging of the searched-out evils, a healing of the spiritual diseases, and a removing of wrong ways from our midst. Much better to have evils discovered and mercifully remedied, than to become accustomed to them. “Is the Spirit of the LORD straitened? are these His doings? do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?” (Mic. 2. 7). “Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?” (Psa. 85. 6). See also Joel 2. 12-14; Amos 5. 13-15; Malachi 3. 8-12. One purpose designed in the issue of these brief articles on the church of God – if the Lord will condescend to further the effort – is that our people may be led to consider more particularly the importance and sacred nature of the Lord’s institutions, with the privileges and responsibilities attached thereto.

Regarding the pastorless state of many churches, a practical suggestion is that two or even three small “causes” within a reasonable



radius, should seek to ascertain by prayer and supplication the Lord's will concerning their uniting under one minister as their pastor. "Difficult"? "Impossible"? The first point is, Do the deacons and church members really desire a spiritual, discriminating, unctuous ministry: are they prepared to submit to it? The second thing is, Do they seriously seek it at the hand of Jehovah? He can show the way, overcome every difficulty, and can even remove mountains of impossibility, if it be His pleasure. We firmly believe that if, in the tender fear of the Lord, and in a genuine love for the truth and of gospel order, such an arrangement as outlined could be made, it would receive the sanction and blessing of the great Head of the church. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14. 40). According to circumstances the several members of the two (or three) causes could unite together as one church for discipline; the Lord's supper, church meetings, etc., might be held alternately at one and another of the chapels in the union; and for preaching services each pulpit would be occupied by the pastor in succession, with, perhaps reading services in rotation. We are convinced that the truly spiritually-minded would prefer the sound ministry of a God-sent pastor, in its continuity, to the constant change, incompleteness, and uncertainty inseparable from the "supply system." We say *system* deliberately, for we greatly respect some gracious ministers who "supply" here and there; and we truly sympathise with the "twos and threes" meeting occasionally without the ministry. They with us mourn over the condition of the churches which seems to make the unscriptural system unavoidable. The good Lord regard us in mercy.

The order of *evangelists* (Eph. 4. 11; Acts 21. 8; 2 Tim. 4. 5), appears to have been established principally for the preaching of the gospel in the "regions beyond," where Christ was not named, but "as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand" (2 Cor. 10. 16; Rom. 15. 20, 21). We see the work of the apostles and others, evangelising – discipling – the people. They did not "compass sea and land to make one proselyte" (Matt. 23. 15), for the Holy Ghost governed their movements, prohibiting or directing, according to His sovereign will. We say seriously that with all our heart we desire God-speed to any gracious man who feels called of God to enter upon missionary work, home or foreign. On rare occasions we have met missionaries who gave real evidence of saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ – who know in their own soul's experience, law and gospel; whose sober, humble testimony concerning the Holy Spirit's work among the heathen has cheered, warmed and enlarged our heart, and with softened spirit we have humbly thanked the Lord, praying for still more such victories of grace. We hope we can

truly say, we love and intensely admire the work of the Holy Ghost in a sinner's heart with its fruits in the life, but we are jealous over the souls of men, and cannot receive much that today passes for "conversion." At the same time, it is our sincere desire to cherish the least spark of divine life and continually to pray for peace upon all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity – without corruption" (Eph. 6. 24, margin). Often have we been solemnly glad for the Scripture, "The Lord knoweth them that are His"; and it behoves us all to remember the adjunct, "And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2. 19). Also let us preserve the important distinction between firm renunciation of what in practice or profession we deem to be unscriptural or delusory – and censoriousness or harsh judgment of a person's state before God.

*(To be concluded)*

---

### **HE FEARED GOD ABOVE MANY**

*Experience of Jesse John Farley,*

*Pastor of Jireh Chapel, Tenterden 1971-1980, by John C. Buss*

---

Mr. Farley was born in 1903 at Southborough, and was taken as a babe in arms to the chapel there.

In the providence of God the family moved to the Cranbrook area and attended Providence Chapel, Cranbrook.

The following is a brief account written by himself:

"Although instructed from my early childhood to 'say my prayers,' I believe my first real visit to the throne of grace was in early schooldays, as the result of a tormentor much stronger than I (always a weakling). In my distress, through daily fear, I cried unto the Lord in my trouble, and He in mercy delivered me. To my surprise and relief the family shortly after left the district. There followed the first feeble attempt to offer thanksgiving. But in spite of this and many other providential mercies, I proved throughout my youth, and indeed my life thus far, that I possess an impatient and rebellious spirit. The Lord saw fit to frustrate my hopes and wishes regarding both better education and a more congenial employment, and later on also in my choice of a life-partner. Against these, His dealings, I chafed and rebelled for many years, though to be honest, there were given then times of real contrition and confession at His mercy seat, and pleas for forgiveness as I painfully learned my deep need of this.

"In my early twenties I lost both my mother and father, and still further proved my inability to submit quietly to His will (I believe I have

most sincerely thanked Him since for taking them from the wrath which has fallen upon us nationally).

“Soon after these bereavements, living then with a relative and continuing the same occupation, I read in one of our magazines a description of ministers, of whom it was said they had used the Sunday School as a stepping stone into the ministry and appeared to have no other qualifications for the task. Why this should have annoyed me at *that* time, I have only slowly learned since. But to my shame I must confess that I said in my annoyance, ‘I will have nothing to do with these three things: 1. Leading the singing in a place of worship; 2. Sunday Schools; and, 3. Being a parson.’ For this rashness I have been chastised three times, in exactly the order I said I would not do them, and all of them have been done at Bounds Cross where I have mainly attended since November 1923.

“In 1931, while still mainly taken up with time things, I met with a road accident while on my way to see one who became my wife. I sustained a badly-fractured leg and concussion, and though at times humbled by the realisation of the mercy which both spared and restored me, I remained still hard and unrepentant concerning those three things.

“Towards the end of July 1938, the second chastisement began. I fell ill for the third time with pleurisy, and a more careful examination showed I had chest trouble (tuberculosis) and arrangements were made for sanatorium treatment. While waiting for a bed, it pleased the Lord in His great mercy to visit me in my distress. Burdened with my own sins, faced with a long affliction and the heavy care of my wife and two children, I was set at liberty and granted a hope in His mercy by the sweet application of verse 3, hymn 961, followed later by verse 2, and in the evening of the same day by verse 4. In my new-found joy I sung the first two verses of Psalm 103 in my heart, and the sweet effect of this blessing remained for about three weeks. Exercise concerning my duty to walk gratefully in the ordinances began, coupled with a growing conviction within me that I should *have* to do the very things that I said I would not.

“In May 1939, while we were still without a pastor (and I was still under weekly treatment as an outpatient), I ventured before the church and gave a very small and incomplete account (could not reveal my exercise about the ministry), but was accepted by the church and baptized by Mr. R.V. Pearson on May 31st, 1939. He was then still a supply minister whom I heard to profit. Shortly after this I became sorely tried because my deliverance had not been by the application of some word of Scripture, but a hymn. This occasioned earnest petitions that I might be favoured with an assurance of my personal forgiveness by a word from

His Word. After many prayers, this was granted to me in the very early hours of one morning, by this word: 'Even as God for Christ's sake *hath* forgiven *you!*' I have tried at times to describe the joy and freedom felt in a forgiven sinner, but have always failed.

"At the end of 1944, our late pastor said to me, 'In view of our present circumstances, I want you to take over the Sunday School.' A conflict arose in me and I endeavoured to turn him from this, but finally asked for a week to consider it. After much of both *won't* and *can't*, I found myself asking for a word of direction and received this: 'In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.' I have nothing I wish to say about ten years or so of this experience, except that I did most solemnly prove my need of meekness and instruction myself. I had been leading the singing regularly for some time, and when Mr. G. Baldwin was sent into the ministry, was chosen a deacon to serve in his place.

"In 1956 came the third chastisement, resulting in a serious operation and extreme weakness so that at one time I felt my end was near. Yet in this affliction the Lord dropped this word with sweetness and power into my soul: 'Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth.' I felt completely reconciled for a season, and finally left the hospital with these words ringing in my ears: 'Preach the preaching that I bid thee.' At my bedside that evening I said quite simply, 'I will, Lord, if Thou wilt be with me, and open the door, for I cannot, I dare not.' The other word of direction on this matter I received during the months that followed was this: 'A time to keep silence, and a time to speak,' and for this latter I had to wait.

"After a prayer meeting on a Thursday evening in July 1959, Mr. Baldwin detained the pastor and myself, saying that he had been pleading for a word concerning me, believing I was deeply exercised about the ministry, and the word he had received was, 'An ambassador in bonds.' Our pastor having read those very words that evening, he felt the time had come for the matter to be attended to. As pastor and deacons agreed on this, it was decided that on the next Lord's day, instead of reading as expected, I should speak to our friends as led and helped, the pastor being engaged away. This put me in a great exercise and caused me to plead for a word of commission, which would give me authority for such a step. The Lord graciously heard my pleading and favoured me with this word: 'Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.' In my simplicity I responded, 'If Thou wilt be *with* and *teach*, I will go.'

"Saturday was spent petitioning for words to go with, and towards evening there settled comfortably in my mind Psalm 37. 5 for the morning subject, and a portion of Luke 24. 27, 'The things concerning

Himself' for the afternoon subject. Afterwards I was helped to speak before the church a little on John 2. 24. The result of this meeting was that I received the sanction of the church. It is my desire now to speak as helped of 'the things concerning Himself' and 'things which accompany salvation' leaving the issue in His kind and gracious hands. May the Lord forgive the many shortcomings of an unworthy servant."

The cause at Tenterden was caused to pass through deep waters in 1967, and Mr. Farley willingly helped us in our need. On the first occasion he preached from, "After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet. 5. 10), and this was truly a word in season. Despite our difficult position, the Lord laid an exercise upon the church that He would send us another pastor, and in 1969 Mr. Farley acceded to the church's request to supply with a view in 1970. This proved to be a time of blessing and help, resulting in a call to the pastorate. The exercise of His servant is revealed in a sermon he preached at Bethersden in 1978, of which the following is an extract: "I trust that I may now say gratefully that I believe the Lord directed me very clearly to undertake what I have so far been able to undertake. Some people do get a premonition of what the Lord's will is. I was favoured with one, but it was rather vague, because there seemed nothing to work on. I passed along in my duties of going around the causes as a supply minister, and yet this word would keep occasionally cropping up, and I could not get rid of it: 'Thou must go with this people' (Deut. 31. 7). I said, 'Lord I do not feel any drawing to any one people.' After a time circumstances occurred and the letter did finally come. Before I opened it, that word was really clear and very strong: 'Thou must go with *this* people.' Well, that was my experience, and I hope I have been thankful for such a clear word of direction."

He was maintained to us through much affliction and weakness for over nine years, and despite affliction he was granted great perseverance so that he was rarely absent from a service. His ministry was, as indicated in the Gospel Standard Annual Report for 1980, one of sweetness.

On the morning of the first Lord's day in 1980, he preached from: "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" (Isa. 41. 10), the Lord's gracious help being very apparent, and the unction of the Spirit being granted. On the second Lord's day in February, he went into the Sunday School, and, though having to sit through weakness, was graciously helped in speaking to the children on the voice of God, including God's call to Samuel (see 1 Sam. 3. 4, 5), a still small voice (see 1 Kings 19. 12), a mighty voice (see Psalms 68. 33), a voice of comfort (see Lamentations 3. 57) and

a voice of command, "Follow Me" (Matt. 4. 19). The teachers noted particularly how attentive the children, including the little ones, were. At the morning service he read and prayed and immediately started to preach, but after a very short time was unable to continue. He ventured on the following Lord's day. In the morning the first part of the service was taken by the deacons, but he could only speak for about five minutes. As he was always meticulous in the way he conducted a service, it was agreed that he should try and take the full service in the afternoon. He read with great feeling the 14th chapter of John and was greatly helped in prayer in committing the flock into the Lord's gracious hands, but he was unable to continue further. This therefore proved to be his farewell to us, although he was able to attend as a hearer on one Lord's day afternoon before going into hospital.

From this time his affliction increased, and hospital treatment was found necessary. This only gave temporary relief, which enabled him to return home. It was a sacred privilege to visit him in his affliction, his constant desire being to extol the Lord Jesus Christ. He took a keen, prayerful interest in both old and young at Jireh until the end. When Mr. Dobell, who had been helping us on a Lord's day afternoon, called to see him, he asked after the friends, and then said, "Were the young friends there?" When told they were, he said, "They're in my heart." A friend visiting him referred to the fact that he was nearing the finish of his course, and told him that his ministry had been used to the comfort of many of the Lord's people, and especially at Jireh. He referred to his funeral service, and was anxious to ensure that where this had been the case the praise must be to the Lord only, and *no* praise was due to him personally.

In his preaching he often referred to the end, and stressed that prayer would be necessary all the way. And so he proved it, as his last Sabbath on earth (the day before he died) was preceded by a restless night praying for mercy, but the weeping night was succeeded by a morning without clouds, the dawning of eternal day upon his soul as he exclaimed, "I am on the mount," and later, "Jesus, my Friend – come – come," which were the last audible words he spoke. Early the following morning his ransomed soul took its flight to join the spirits of just men made perfect.

The funeral was conducted by Mr. David Crowter, who based his address on part of Colossians 3. 12: "Bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind." He spoke of the way these Christian graces were so evident in the life and ministry of our late, beloved friend, through a pathway of affliction, and by the abounding grace of the Lord Jesus.

We would acknowledge the Lord's goodness in that Mrs. Farley was strengthened and enabled to nurse him to the end. Truly it may be said, "The memory of the just is blessed."

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

**Valiant for Truth:** The collected writings of Bishop D.A. Thompson (1896-1983), former editor of the *Bible League Quarterly*; edited by John P. Thackway and obtainable from the Secretary, The Bible League, 46 Bulbridge Road, Wilton, Salisbury, SP2 0LE.

Bishop Thompson was a leader in the Free Church of England (not to be confused with the Free Church of England Continuing) who took a principled stand for the integrity of the Word of God in his generation. He was chairman of the Bible League Trust and edited its publication, the *Bible League Quarterly* from 1961 to 1970.

The twenty-six chapters are taken mainly from his time as editor of the *Bible League Quarterly*, along with separate articles he authored over the years.

There is a brief and interesting account of his life, followed by four sections covering Biblical and Devotional Subjects, Bible Translation, Textual Matters and Book Reviews.

Though the style is scholarly (Bishop Thompson was highly regarded in that respect), yet the articles are very readable and instructive. This book meets an important need in our generation, namely of clearly and earnestly contending for the faith, particularly as it concerns the integrity of the Word of God. Bishop Thompson contended that it is important that we know *what* we should stand for, and equally vital to know *why* we should stand.

It is to be warmly commended.

**The Epistle to the Hebrews; An Exposition by Adolph Saphir;** 910 pages; price £18; published by The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, from whom it may be obtained at 1 Donald Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9JB, or from their website: [www.sgat.org](http://www.sgat.org),

Born into a Jewish family in Budapest, Hungary, Adolph Saphir nevertheless was remarkably brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ savingly as the true Messiah whilst comparatively young. He was contemporary with Dr. (Rabbi) Duncan with whom he maintained a close friendship. He held fruitful pastorates in London.

The book is a series of lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and its style makes it readily understood, and there is much profitable exposition of this precious part of God's Word. Being of Jewish upbringing, he brings an understanding to its doctrines from a standpoint not dissimilar to that of another Jew, the Apostle Paul, whom Saphir correctly believes to be the author, under God, of the Epistle.

However, it should be noted that, in keeping with the beliefs of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, it appears that Saphir was of the Premillennialism view of the end times, a view not generally held among our churches. Occasionally this is evident in his exposition. This should not detract from the soundness and warmth of exposition of these lectures.

---

## PLEADING FOR MERCY

---

Did Jesus die, but not for me?  
Am I forbade to seek my God?  
Is there not pardon, rich and free,  
Proclaimed through Jesus' precious blood?

Who, then, shall drive my trembling soul  
From Thee, my God, to black despair?  
Who has surveyed the sacred roll,  
And found my name not written there?

Presumptuous thought! to fix the bound –  
To limit mercy's sovereign reign:  
What other happy souls have found  
I'll seek, nor shall I seek in vain.

I own my guilt, my sins confess;  
Can men or devils make them more?  
Of crimes already numberless,  
Vain the attempt to swell the score.

Were the black list before my sight,  
While I remember Thou hast died,  
'Twould only urge my speedier flight  
To seek salvation at Thy side.

Lord, at Thy feet I'll cast me down,  
To Thee reveal my guilt and fear;  
And if Thou spurn me from Thy throne,  
I'll be the first who perished there.

Author Unknown

---

## NOTICE OF DEATH

---

**Norman Henry Roe**, minister of the gospel and the esteemed pastor at Ossett and Birkenhead for many years, passed to his eternal rest on Friday, September 10th, 2021, aged 82 years. "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

---

Though I should see inscribed over the face of the heavens, and over the face of the earth, the words: "Finlay Cook shall be saved," I could not rely on such a testimony. When, however, I get the assurance from the Word of God, I may well be assured of my everlasting acceptance and safety. And why? Because heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word shall never pass away. (See 2 Pet. 1. 19, Ed.)

*Finlay Cook*



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
NOVEMBER 2021

---

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

---

**“LET THERE BE LIGHT”**

The opening words of Holy Scripture reveal in one sentence the awesome power and majesty of our Creator. He, who “from everlasting to everlasting” is God, begins with this one sentence to reveal Himself to sinners.

He reveals Himself as the one and only true God, and yet how clear it is that it is a Triune God who speaks and acts. God the Father speaks by His Son and sends the Spirit through the word of His Son. So, we read later this same God said, “Let Us make man in Our image.” It is the same “Us” that said to Isaiah in chapter 6 of his prophecy, “Whom shall I send” – there is His unity – “and who will go for Us?” – there is His Trinity.

Again, the Apostle John, who delighted to dwell on the divinity of Christ, opens the gospel with the words, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” “By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: He layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33. 6-9).

It appears that Almighty God first commanded into existence all creation, not just the earth; and then, rather as the potter takes the clay and begins to form a vessel for his use, so God took the earth and fashioned it for His own honour and glory, and for the good of man whom He would place on it. The great and fundamental reason for the creation of the earth was that on it, over the ages of time, God would prepare for Himself a people for His eternal praise in heaven above. As the Son of God was to live on the face of the earth as the incarnate God, so it was prepared for Him in a very special way.

But what about this primeval darkness “upon the face of the deep”? It would appear that the whole planet was submerged in water at its creation and as the Word of God says, “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Then these all-commanding words were spoken: “Let there be light: and there was light.” It is very evident that this light

was not the light of the sun, moon or stars, which were yet to be created, but was an effusion of the light in which God dwells above. This was the same light which the favoured disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration saw, and the same under which Saul of Tarsus was stricken down on the Damascus Road.

So the first lesson from these words is that God created what we see around us, and as such we are accountable to Him as His creatures. Those who take Genesis 1 out of Scripture by claiming that this is at best an allegory, and at worst an ancient legend, do so because they do not want to acknowledge that they are answerable to a higher power and authority. But take Genesis 1. 1 away and you undermine the whole foundation of the gospel.

The second lesson from these magnificent words is that they are a picture of how the Lord begins a work of grace in the heart of a sinner. By nature, because of the Fall, we are born in spiritual darkness, and the sin of unbelief; our souls are without form and void of any spirituality, even though they have an immortality. But unasked and unlooked for, the Holy Spirit begins to move upon the face of the waters of the soul and says, "Let there be light," and "there is light." This is taken up by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4. 6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is the devil's aim, called "the god of this world," to blind the minds of men, and to seek to hinder the in-shining of the light of the gospel. The blessed thing is, that just as the primeval darkness could not resist the shedding abroad of the light, neither can the darkest night hinder the rising of the sun at its appointed hour, so it is an irresistible work wrought by the Spirit when He begins to move upon the face of the waters of the heart, soul and life to renew a sinner with grace.

If we consider the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, what an awesome time it must have been when He entered into the darkness of His Father's wrath against His people. The natural sun hid its light in an unnatural eclipse as, within the veil, our Saviour endured that darkness of all darkness. But when that cloud was dissipated, and His people's sins were for ever cast behind His back, then the full beams of His Father's love radiated His holy soul as He died in peace. Because of the darkness He endured and overcame, so He sends forth the Spirit in the day of regeneration to move upon the face of the waters of the soul and command that He who is the Light of the world should shine into their hearts. The very presence of the Light in the soul reveals our need of Christ, and the more the Light shines the more we are led to appreciate our need.

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us

from all sin” (1 John 1. 7). The moving of the Holy Spirit upon the waters of our soul makes us willing to be brought to the light that we may know the true state of our soul before God. The natural man and carnal mind resist this examination. It is a great mercy if the Lord has made us honest before Him. “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psa. 139. 23, 24).

But then there are those dark paths through which God’s people are sometimes called to walk. It may be because of backsliding or rebellion as in Jonah’s case. What a dark place the belly of the whale must have been! At other times to try our faith God hides His face in dispensations unlooked for and mysterious. At such times it becomes the urgent cry of the believer that God would send His Spirit to move upon the face of these dark waters and command light. Until He does, no man can discern what God is doing. But He has promised to “bring the blind by a way that they knew not,” and to “make darkness light before them.” Micah said, “When I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a Light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness” (Mic. 7. 8, 9).

At death the believer leaves this dark world, where the prince of darkness holds so much sway, and enters into that blessed place where there is “no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21. 23). Then there is the full consummation of Paul’s words to the Colossians: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1. 12-14).

---

---

### THE LORD’S WATCHMAN

*Sermon preached by Samuel Curtis of Southill, at Clifton Chapel, on  
January 12th, 1925, on the occasion of the recognition of  
R.J. Morris as pastor*

---

**Text:** “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel” (Ezek. 33. 7).

God, in His great wisdom, and in His great love to His people, has ever raised up men to occupy those particular positions which were for the comfort, the edification and the good of His one loved church. He gives a variety of gifts, raises men up for different purposes – some

prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, some teachers: for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ. And to the men whom God raises up to any particular work, He gives the wisdom, the grace and ability necessary for the positions in which He places them. Were we to believe and speak differently from this, it would in reality be to attribute folly to God and to say He made mistakes and did not properly carry out that which He undertakes and which He purposed doing. O may such folly then be banished from our minds, and may we be enabled to view all the works of God in their glorious perfections. Amongst ministers – men whom God raises up for the benefit of His church – are watchmen, Zion’s watchmen, men whom He Himself places upon the walls of Zion. In connection with my text, the Lord shows to His servant the prophet Ezekiel what the duties of a watchman are and, if you carefully read through this chapter, you will not fail to observe that the position of a watchman is most sacred, most solemn and important. I can fully endorse the language of good Mr. Newton when he says:

“What contradictions meet  
In ministers’ employ!  
It is a bitter sweet,  
A sorrow full of joy.  
No other post affords a place  
For equal honour or disgrace.”

Equal honour if honourably fulfilled; equal disgrace if it is otherwise than honourably fulfilled. May God help, yea, may He cause every one of His own dear servants solemnly and deeply to realise this.

As the Lord helps me I will notice:

1. The watchman.
2. The people setting the watchman over them, which means giving a godly minister a call to the pastorate and setting him to rule over them as such.
3. The duties of the one to the other.

1. *The watchman.* Every true watchman upon Zion’s walls is born to be such, brought into existence for that very purpose. And the man who is not born into this world to be a watchman upon Zion’s walls will never be one in reality nor according to the Scriptures of truth. The watchman will be dealt with; the time will come in his experience when God will begin to deal with him, and what will be the first dealing? A call by grace, an effectual call by grace. The effect of that call will be to make him know and understand what he is as a sinner before God. From the effects of that call, he will be led to seek the Lord, and for an interest in Jesus Christ and in His precious blood, that blood which alone can remove guilt from the conscience, and bring liberty from the bondage and the terrors of God’s broken law, under which he has laboured. It is

necessary that a watchman shall understand law and gospel, bondage and liberty – or otherwise he will never be able to go before the people in those exercises and be a comfort, a help and a blessing to them.

Then the time comes when another exercise takes possession of him, an exercise which will be separate and distinct from that exercise which attends them in their call by grace. And yet no man whom God has not called by His grace can ever be rightly exercised concerning the important work of the ministry. When God exercises the minds of His people, He exercises them effectually. They cannot shake that off. Doubtless our friend would have shaken those exercises off, would have got away from them; perhaps they have meant many a wakeful hour, many a groan, many a tear, but God's purposes must be accomplished.

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

(320)

It is often bitter circumstances, bitter trials, that bring God's servants into the particular position which He has designed them to occupy.

God will make His own watchmen very prayerful. They will watch and pray; pray and watch. How they watch His hand in His various leadings. The time comes when He calls them into the work of the ministry. Perhaps it is some mysterious providence that brings it about: some minister ill, some minister gathered home, some circumstance over which no one has any control, is the means of this and that particular man commencing to open his mouth in the Lord's name. O how that man wants to see God's hand in this; how he longs to have a word from the Lord Himself, a word of direction, leading him in this important matter! It is nice to have a directing word. This is not always given. But exercises, prayers, circumstances, all point in the one direction so that there can be no mistake, as in the case of Nehemiah. Then there is the word behind, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Oh, how good this is, how confirming, how satisfying! He then feels that it is the right way. I can honestly say that I never once sought a pulpit in my life, nor the influence of any to lead me into one. I should be very sorry to begin it now.

It is well for the minister of the gospel to commit his way unto his God, watch God's hand in answer to his prayers, and see Him going before and making ways for him. Do not be unduly influenced by a man's gift or natural ability, but watch if there be any life, any savour, if attended with power; that which feeds the flock of slaughter, and commends him to your conscience as a servant of God, causing you to receive him as such, and love him as God's own special gift unto you, as your watchman. Then the Lord's blessing so attends his labours as to

remove doubts or misgivings; there is a sweet confidence, a feeling of satisfaction about it. The Lord makes the watchman; man does not make him. A man does not make himself one; it is the Lord's own work.

2. *The people setting the watchman over them.* This sets forth the church giving a godly minister the call to become their pastor. For this there must be a cause and they must have an object in view. What is that object? Is it a matter of convenience? Is it to liberate from some anxiety and from some burden? Is it because it seems to be a desirable thing to be done? If it is, my friends, it is very poor work indeed. I hope there is something more than that in the setting up of our friend, Mr. Morris, statedly in this place. There should be mutual exercise of hearts, mutual, prayerful exercises. That is, a man should be laid upon the people's minds. It will not be laid upon all the people's minds at once. Perhaps in a very secret way in the congregation there may be just one or two who at first receive the word from him in such a way that it exercises their minds and they begin to think and watch and pray. And as they begin to pray and to feel impressed, they carry these things, they spread them before the Lord. They then come in touch with one and with another, and find that others are exercised in the same way. And so the feeling spreads. There are mutual exercises, a feeling of love towards the man, a desire that, if the Lord will, he may become their minister. You do not tell him about it; you do not say to him how you are longing for this and that. You tell the Lord about it.

Then the Lord shows to the minister what is in their minds towards him. He watches and he prays. He may go on like that for some time. But he cannot get away from his own feelings; they have a firm hold upon him, and when God fixes them upon the mind and feelings, you cannot get away from them. Then the secret comes to light and it is seen that the exercises of the minister and the people are mutual, and there is a particular power and blessing attending his labours amongst them. There is living food. The gleaners, the little gleaners – they are favoured ones, you know; they are precious souls, who would be gleaners in the gospel field if they could – and how nice it is when they, after prayers and labour, and exercises and sorrow, are favoured to get a little help; the minister comes along just where they are and lets fall some handfuls of purpose for them. How encouraging then that is! It is one of the signs.

Perhaps one poor creature has been in trouble labouring under the burden of his sins, his own guiltiness. He looks upon his own case as hopeless. Then the Lord clothes the Word with power, and the troubled one is comforted. Hope springs up within. And sometimes the poor, guilty, fearing one is brought into the liberty of the gospel of Jesus Christ. My friends, that is a sweet testimony, a precious testimony. Perhaps some poor creature comes in altogether unconcerned, and the

Lord carries the Word with power to his soul, convinces him of his sin, makes him an unhappy man, a guilty man; and then, as the minister goes on, the Lord raises him to a hope, and perhaps blesses the labours of His servant to his deliverance. What a clear seal!

When God uses me as an instrument in His hands to deliver one from any particular trouble, or any sad state that that one may be in, that is a sweet testimony. But if God uses me as the honoured instrument in the conversion of a sinner, that is a seal to my ministry, that is a soul for my hire. That is a real seal. May we be led rightly to discern between seals and testimonies; they are both precious. They both bear witness to the fact that the man is a true minister of the gospel. These will be the signs that follow, and that will commend the minister to the minds and consciences of the people. And I hope and pray that these things may be manifest in the ministry of our dear friend, in whose interest we meet today, recognising him as the pastor of this church and people.

3. *The duties of the one to the other.* Speaking first of the watchman, it will be his duty to love and care for the people, to watch over them in love and to seek their best welfare. And what I mean by their best welfare is their souls' welfare, their spiritual welfare. I know he will be concerned for the temporal welfare of his people. He will rejoice in their prosperity and he will mourn in their adversity, because their cares, their woes and their trials will in measure be his, and their joys and their prosperity also in measure will be his. Therefore as he loves them and has their welfare at heart, he will sympathise with them, and he will rejoice with them. Love will be such that sorrow will "flow from eye to eye and joy from heart to heart." There is something wrong, there is something wanting, the devil is at work if it is otherwise than this. I hope these precious things will be largely experienced, largely enjoyed, by my friends here at Clifton.

Then there will be a particular love that he will have for the truth of God. The truth of God will be a sacred thing with him, a precious thing. And that truth he will be prepared to defend to the very utmost of his power. I should have a very poor opinion of any minister of the gospel who would not to the very utmost of his power defend the truth of God, the truths which he preaches, when and by whomsoever they might be assailed. We do not like fighting, we do not want to fight, but there are times when God's ministering servants are compelled either to fight or to play the coward's part. I fully endorse the words of the good hymn-writer:

"There's not a lamb in all Christ's fold  
I would disdain to feed.  
There's not a foe before whose face  
I'd fear His cause to plead." (See H. 1066)

It is the duty, the privilege, it is the honour of the servant of God, to defend the precious truth of God, those truths which He has sealed upon his heart, which have been made meat and drink to his soul, which have been to him at times made even more precious than life itself, in the doctrines, in the precepts, and in the precious experience of them.

A godly minister, a true watchman, will watch over and guard the honour and the character of his church as that of his wife or daughter. That which is good will gladden his heart, that which would stain would be a grief to him. No minister is responsible for the individual actions of his church and congregation, but he is responsible for condoning and connivance in connection with them. What wisdom and grace are needed here! May our dear friend be helped to watch over the people in love, to preach the precious truths which God has, I believe, made dear to his heart; to watch over and care for the honour of this church, and may that union which he feels to this church and people grow, and all of you grow in grace as time goes on.

Then as to the people. One thing will be to do all you can for his temporal comfort. See that his needs are supplied, and that should be a sacrifice of love. I cannot help but feel satisfied that if the Lord blesses his ministry and warms your hearts and makes you to rejoice, you in return for what you receive from him in spiritual things will freely provide that which shall minister to his temporal necessities. May that which is honourable and which is right in the sight of God be done. He will need your sympathy and he will need your prayers. And he will need those things far beyond what perhaps you are aware of at the present time. He will need your sympathy and he will need encouragement. Do encourage him, friends, as far as is consistent and honourable. Do sympathise with him. Do let it be made manifest that you have a love towards him. Do not talk against him, do not give him a bad name, friends. If you injure his reputation amongst you, he is a ruined man as far as his position and usefulness in connection with this cause is concerned. Materially, you would not injure him, you would not do him any hurt. God would take care of that. It would do the cause hurt, it would do you hurt. Be kind and sympathetic, friends; you cannot hurt him without touching the apple of God's eye, and that is a very, very tender spot. O the important position of the watchman! Try and bear with and act so as to encourage him. Pray for him, sympathise with him, and that will satisfy him that he has a warm place in the affections of your hearts.

In conclusion, I express my sincere wish that the union may be a lasting one, that it may be a peaceful one, that it may be a happy one, and that it may, with God's blessing, be a very prosperous one. I commend you one and each to the Lord. May He bless these few words, and to His name shall be the praise.



## GOD THE GREAT TEACHER AND LEADER OF HIS PEOPLE

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

---

“Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day” (Psa. 25. 4, 5).

There is one feature in true religion perhaps not much insisted upon, but none the less real and genuine, which is this: that all true religion brings the soul into vital and immediate contact with God. False religion on the other hand only sets the soul at a distance from Him. We see this peculiar feature of vital godliness very much developed in the Psalms, and in other parts of holy Scripture, where the saints of God breathe forth their desires after the Lord. The desire of their souls to get near to God, to have special dealings with the Majesty on high, to receive mercy from His gracious hands, to be blessed with manifestations of His favour, watered with the dew of His grace, and nourished as with marrow and fatness by the smiles of His countenance, shines forth very conspicuously in the Word of truth.

How all these breathings after God, which you see so clearly traced out in the Psalms and other devotional parts of God’s Word, establish the truth of what I was just saying, that true religion, vital godliness, bring the soul into close and personal contact with God! In opposition to this, there is no mark stamped upon false religion more evidently and plainly than this: that it sets up a false god, an idol god; not perhaps a wood or stone representation, but a god adapted to the carnal mind, and suitable to the natural heart – in a word, such a god as we see in all ages blind, fallen man has worshipped.

Thus, were you to analyse and examine all false religion, whatever its name or nature, you would find this feature of death stamped upon it: that it sets up a false god for the true God, a false faith for true faith, and a false righteousness for true righteousness; and thus worships an imaginary, an idol god, instead of the true and living God, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we may be well assured, that nothing short of the work and teaching of God in the heart can ever pull down this false god and set up in its place the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

See in the words before us how the psalmist breathes forth his soul unto God; how he draws near to the throne of the Majesty on high, and finding some access of soul to the ear of Him who bows down and listens to the cry of the destitute, cries out in the simplicity of his heart, as though he could not live unless he received an answer to his petition, “Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.”

## COMMUNION WITH GOD

*By John Owen (1616-1683)*

*(Continued from page 301)*

*That the saints have this communion distinctly with the Father, Son and Spirit – 1 John 5. 7 opened to this purpose; also, 1 Corinthians 12. 4-6, Ephesians 2. 18 – Father and Son mentioned jointly in this communion; the Father solely, the Son also, and the Holy Ghost singly – the saints' respective regard in all worship to each Person manifested – faith in the Father (John 15. 9, 10); and love towards Him (see 1 John 2. 15, Malachi 1. 6). So in prayer and praise – It is so likewise with the Son (see John 14. 1) – Of our communion with the Holy Ghost – The truth further confirmed.*

That the saints have communion with God, and what communion in general is, was declared in the first chapter. The manner how this communion is carried on, and the matter wherein it doth consist, comes next under consideration. For the first, in respect of the distinct Persons of the Godhead with whom they have this fellowship, it is either distinct and peculiar, or else obtained and exercised jointly and in common. That the saints have distinct communion with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (that is, distinctly with the Father, and distinctly with the Son, and distinctly with the Holy Spirit), and in what the peculiar appropriation of this distinct communion unto the several Persons doth consist must, in the first place, be made manifest.

1 John 5. 7, the apostle tells us, "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." And what is it that They bear witness unto? Unto the Sonship of Christ, and the salvation of believers in His blood. Of the carrying on of that, both by blood and water, justification and sanctification, is he there treating. Now, how do They bear witness hereunto? even as three, as three distinct Witnesses. When God witnesseth concerning our salvation, surely it is incumbent on us to receive His testimony. And as He beareth witness, so are we to receive it. Now this is done distinctly. The Father beareth witness, the Son beareth witness, and the Holy Spirit beareth witness; for They are three distinct Witnesses. So, then, are we to receive Their several testimonies: and in doing so we have communion with Them severally; for in this giving and receiving of testimony consists no small part of our fellowship with God. Wherein Their distinct witnessing consists will be afterward declared.

1 Corinthians 12. 4-6, the apostle, speaking of the distribution of gifts and graces unto the saints, ascribes them distinctly, in respect of the fountain of their communication, unto the distinct Persons. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit;" that is, the Holy Ghost (verse

11). “And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord,” the same Lord Jesus (verse 5). “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God,” etc., even the Father (see Eph. 4. 6). So graces and gifts are bestowed, and so are they received.

And not only in the emanation of grace from God, and the illapses [enterings in] of the Spirit on us, but also in all our approaches unto God, is the same distinction observed. “For through Him” – Christ – “we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2. 18). Our access unto God (wherein we have communion with Him) is, “through Christ,” “in the Spirit,” and “unto the Father”; the Persons being here considered as engaged distinctly unto the accomplishment of the counsel of the will of God revealed in the gospel.

Sometimes, indeed, there is express mention made only of the Father and the Son: “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1. 3). The particle “and” is both distinguishing and uniting. Also John 14. 23: “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.” It is in this communion wherein Father and Son do make their abode with the soul.

Sometimes the Son only is spoken of, as to this purpose. “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1. 9). And, “If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3. 20), of which place afterward.

Sometimes the Spirit alone is mentioned. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all” (2 Cor. 13. 14). This distinct communion, then, of the saints with the Father, Son and Spirit, is very plain in the Scripture; but yet it may admit of further demonstration. Only this caution I must lay in beforehand: whatever is affirmed in the pursuit of this truth, it is done with relation to the explanation ensuing, in the beginning of the next chapter.

The way and means then, on the part of the saints, whereby in Christ they enjoy communion with God, are all the spiritual and holy actings and outgoings of their souls in those graces, and by those ways, wherein both the moral and instituted worship of God doth consist. Faith, love, trust, joy, etc., are the natural or moral worship of God, whereby those in whom they are have communion with Him. Now, these are either immediately acted on God, and not tied to any ways or means outwardly manifesting themselves; or else they are further drawn forth, in solemn prayer and praises, according unto that way which He hath appointed. That the Scripture doth distinctly assign all these unto the Father, Son and Spirit, manifesting that the saints do, in all of them, both as they are

purely and nakedly moral, and as further clothed with instituted worship, respect each Person respectively, is that which, to give light to the assertion in hand, I shall further declare by particular instances:

1. For the Father. Faith, love, obedience, etc., are peculiarly and distinctly yielded by the saints unto Him; and He is peculiarly manifested in those ways as acting peculiarly towards them; which should draw them forth and stir them up thereunto. He gives testimony unto, and beareth witness of, His Son. "This is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son" (1 John 5. 9). In His bearing witness, He is an Object of belief. When He gives testimony (which He doth as the Father, because He doth it of the Son), He is to be received in it by faith. And this is affirmed, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (verse 10). To believe on the Son of God in this place, is to receive the Lord Christ as the Son, the Son given unto us, for all the ends of the Father's love, upon the credit of the Father's testimony; and therefore, therein is faith immediately acted on the Father. So it follows in the next words, "He that believeth not God" – that is, the Father, who bears witness to the Son – "hath made Him a liar." "Ye believe in God," saith our Saviour (John 14. 1); that is, the Father as such, for He adds, "Believe also in Me;" or, "Believe you in God; believe also in Me." God, upon whose authority is founded, and whereunto all divine faith is ultimately resolved, is not to be considered as peculiarly expressive of any person, but comprehending the whole Deity: which undividedly is the prime Object thereof. But in this particular it is the testimony and authority of the Father (as such) therein, of which we speak, and whereupon faith is distinctly fixed on Him; which, if it were not so, the Son could not add, "Believe also in Me."

The like also is said of love. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2. 15), that is, the love which we bear to Him, not that which we receive from Him. The Father is here placed as the Object of our love, in opposition to the world, which takes up our affections. The Father denotes the matter and object, not the efficient cause, of the love enquired after. And this love of Him as a Father is that which He calls His "honour" (Mal. 1. 6).

Further: these graces as acted in prayer and praises, and as clothed with instituted worship, are peculiarly directed unto Him. "Ye call on the Father" (1 Pet. 1. 17). "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3. 14, 15). Bowing the knee compriseth the whole worship of God, both that which is moral, in the universal obedience He requireth, and those peculiar ways of carrying it on which are by Him appointed. "Unto Me," saith the Lord, "every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45. 23). Which, verse 24, 25, He declareth to

consist in their acknowledging of Him for righteousness and strength. Yea, it seems sometimes to comprehend the orderly subjection of the whole creation unto His sovereignty. In this place of the apostle it hath a far more restrained acceptation, and is but a figurative expression of prayer, taken from the most expressive bodily posture to be used in that duty. This he further manifests (see Eph. 3. 16, 17), declaring at large what his aim was, and whereabouts his thoughts were exercised, in that bowing of his knees. The workings, then, of the Spirit of grace in that duty are distinctly directed to the Father as such, as the fountain of the Deity, and of all good things in Christ, as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And therefore the same apostle doth, in another place, expressly conjoin, and yet as expressly distinguish, the Father and the Son in directing his supplications. "God Himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you" (1 Thess. 3. 11). The like precedent, also, have you of thanksgiving. "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). I shall not add those very many places wherein the several particulars that do concur unto that whole divine worship (not to be communicated unto any, by nature not God, without idolatry) wherein the saints do hold communion with God, are distinctly directed to the Person of the Father.

2. It is so also in reference unto the Son. "Ye believe in God," saith Christ, "believe also in Me" (John 14. 1). "Believe also, act faith distinctly on Me; faith divine, supernatural, that faith whereby you believe in God, that is, the Father." There is a believing of Christ, namely, that He is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. That is that whose neglect our Saviour so threatened unto the Pharisees. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24). In this sense faith is not immediately fixed on the Son, being only an owning of Him (that is, the Christ to be the Son), by closing with the testimony of the Father concerning Him. But there is also a believing on Him, called, "Believing on the name of the Son of God" (see 1 John 5. 13; so also John 9. 36); yea, the distinct affixing of faith, affiance and confidence on the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, as the Son of God, is most frequently pressed. "God" – that is, the Father – "so loved the world ... that whosoever believeth in Him" – that is, the Son – "should not perish" (John 3. 16). The Son, who is given of the Father, is believed on. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned" (verse 18). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (verse 36). "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (see John 6. 29, 40; 1 John 5. 10). The foundation of the whole is laid. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son

honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him” (John 5. 23). But of this honour and worship of the Son I have treated at large elsewhere; and shall not in general insist upon it again. For love, I shall only add that solemn apostolical benediction: “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity” (Eph. 6. 24) – that is, with divine love, the love of religious worship; which is the only incorrupt love of the Lord Jesus.

Further: that faith, hope and love, acting themselves in all manner of obedience and appointed worship, are peculiarly due from the saints, and distinctly directed unto the Son, is abundantly manifest from that solemn doxology, “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). Which yet is set forth with more glory: “The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Rev. 5. 8), and verses 13, 14: “Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” The Father and the Son (He that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb) are held out jointly, yes distinctly, as the adequate Object of all divine worship and honour, for ever and ever. And therefore Stephen, in his solemn dying invocation, fixeth his faith and hope distinctly on Him. “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” and, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7. 59, 60), for he knew that the Son of man had power to forgive sins also. And this worship of the Lord Jesus, the apostle makes the discriminating character of the saints. “With all,” saith he, “that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1. 2), that is, with all the saints of God. And invocation generally comprises the whole worship of God. This, then, is the due of our Mediator, though as God, as the Son – not as Mediator.

3. Thus also is it in reference unto the Holy Spirit of grace. The closing of the great sin of unbelief is still described as an opposition unto, and a resisting of that Holy Spirit. And you have distinct mention of the love of the Spirit (see Rom. 15. 30). The apostle also peculiarly directs his supplication to Him in that solemn benediction, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all” (2 Cor. 13. 14). And such benedictions are originally supplications. He is likewise entitled unto all instituted worship, from the appointment of the administration of baptism in His name (see Matt. 28. 19). Of which things more afterward.

*(To be concluded)*

## HARVEST OF PROMISE

*by William Spurstowe (1605-1666)*

“Though it tarry, wait for it” (Hab. 2. 3)

Abide and continue in a holy waiting upon God, until He who is the Maker of the promises becomes the Fulfiller of them. “Our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that He have mercy upon us” (Psa. 123. 2). Some promises are like the almond tree which puts out upon the first approach of the spring, and brings forth an early fruit; they are not long pleaded, before they are fulfilled, and have their blessings like ripe fruit to drop in the mouth of the eater. Others are like the mulberry tree, which is slow and backward in the imparting of its sap unto the branches; they are long before they bud forth into any appearances which may disclose any step and progress to be made toward their future accomplishment. So that they who are the inheritors of them, though they need not fear their failing the appointed time, yet they need patience to expect and wait for their fulfilling. The great promise which God made to Abraham of multiplying his seed like the stars of heaven did for twenty-five years continue its motion like a slow-placed planet, having in all that tract of time gone little of that course which it was to finish. Abraham was seventy-five years old when the promise was made, and a hundred years old when Isaac, who was the first blossom of that promise, was born. Seeing therefore that there is often a long interval between the seedtime and the harvest of the promise, between its making and fulfilling, it is necessary for believers to wait upon God, who is the One that can best date and time His own promises, and to expect with patience the appointed time of the promise, which at the end shall speak and not lie.

---

## CHRIST THE TRUE AND EVERLASTING PRIEST

*By Thomas Boston (1676-1732)*

That Christ is truly and properly a Priest, is evident, if we consider,  
1. That the scripture holds Him forth as such (see Psa. 110. 4 and Heb. 5 and other places of that epistle).

2. Because He exercises the acts of the priestly office, in offering sacrifice, and praying for His people.

3. Because He was typified by such as were really priests, as all the Levitical priests, and Melchizedec.

*Question:* Wherein did Christ's priestly office differ from the priestly office under the ceremonial law?

1. The priests under the law were priests after the order of Aaron, but Christ is a Priest after the order of Melchizedec. Who this Melchizedec was, it is in vain to enquire, and cannot possibly be known; the Holy Ghost designedly concealing his genealogy, beginning and ending, and descent, that so he might be a fitter type of Christ and His everlasting priesthood. He was like a man dropped from the clouds, and at last caught up again, and none knew how. It is said of him that he was “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually” (Heb. 7. 3).

Now, Christ was a Priest after the order of this Melchizedec, not by a corporeal unction, legal ceremony, or the intervening act of a human ordination, but by a divine and heavenly institution, and immediate unction of the Spirit of life, in that extraordinary manner, whereby He was to be both King and Priest unto God, as Melchizedec was (see Heb. 7. 1, 2). He was not a priest after the order of Aaron, because the law made nothing perfect, but was weak and unprofitable; and therefore was to be abolished, and to give place to another priesthood. Men were not to rest in it, but to be led by it to Him who was to abolish it (see Heb. 7. 11, 12). The ministry and promises of Christ were better than those of the law, and therefore His priesthood, which was the office of dispensing them, was to be more excellent too (see Heb. 8. 6). For when the law and covenant were to be abolished, the priesthood, in which they were established, was likewise to die.

2. The priests under the law were sinful men, and therefore offered sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people (see Heb. 5. 3). But Christ was “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” (Heb. 7. 26, 27). He was perfectly pure and holy, and could stand before God even in the eye of His strict justice, “as a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Though He “made His soul an offering for sin,” yet He “did no sin, neither was there any guile found in His mouth.” And indeed His sacrifice had done us no good, had He been tainted with the least sin.

3. The priests under the law were many, because they were mortal; death as an universal deluge was continually sweeping them off the stage. But Christ is a Priest for ever (see Psalms 110. 4; Heb. 7. 23). “This Man continueth ever.”

4. The priesthood under the law was changeable, but Christ’s priesthood is unchangeable. The legal dispensation was to continue only for a time. It was but like the morning star to usher in the rising sun,



which so soon as he appears in our horizon, it vanishes and shrinks away (see Heb. 7. 12). God confirmed this priesthood with an oath (see Psa. 110. 4; Heb. 7. 21) as well as being a King. Those offices which were divided before between two families, were both united and vested in Christ; this being absolutely necessary for the discharge of His mediatory undertaking, and for the establishment of His kingdom, which being of another kind than the kingdoms of this world, even spiritual and heavenly, therefore needed such a King as was also a minister of holy things. And the apostle tells us that “this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood” (Heb. 7. 24).

5. The priests under the law offered many sacrifices, and of various kinds, as lambs and rams, calves and bullocks, and the blood of many beasts: but Christ offered but once, and that but one sacrifice, even the sacrifice of Himself. So it is said, “Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9. 25, 26). And herein He excelled and far transcended all other priests in this, that He had something of His own to offer. He had a body given Him to be at His own disposal for this very end and purpose. It is said, “Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me.... Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.... By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10. 5, 7, 10). He offered up His body, and not only His body, but His soul also was made an offering for sin (see Isa. 53. 10). We had made a forfeiture both of our souls and bodies by sin. It was therefore necessary that the sacrifice of Christ should be answerable to the debt which we owed to God. And when Christ came to offer up His sacrifice, He stood not only in the capacity of a Priest, but also in that of a Surety; and so His soul stood in the stead of ours, and His body in the stead of our bodies.

6. All those sacrifices that the priests offered under the law were types of the sacrifice of Christ, which He was to offer in the fulness of time, they not being sufficient in themselves to purge away sin, nor acceptable to God any further than Christ was eyed in them. But Christ’s sacrifice was the thing typified by all these oblations, and is efficacious in itself for the satisfaction of justice, and the expiation of sin. “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.... For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.... For

by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10. 1, 4, 14). His sacrifice was invaluablely precious, and of infinite efficacy and virtue. And such it behoved to be, for it being offered as an expiatory sacrifice, it ought to be proportioned and equivalent, in its own intrinsic value, to all the souls and bodies that were to be redeemed by it. So that as one rich diamond is more in worth than ten thousand pebbles, or one piece of gold than many counters, so the sacrifice of Christ’s soul and body is far more valuable than all the souls and bodies in the world.

7. The priests under the law appeared before God in behalf of the people, in the temple made with hands, but Christ appeareth in heaven itself. The Levitical priests offered sacrifices and made prayers for the people in the temple, and the high priest, who was an eminent type of Christ, entered into the holy of holies, the figure of heaven, once a year, and that not without blood. This was typical of Christ’s entering into heaven itself in His people’s name, to appear for them before the throne of God. Hence it is said, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9. 24). “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2. 1).

8. The priests under the law had only the office of priesthood, but Christ is Prophet, Priest and King.

---

## THE WATERS OF JORDAN

*By Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

---

“The waters of Jordan” (Josh. 4. 23).

The sacred streams of Jordan, so often and so highly celebrated in the Word of God, open a very blessed subject for meditation. Sit down, my soul, by the side of that ancient river, and call to mind the faith exercised on that memorable spot by the multitude of the faithful gone before, who were heirs with thyself of the promises; and see whether the Holy Ghost will not graciously make thy meditation sweet? Recollect, as thou viewest the hallowed ground, that here it was, in this river, Jesus received the first public testimony from God the Father, and the first open display of the descent of God the Holy Ghost. Here Jehovah began to magnify the Lord Christ. And here, in ages before, had the Lord begun to magnify that memorable type of Jesus, His servant Joshua. And as, from the baptism of Jesus at this sacred river, the Lamb of God opened His divine commission, so here Joshua, his type, commenced his ministry. From hence he led the people to the promised land. And from

hence Jesus, in the baptism of His Holy Spirit, leads His redeemed to the possession of the everlasting Canaan in heaven.

There is, indeed, a double view of our Lord's ministry, in these waters of Jordan; not only of baptism, as introductory to the wilderness-state of temptation that follows to all His people, but also as the close of the wilderness-dispensation, in the Jordan of death, when, finally and fully, Jesus leads them through, to their immortal possessions. And as the children of Israel had been exercised for *forty years* together, through a waste and howling wilderness, until they came to Jordan, which opened a passage to them of life and liberty, to a land flowing with milk and honey, so the followers of the Lord Jesus, having passed through the pilgrimage of this world, amidst the various assaults of sin and Satan, pass through the Jordan of death, conducted and secured by their almighty Leader, unto the possession of that kingdom of glory and happiness which is above.

Pause, my soul, over the review! Behold by faith the wonderful events which passed here. In this sacred river once rested the ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth. Here Jesus, whom the ark represented, was baptized. Here Israel passed over. And here, my soul, must thou pass over in the hour of death. O how sweet and blessed, in the swellings of Jordan, to behold Jesus, and hear His well-known voice, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee"!

---

---

## THE TARES AND THE WHEAT

*By Thomas Charles (1755-1814)*

---

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13. 30).

We are taught by the parable of the tares and wheat that there will always be a mixture in this world of good and bad men, which no care or diligence can prevent. In every place, in every society there will be a mixture. Whatever discouragements may be given to evil, and whatever care and diligence may be taken to purge and keep out the wicked, the enemy, still more vigilant, will find an opportunity to sow his tares. And though we would often think and act otherwise, yet the Lord, for the wisest reasons, permits the tares and the wheat to grow together until the harvest. The tares and the wheat are sown in the same soil; the same rain and the same sun cause both to grow and to ripen.

It is the nature of *grace* to grow. Therefore it is compared with seed, with trees, with a child – things which have but small beginnings, but which, if healthy and properly taken care of, will infallibly grow.

The *tares* also grow. The wicked are also in a progressive state, and are continually ripening, yes, ripening for destruction. They may enjoy the same means of grace, and be partakers of the same outward privileges with the righteous, and yet they are ripening only for destruction.

The same soil, the same sun, and the same rain, may nourish an unfruitful, prickly thorn, as the most fruitful tree.

We are also taught how vigilant, how zealous, how industrious, the enemy is, to do harm. For it is *not* said, that he sowed the tares while men played or were careless, as if there had been any negligence laid to their charge – but “while men *slept*,” without which they could not live. Sleep they must, nature requires it; but then it was that the enemy did the mischief. Watch him as narrowly as you will – yet still he will do his work in spite of all care and diligence. If you will but step aside, to do what must be done – to eat, to drink, or to sleep – he is ready to take his opportunity of sowing his tares.

And the ground, which will not answer the gardener’s hope without toil, labour and cost, will produce the bad seed of its own accord, and yield but too plentiful a crop.

This is an exact picture of the human heart. What toil, what labour, what care and diligence will it cost to produce anything good in it! And when it is sown there by the heavenly Gardener, what watchfulness is required to prevent its being injured! Our eye must be continually upon it, and the most diligent care must be exercised.

But the tares will grow without any care – the soil exactly suits them. May this teach us to be more watchful, to prevent, if possible, the enemy from sowing his evil seed. If that is not possible, let us endeavour to distinguish between the wheat and the tares, that we may not be mistaken, and think that we have a good crop of wheat, when more than half of it is only tares, which are unprofitable, and will in the end be burned.

The tares and the wheat, it appears, are to *grow together*. They are not to grow in a different field, but in the same field, and intermix together. Where there is a stalk of wheat, there you may find at least one tare, or it may be many tares. This is doubtlessly permitted, and ordered for the wisest purposes.

We are apt to complain that the world is so sinful and so wicked, thinking that were it otherwise, we would live more holily, and be rid of many temptations, which now give corrupt nature an advantage over us. Were there none but godly people in the world, and the field free from

all tares – O what a happy thing would it be! We are apt to think, how much benefit would we then derive to our souls!

But the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways His ways. "Let both grow together," is His appointment. And no doubt, this is one of the "all things," which work together for good to those who love God. Let us then patiently bear the evil, and diligently seek from it some profit and spiritual improvement.

1. This is one great means of *increasing grace* in those who love God. Living among those who are enemies to true godliness, keeps patience, forbearance and self-denial in constant exercise. Were all humble, loving and forbearing, then how could patience and meekness be exercised, and thereby gain strength? We would be apt to deceive ourselves; and while we enjoyed our own wills and ways, we would be ready to think that there is no such thing as sin within us.

But an evil world, the tares continually among us, show us what spirit we are naturally of, bring us in one way or another perpetually to the test, and prove to us what desire there is still lurking within us, of having things in our way. The obstinate stubbornness of the people of Israel was one great means, in the course of providence, of promoting meekness in Moses, of making him more watchful over his own heart, and thereby of gaining greater victory over himself.

2. This state of things promotes faith, which alone can daily give victory over the world.

If we live a sober, righteous and godly life in this present evil world, then faith will be continually exercised and tried, and tried by all the force which worldly customs, practices and long habits can bring against it. *The fewness of real Christians leaves us often to walk, as it were, almost singly in the narrow way.* The number also and prosperity of the wicked may cause us at times to search and examine the grounds of our faith, and shaking it to its very foundation, may make it more steadfast, and render us immoveable in the midst of all storms which are raised by an evil world.

We are forced continually to the most vigorous exercise of faith, and thereby it is more strengthened and confirmed. Without being strong in faith, it is impossible to endure, "as seeing Him who is invisible," to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world, and to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

The world, lying in wickedness, calls forth faith, in one way or other, into perpetual exercise. While we live differently from the world, not swayed by its customs, not led by its maxims, not influenced by its favours, not awed by its frowns, we must "live by faith." "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is he that

overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" It is a perpetual warfare between the world of lost sinners on one side, and faith on the other, and victory must every day be gained, or we are enslaved.

The world gives faith no rest; and faith puts forth its strength, which is Christ, continually to oppose it. The world, with its glory, pomp, wealth and care on the one hand, and persecution and suffering on the other, is an enemy that cannot be easily vanquished – nothing but the continual exercise of vigorous faith can make any stand against it.

The psalmist felt the power of this enemy. "My feet," said he, "were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." And why? "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." But when he saw them thus easy, secure and prosperous, to what did this lead him? "When I thought," said he, "to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God." He betook himself to the ordinances of God; and thereby his faith was called forth into exercise, and gained strength, and he was helped over a great stumblingblock to a clearer insight into the secret mysteries of God's providence, and to a more steadfast belief of His promises.

3. The intermixture of tares and wheat, of the wicked and the godly, is, by the blessing of God, one great means of mortifying our love to this present evil world, and of engaging our affections to the world above.

How strong is the love of present things in our hearts! Though we see nothing but sin in the world, yet how unwilling we are to leave it! If, when full of sin, as it is, we are in general too fond of it, then what would be the case, were it exactly according to our wishes, and were everything around us just what we would desire? What can be more suited to mortify this love, and to engage us to the pursuit of higher things, than the very sight of the evil world itself, and a little feeling of the prickly thorns with which it abounds? The sinfulness of the world, and a continual abode among the enemies of God and of godliness, has the desirable effect upon the gracious soul of weaning it from such a scene of sin and misery.

When the Christian reflects on the evil that is daily done under the sun, and when by peculiar circumstances it is brought home to him, he sets his desires after God, and after the new world, wherein dwells righteousness. His soul grows sick of this dungeon and sink of iniquity where he is confined, and he loathes himself for having set any value on the things of earth.

Thus we see how the intermixture of good and bad in this world tends to our spiritual improvement. Corruptions are hereby weakened, and grace improved and strengthened. We have the wicked daily around

us, as thorns in our eyes and scourges in our sides; and the best of men are full of daily infirmities, which call forth patience, forbearance and forgiveness. The present state of things should not be left unnoticed, but made to minister to our edification and improvement.

Let us not be impatient and complain of our particular situations, but be our situation what it may, let us look up to that God who can cause all things to work for our good, who can make even the sins of others to turn out to the spiritual and eternal good account of His servants!

O what wisdom does God display in all His proceedings! With what submission therefore should we acquiesce in His disposal of us! And what grounds have we in all things to depend on Him, and to wait, with full assurance, for a blessing in everything. He can make the world's poison to be nourishing food; and what proves fatal to others, He can make beneficial to His people.

Well then, since this is the will of God, that the tares and wheat should grow together until harvest, let us never expect it to be otherwise, but let us look for something to exercise grace in everything, in every situation, and in every individual. God will have it so. What cause then for contentedness, and also for continual thanksgiving! Let us become more dead daily to the world, have our affections more steadily fixed on things above, and more diligently seek a better country!

---

---

## LOOKING UNTO JESUS

*From the Diary of Ruth Bryan (1805-1860)*

*September 3rd, 1853:* "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord." In addition to outward trial, there is deep, inward conflict. Under an agonising sense of unprofitableness, there seems to come a blight upon everything I touch. O it is bitter! I have not a doubt of my precious Saviour's love, but I feel as if all else is torn from me, and I am covered with shame because I make Him such poor returns. Dear Lord, enable me to endure all Thou seest needful. I am sure it is well, though I feel something like David, in Psalm 66. 12; but I deserve a thousand times worse. "Father, Thy will be done."

*September 11th, Sabbath evening:* In the past week I have had deep conflict, many storms, but sweet interminglings of mercy. I feel weak and faint, as if the journey were too great for me; but my dear Lord will sustain me. I am the poorest worm, and must let fall my whole weight upon Thee, my precious Saviour. Lord, help me on, and help me home. Isaiah 43 is very sweet today; I am much pleased with the expression, "Dragons and owls honouring the Lord" (see verse 20; Job 30. 29).

*September 18th:* I bring a hard case to Thee, my Lord. Some of Thy dear children think I am in a wrong position, and would delight to have me again in the depths of my own corruption. My heart is deeply wounded: I commit it to Thee. If constantly looking at what I am in the first Adam will most honour Thee, I resign myself to it; if looking to my dear Lord, and learning what I have and am in Him, is most God-glorifying, I pray for it, whoever may fight against it. I do marvel that some of the living family should so seek to take off my eye from Jesus. O Lord, undertake for me, and judge between us! Make me know the right; confirm what is Thine; deliver from what is mine, or any other creature's.

---

---

## THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

*By Adolph Saphir (1831-1891)*

---

We find in Scripture, doctrine which man never could have discovered, and which, now that it is revealed, no man and no age can exhaust. The one fact proves that a higher than human mind is the Author of the Book; the other is a sign of its infinite and eternal character.

1. *Take the idea of God, such as the Bible gives us.* So spiritual, and yet so simple. God is infinite and incomprehensible, dwelling in light inaccessible, and full of glory; high above all that is created and finite; whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and before whom even the angels veil their faces as they adore Him. And yet He is presented as being near unto us, even unto all that are of a broken and contrite heart; as listening unto the sighing of every humble child, and condescending to reveal Himself unto babes. How spiritual and sublime is the Scripture teaching of God! How homely and simple its revelation of the Father! Scripture reveals to us God as the great Creator of the universe, the Governor and Upholder of the world, the adorable King of angels, who obey His commandments; and at the same time we are assured that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without His will, and that the very hairs of our head are numbered; we are taught that we may commend to His guidance the minutest duties of our life, and expect His answer to our prayers on behalf of our daily troubles and difficulties. Scripture reveals Him as a God of holiness, justice and truth, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and whose throne is established in verity and righteousness; and Scripture unfolds to us the mercy, the compassion, the tenderness of God – His delight in blessing, His glory in His wonderful grace. Whence this idea of God, so sublime and yet so



simple, so spiritual and yet so tangible, so pure and holy, and yet so gracious and loving? Do we find anything to be compared with it among the Greeks and Romans? It has come down from above. God revealed Himself.

2. *Or take the idea of the law of God.* What the Bible teaches us concerning man is no less wonderful than the idea of God which it brings before us. What is man? As nations advance, their idea of humanity advances. While savage nations value man according to his strength, subtlety, courage and even cruelty, civilized nations have a higher and more intellectual and moral standard of human excellence. But what is the true, the perfect idea of man? Look at the Scriptures, teaching us that man is created in God's image. And because since the Fall we do not know clearly what that means, God gives us in the law His idea of humanity; and the law teaches us that man is to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. How wonderful are the ten commandments! How high is the law of God, elevating man to communion in love with the Lord God! How deep – requiring truth in the inward part, the affection of the soul, the surrender of the will! How broad – taking cognisance of all our varied relationships, of all occupations, circumstances, duties; entering into all the minute detail, into all the ramifications of our earthly life! And this idea of man, existing in the original purpose of God, realised in Adam, and subsequently described in the law of Jehovah, is afterwards manifested in greater fulness and glory in the Person of Jesus Christ, the second Adam. This is the second idea revealed in Scripture, above human thought and discovery, the divine idea of man.

3. *The Bible idea of redemption.* Of sin we have no adequate conception. Scripture reveals to us the depths of sin, as offence against God and as a disease – as guilt and pollution. But as the Bible-view of sin far transcends our thought, still more wonderful is the Bible idea of redemption! Take a beautiful vase, a masterpiece of art, and dash it to the ground, so that it is shattered into a hundred pieces. Who can restore it? Who can unite the fragments, so that the beauty and harmony of the original shall again show forth the master's skill and thought? Yet what is this compared with the Fall, when man's understanding became darkened, his heart alienated from God, his conscience burdened, his will enslaved, his imagination defiled, his soul and mind and affections corrupt; when man became dead in trespasses and sin, so that from the inmost centre of his being to the very members of his body sin reigns unto death? And then see how the idea of redemption runs from the very threshold of the Bible in Genesis to the topmost stone of the edifice in Revelation. And such redemption! Full pardon of sin, so that our souls are whiter than the snow; enemies are reconciled, and adopted as children

of God; condemnation is removed, and the kingdom of heaven is opened; the heart is changed, the will set free, the mind enlightened; in short, as sin abounded unto death, grace doth much more abound unto life! Whence such a glorious thought?

4. *Man never could have conceived this.* But could man have conceived the superabundance of this grace, restoring us not merely to the lost Paradise, and to the condition of Adam before the Fall, but giving us far more than we lost and placing us far higher than man at his creation? For we are accepted in Christ, the Beloved, and by the Holy Ghost we are one with Jesus, who is the Son of God, one with the Father. Ours is not merely peace, but Christ's peace; not merely life, but Christ's life. Christ is given to us for ever, and we are members of His body, one with Him in the Spirit. Thus are we partakers of the divine nature, and from Christ the quickening Spirit is our new life. Who could have thought of this?

5. *And then notice how Scripture reveals to us all this as a portion of the counsel of God.* Into the council chamber of eternity, into the secret purpose which God purposed in Himself, before the foundations of the world were laid, the Word of God takes us, and shows us that according to this purpose God created the world in Christ, elected Israel, sent His Son, brought in the church, Jews and Gentiles in one body, that in the ages to come Christ and the church should manifest His glory, and that thus His grace should be seen and adored by angels and the nations of earth. Who could have found out this, or imagined it? A plan so vast, so grand, so beautiful, could only emanate from Him who is God, who is love; and none could have known it but the chosen ones, to whom He revealed His will. And now that it is revealed, we cannot exhaust the Scripture teaching. It is above us and beyond us. We can only exclaim, "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!"; "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? ... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen."

---

When Aaron entered into the holy place, his bells gave a sound; so Christ having entered into heaven, His intercession makes a melodious sound in the ears of God. Though Christ be exalted to glory, He has not laid aside His bowels of compassion, but is still mindful of His mystic body, as Joseph was mindful of his father and brethren when he was exalted to the court. "Who also maketh intercession for us." To intercede is to make request in behalf of another. Christ is the great Master of requests in heaven.

*Thomas Watson*

## THE CHURCH OF GOD

*By John Hervey Gosden (1882-1964)*

*(Concluded from page 314)*

---

### *The diaconate*

The office of deacon is generally considered to have been occasioned by the growth of the church making it imperative that its secular concerns (the relief of the poor in particular) should be undertaken by laymen, lest the minister should be overburdened and his work thereby hindered. "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables.... We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6. 1-4). Though this office is subordinate, there are Scripture considerations most weighty for the proper qualifications for it and the due discharge of it: as for instance, that they were to be men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6. 3). See the description of the requisite character of a deacon (1 Tim. 3. 8-13), particularly that he should "hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience"; also the primary mode of solemn institution into it by the apostles, by laying on of hands and prayer (see Acts 6. 6), together with the gracious promise that they that have "used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3. 13), and further that the apostle names the office in conjunction with – but in distinction from – that of bishop or overseer (Phil. 1. 1) – all which considerations invest the diaconate with grave responsibility and importance. The institution of God and the appointment of the church raise the position of the deacon above that of a private member, showing that it is not to be undertaken lightly, and, that those most qualified are such as have not only business ability – which is important, but – what is more important – a gracious standing in the truth.

The duties of deacons as laid down in Scripture, seem to be:

1. To attend to proper administration of the funds for the relief of the poor believers connected with the church and congregation.
2. To "serve tables" – a phrase which indicates the general management of the temporal concerns of the church and of the place of worship (see Acts 6. 1, 2). That it has become a custom in many of our congregations for the deacon to announce hymns at the services, to distribute the elements at the Lord's supper, or to read sermons and conduct prayer meetings in the absence of the minister, does not imply that strictly there is any proper connection between those duties and the diaconate as instituted by the Lord and practised in the apostles' day. The pastorless state of many churches has thrust some deacons into a position which does not appertain to their office, with the result that there

devolves upon them duties named above: in discharging which a gracious man will regard chiefly the honour of God and the spiritual welfare of the church. There appears to be no scriptural ground for the office of *deaconess*, as recognised by some. It is not evident that the women mentioned as “helpers” (Phebe, Priscilla, etc., Rom. 16) held any official position in the churches, but that they assisted the apostles in their work by practical methods and by prayer. It is interesting to note that Philip the deacon (Acts 6. 5) was also an evangelist (21. 8). Two inferences are deducible:

1. A preacher may hold the office of deacon.
2. All preachers are not necessarily pastors; for obviously a pastor cannot be a deacon, although a pastor may “do the work of an evangelist,” thus making “full proof of his ministry” (2 Tim. 4. 5).

There has been difference of opinion and practice between denominations (e.g., ourselves and the Presbyterians), respecting *ruling elders* and *teaching elders*. We do not recognise these titles, although the pastorless circumstances of some churches seems to place the deacon in a position not altogether dissimilar to that of ruling elder. Paul makes a distinction between elders when of some he says, “*especially* they who labour in word and doctrine,” which may confirm the above statement that a deacon may also be a minister, though the diaconate itself is quite separate from the office of the ministry, which requires (as we have shown), especial qualifications and an especial divine call.

---

## HECTOR MACPHAIL (1716-1774)

*By D. Beaton*

---

Among the noted ministers of Christ who laboured in Ross-shire, a highly-honourable place has been given to Hector Macphail, Resolis. He entered on the solemn work of the ministry an unconverted man, but a great change came over him, and his labours were acknowledged in a signal manner by his Master, whom he so devotedly served. “He was perhaps one of the most deeply exercised Christians of his time,” says Mr. Sage, “and minutely conversant with the depths of Satan, on the one hand, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, on the other” (*Memorabilia Domestica*, 1st edition, 355).

Mr. Hector Macphail was born at Inverness in the year 1716. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Inverness, December 20th, 1746, and ordained at Resolis, September 22nd of the following year, by the Presbytery of Chanorny. At the time of Mr. Macphail’s induction, there were two churches in the parish where services were conducted, viz., at Cullicudden and Kirkmichael. At one time these were separate parishes,

but on their union the minister resided at Cullicudden. The heritors, owing to the ruinous condition of the manses, decided to erect a church and manse at the western extremity of the old parish of Kirkmichael, called Resolis.

Mr. Macphail's first wife was a daughter of Mr. John Balfour, Nigg. She had been one of Mr. Porteous of Kilmuir's hearers, and had benefited by his preaching. "Feeling painfully the difference," says Dr. Kennedy, "between her husband's doctrine and that to which she had been accustomed, she told him on a Sabbath morning soon after their marriage, that her soul was starving, and that as all must give place to her care for its welfare, she had resolved to go on that day across to Kilmuir." He offered no opposition; he even accompanied her to the ferry. It was a sad journey the pious wife took that day to Kilmuir. Arriving at the manse before the hour for beginning the service in church, Mr. Porteous was not a little surprised to see her, and on meeting her, asked very anxiously why she had come. She told him that, as her soul was famished at Resolis, she was compelled to come for the bread of life to the place where she had been wont to receive it. Mr. Porteous retired to his study, and on rejoining her, said, "If I am not greatly deceived, you will not long have the same reason for leaving Resolis, for I expect that the Lord will soon give you, by the hand of your husband, the very finest of the wheat" (*Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, 5th edition, p. 47).

The sequel to this extraordinary incident, as narrated by Dr. Kennedy, was the awakening of Mr. Macphail's conscience to his unfitness for the work of the ministry. He passed through deep convictions, which extended over a period of several years. So unprofitable as a servant did he appear in his own eyes that he determined to resign his charge. In order to carry out his intention, he sent for Mr. James Fraser, Alness, to preach on a weekday in his church, and it was proposed that Mr. Fraser would make the intimation of his resignation to the congregation at the end of the service. During the preaching of Mr. Fraser's sermon, light came to the distressed minister, and a desire was awakened in his heart to preach Christ to perishing sinners.

Next day he, full of his new-found joy, escorted Mr. Fraser to Alness Ferry, and on his way back he called at the house of one of his elders, who had been an earnest pleader at the throne of grace for his minister. "What news today, Mr. Macphail?" was the elder's salutation. "Good news," replied the minister. "Hector Macphail is not to preach to you any more." "Oh, I expected other news than that," said the elder, "for I don't reckon that to be good news." "Hector Macphail is not to preach any more," said the minister explaining, "but the Spirit of the

Lord is to preach to you through him.” “Oh, that is good news, indeed,” cried the elder in his joy.

With the new sense of responsibility awakened within him, Mr. Macphail lost no opportunity of speaking about eternal matters with those with whom he came in contact. The story of the kitchen maid to whom he taught the prayer, “Shew me myself,” and afterwards, “Shew me Thyself,” is well known, as is also the story of Luke Heywood’s conversion.

It happened that while Mr. Macphail, on one occasion, was waiting for the boat to take him across the Fort George ferry to the Black Isle side, a soldier entered a butcher’s shop and asked the price of a leg of mutton. The shopman quoted his price, whereupon the soldier, with an oath, exclaimed he would never give so much for it, but, notwithstanding, he purchased the piece of mutton. On coming out, Mr. Macphail, in a gentle manner, asked what he paid for the joint. The soldier mentioned the price. “Oh, you paid much more than that for it,” said Mr. Macphail. “I did not,” replied the soldier with some heat. “But you did,” said the minister; “you gave yourself, soul and body, for it, for did you not say, ‘May Satan take me if I give that price for it’? If this should take place, what an awful eternity should await you.”

The soldier paid little attention at the time to what had been so fitly said to him, but afterwards the faithful warning began to trouble his conscience. The same evening he came to the shop where he had purchased the mutton, and enquired about the gentleman who had spoken to him and where he resided. On learning he was the minister of Resolis, he immediately crossed by the ferry, reaching the manse about midnight. The soldier was shown into the study, and in great excitement of mind informed Mr. Macphail of his great concern. The minister addressed to him such words as might be helpful to one in such a state. The work of grace so wonderfully begun was carried on according to the promise, and Luke Heywood became a true follower of the Lord Jesus.

In the *Diary of James Calder* there are frequent references to Mr. Macphail’s preaching. In one entry Mr. Calder says: “Mr. Macphail preached one of the best sermons my ears ever heard, from Titus 2: ‘Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.’”

Mr. Macphail was sorely tried at times, and though his faith did not fail, yet of him it could be said, as of another, that it was a helpless hand that to Christ’s cross was clinging. Mr. Sage says of his faith that it “took its rise from a sense of utter helplessness of help in man to save, and it made its way to ‘that which is within the veil’ through the darkness of unbelief, and in the face of Satan’s deepest devices to ensnare and deceive” (*Memorabilia Domestica*, p. 353).

On his death, as he was passing through the valley of the shadow of death, his hope of heaven grew very dim. While the conflict was being waged he fell asleep, and in the following dream, so beautifully recorded by Dr. Kennedy, he received encouragement. "He dreamt," says the doctor, "that he was waiting, lonely and despairing, outside the walls of the New Jerusalem. Seeing the gate closed, and none near to help him, and none in sight to cry to for help, he had just lain down to die, when he heard sounds as of a company approaching the city. Venturing to look up from the dust where he lay, he recognised Noah, Abraham and all the patriarchs. As they drew near, the gate flew open, a glorious company from within came forth to meet them, and in the midst of shouts of triumph, they entered. The gate again closed, and again he is left alone and hopeless.

But soon he hears the noise of another company approaching. As they pass he recognises Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David and all the prophets, a glorious and numerous band. Again the gate is thrown open, "an abundant entrance" given, and again he is left outside, and feels more disconsolate than ever. A third company is heard approaching, composed of the apostles and all the earliest Christians. They enter the city amidst rejoicing like the rest, and he, with less hope than ever, is still outside the gate. A fourth company now appears. Luther and Knox are at the head of those who form it. They pass by like those who went before, are admitted into the city, and leave him alone and despairing without.

Quite close to him now comes a fifth company. He recognises in it some of his friends and acquaintances who had died in the Lord; but though their shining skirts touch him as they pass, he could not venture to arise and join them. Again he sees the gate open and close; and now, at last, he lays himself quite down to die. But he hears the footsteps of a solitary pilgrim coming exactly to the place where he lies. Looking up, he recognises Manasseh. Summoning all his strength, he takes hold of his skirt as he moves slowly towards the city, and, creeping on behind him, he knows the gate has opened by the light of the city's glory shining on his face; and just as he thought he heard the sound of the gate closing behind him, he suddenly awoke. The lesson of this dream was presented to him thereafter in the sweet words of Paul, "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" (*Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire*, 5th edition, pp. 50, 51).

---

---

### MR. J.K. STEHOUWER

---

Our readers will be interested to know that an account of the life of the late Pastor J.K. Stehouwer will appear, if the Lord will, in the November and December *Friendly Companion*. We warmly commend it to our readers.

## FOR EVER

---

Oh, how the thought that I shall know  
 The Man that suffered here below,  
     To manifest His favour,  
 For me and those whom most I love;  
 Or here, or with Himself above,  
 Does my delighted passions move  
     At that sweet word, for ever!

For ever to behold Him shine,  
 For evermore to call Him mine,  
     And see Him still before me!  
 For ever on His face to gaze,  
 And meet His full assembled rays,  
 While all the Father He displays  
     To all the saints in glory.

Not all things else are half so dear,  
 As His delightful presence here:  
     What must it be in heaven!  
 'Tis heaven on earth to hear Him say,  
 As now I journey, day by day,  
 "Poor sinner, cast thy fears away,  
     Thy sins are all forgiven."

But how must His celestial voice  
 Make my enraptured heart rejoice  
     When I in glory hear Him  
 While I, before the heavenly gate,  
 For everlasting entrance wait,  
 And Jesus, on His throne of state,  
     Invites me to come near Him!

"Come in, thou blessed, sit by Me,  
 With My own life I ransomed thee:  
     Come, taste My perfect favour;  
 Come in, thou happy spirit, come,  
 Thou now shalt dwell with Me at home;  
 Ye blissful mansions, make him room,  
     For he must stay for ever."

When Jesus thus invites me in,  
 How will the heavenly hosts begin  
     To own their new relation!  
 Come in! come in! the blissful sound  
 From every tongue will echo round,  
 Till all the crystal walls resound  
     With joy for my salvation.

Joseph Swain (1761-1796)



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD  
DECEMBER 2021

---

---

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

---

---

**“FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR”**

---

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ was so precious to Paul that whenever he saw an opportunity of commending His Saviour, the apostle took that opportunity. In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, Paul is exhorting the believers at Corinth to be ready to give out of the abundance God had given them. To enforce this scriptural principle, he uses the best of all examples, that of the infinite generosity and selfless love of the Saviour in laying down His life for sinners.

When the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus Christ to a sinner, there is that constraint of love, which asks the question: “What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?” (Psa. 116. 12). Having proved the freeness of the gospel to a bankrupt sinner, there is an accompanying desire to show that there is a debt to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Salvation is free, says the apostle, but he implies that if our profession of forgiveness does not move us to show our indebtedness to the Saviour’s unconditional love, then there is something sadly and solemnly lacking. The Saviour Himself said, “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7. 20).

What an inexhaustible subject is the love of Christ to sinners! Happy is that sinner who can say, with some degree of God-given faith, “It was for my sake He left His radiant throne.”

In considering this vast subject let us ask four important questions.

*Who became poor?*

None other than the second Person of the undivided Trinity, the eternally-begotten Son of the Father, became poor. This was a triune act – the Father sending Him, the Son voluntarily, and of His own will coming, the Holy Spirit enduing His holy humanity, without measure, out of His fulness. It was the Son of God, clothed in sinless humanity, yet the likeness of sinful flesh, who lay in Bethlehem’s manger, and who at the end of His life died between two malefactors at Golgotha.

*How did He become poor?*

As the Son of God, He took into union with His divine Person, an inferior though sinless nature. He became poor of His own volition. It was not forced on Him unwillingly. He bypassed the nature of sinless

angels, and took a human body and soul, like unto His brethren. He was born in an obscure manger, to a poor woman, brought up in a humble carpenter's home in despised Nazareth and lived for thirty years of His life in obscurity. He had nowhere to lay His head, especially seen as He died at Calvary and was buried in another man's tomb. For most of His sinless life, His deity was veiled, and though His miracles bore eloquent witness to His Godhead, the generation among whom He ministered, except for the few to whom it was revealed, received Him not. He became poor when He stood in the place of sinners, took the poverty of their law debt and fallen lives to Himself. He bore the wrathful anger of the Most High God against their sins, the comforts of His Sonship being withheld as He endured the hell sinners deserved. He confessed, "I am a worm and no man" and cried out in the depths of His sorrow, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27. 46). The deep and mysterious words were fulfilled: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we" – *who knew no righteousness* – "might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

*For whom did He become poor?*

In the first place, for sinners. These sinners were foreknown by Him, as those who would be the fruit of the stupendous condescension He has made, spoken of as His sheep, His bride, members of His body, His brethren, living branches of Him, the true and living Vine, lively stones, built on Him, the Living Stone. Such was His love that sooner than lose one of them, He was willing to become poor, "for love's sake." If we are made wise unto salvation, then it will be our chief concern to be able to say, "For my sake He became poor." If this is a Holy Ghost wrought desire, then we will be made solemnly aware of our poverty in Adam, and in our sin-forfeited lives, under the holy law of God, which justly demands of us perfection or payment, neither of which can we give. Thus, we need One to stoop as low as we are, to reach our helpless and otherwise hopeless state. The only One who can reach our case is He who became poor that we might be rich. Thus, He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5. 3).

*Why did He become poor?*

That they might be rich! Rich in the gift of His Holy Spirit, and all the gifts that accompany that precious donation. Rich in the garment of everlasting righteousness woven out for them during the life of the Saviour. Rich in the interest in the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. Rich because of the promise that appertains to the blood: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exod. 12. 13). How rich to the firstborn sons of Israel must the sprinkled blood have been on the night of the Passover! It stood between them and death. How

infinitely richer is the blood of Christ which secures the saved sinner from eternal wrath and misery! That they might be in glory with Him when the work of grace is done and at the end of time. Rich in the heavenly mansion He has gone to prepare for them.

“Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop;  
Thou that art the people’s hope;  
Thou wast poor, that they might be  
Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee.” (H. 1062)

---

---

### GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

*Sermon preached by Caleb Sawyer at Mayfield Chapel,  
on Lord’s day evening, December 19th, 1948*

---

**Text:** “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3. 16).

Thus the apostle sets forth in a few sentences the great mystery of our faith relative to the Person of that dear Emmanuel of whom you have been singing (Gadsby’s 20). It will ever be a mystery that the great, eternal God, the Maker of all worlds, tabernacled in clay, in a feeble body like our own. And this mystery of “God ... manifest in the flesh” is to be believed. When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the commencement of His ministry, when He came into contact with one and the other, they affirmed their belief, as did Nathaniel: “Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.”

This mystery of God being made manifest in the flesh is that on which our hope is built for a never-ending eternity, and upon which our salvation rests. If you take away this foundation truth, what can the righteous do? But Christ is very God and very Man in one Person; not a confusion of substance, but that Christ is that glorious God-Man; and it is “without controversy.” That is, there is no controversy relative to the mystery of it, though there is controversy concerning the fact. I suppose there has been more controversy respecting the fact of the eternal Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ than any other truth in the whole Scriptures; but there can be no controversy relative to the mystery of it, because we are at one here, in speaking of this as being a great mystery. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, speaks of the “wisdom of God in a mystery.”

Well now, this is a mystery, and yet it is well worthy to be believed. “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.” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Probably for thirty years the Lord Jesus went about as an obscure Person, just as the reputed Son of Joseph; but when He came forth into His ministry, then we believe the rays of His eternal Godhead began at times to shine forth, especially in those mighty miracles that He performed and in those blessed truths to which He gave utterance. But “God was manifest in the flesh”; not the full rays of the eternal Godhead, but God undoubtedly was manifest in the flesh of Him who was spoken of as Jesus of Nazareth.

When He turned the water into wine, when He fed the multitude with the few loaves and fishes, when He healed the leprous man, when He raised the dead, and in all those miracles, which were signs of His eternal Godhead, there was a manifestation of God in the flesh; for though the flesh of the Lord Jesus was pure and sinless, undefiled and, in a sense, He was separate from sinners, yet He had the appearance of an ordinary man. In fact, according to the prophet, if there was anything about His appearance, “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” People think that if they saw the Lord Jesus Christ walking upon this earth they would believe on Him and follow Him, but they would need a supernatural faith, the same as those did who saw Him when He tabernacled here below and walked this earth as “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” It needed faith, God-given faith, supernatural faith, to believe on Him, for “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” O He was manifest in the flesh! In a way they were without excuse when they saw the mighty miracles, but such is the perversity of human nature that, though they had it before their very eyes, yet they would not believe. But He was manifest in the flesh.

It was real flesh. It was not an aerial substance. It was not a phantom. The Lord Jesus tabernacled in a body like our own; and so, even after the resurrection, the Lord Jesus told them to handle Him and prove that He had that same body that He wore as He walked amongst them, that it was real flesh that He tabernacled in and that rose from the dead.

He was manifest in the flesh, also, by the wonders that He performed and the doctrine to which He gave utterance. We must not lose sight of that. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of Himself as being the Bread of life that cometh down from heaven. So the doctrine was manifested in the preaching and the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

But He was “justified in the Spirit” – that is the Holy Spirit of God, the third Person in the blessed Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son, bore witness to Christ’s eternal Godhead. So when Christ was manifest in the first place, when He submitted Himself to be baptized of John, He said, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” – not merely being plunged into Jordan’s stream, but the Spirit bore witness, or justified the Lord Jesus Christ, by descending upon Him in bodily shape as a Dove and resting upon Him. The Spirit thereby justified the Lord Jesus Christ in His entrance upon the public ministry, and so it is with every true minister of Jesus Christ. There will be times when the Spirit of God will so rest upon the minister that He will abundantly justify such a one’s entering upon that sacred, solemn work. The Lord Jesus, after being baptized, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, so that He was “justified by the Spirit” in being made perfect in those sufferings whereby He became a faithful and merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God, in that He suffered, being tempted, so that He was able to succour every tempted son. So though He was not led into temptation by the Spirit, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. There is a difference. The Lord will not tempt anyone to sin, but He may lead you in His providence into those places where you may be subjected to temptation. So the Lord Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil.

Then He came forth by that same Spirit into the place where He was brought up, and He went into the synagogue there, and they gave to Him the book. Probably it was a scroll, but it was the Book of the prophet Isaiah; and He opened it in that place, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.” There we see that Christ was justified in the whole course of His ministry by the Spirit of God. Though the Spirit did not, at that time, rest upon Him bodily as a dove, yet the Spirit of God abundantly rested upon His ministry. It accomplished those things: it was for the poor, the blind, the lame; it was for those who were in captivity, for those who were bowed down. Hence the Spirit of God justified the Lord Jesus Christ in the whole course of His ministry and in the baptism of suffering that He had to endure. So the Spirit of God was with Him to the end; that is, when He said, “It is finished,” and gave up the ghost.

Then we believe that He was justified in the Spirit when He felt in His inmost soul that He had finished the work that the Father had given Him to do. He knew that redemption’s work was accomplished, that the mighty conflict was over, and the conquest was gained, so that He could say with confidence, “Father, into Thine hand I commit My spirit.” And

I believe that – though not to the same extent as our great Forerunner, the great Head of the church – yet there are times when this self-same Spirit bears witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God, when the Spirit of God gives us to know that we are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses, as we “venture all on One,” and as we rest the weight of our souls’ salvation purely upon the finished work of Christ.

But as well as being “justified in the Spirit,” He was “seen of angels.” From His very nativity Christ was seen of angels. Angels heralded His birth, and what a sweet song they sang! “Peace on earth; goodwill toward men.” It was such that it filled those shepherds who were looking after their flock with such joyful anticipation that they said, “Let us now go even to Bethlehem, and see this great sight.” Would to God that we and the world could go to Bethlehem! I do not mean literally or yet locally, but see by precious faith that Infant of Days, that Babe in the manger, and believe that He is our God.

Well, He was “seen of angels” there, and I believe at different times angels ministered to His necessities. We have it recorded that after Satan had finished his temptations, angels ministered unto Him. In Gethsemane’s garden angels ministered unto Him; and then again, when He was about to be parted from His disciples, He was seen of angels, as He ascended up into heaven. So these angels, that are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,” looked upon – desiring to look into – this mystery; and yet they had no part in the work of redemption,

“If sinless innocence be theirs,  
Redemption all is ours.” (H. 39)

Therefore, my friends, these angels were servants to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But it is said here, relative to the Person of Christ, that He was “seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles”; and that was according to His own word to His disciples before He left them: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Christ is to be preached, whether it is to Jew or Gentile, as in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading in his chariot, returning from Jerusalem. He may, it is true, have been a Jew, but in all probability, he was a proselyte to the Jewish faith. He read the Scriptures, and as he was reading that wonderful part, the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, he said, “Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” And Philip began at the same scripture

and preached Christ to him; that was the doctrine of Christ and Him crucified; it was not just talking about the name of Jesus, but it was opening up the precious truth concerning Him. And Philip went to Samaria and did the same there; he preached Jesus.

I believe that if we are true preachers of the gospel we must preach Christ as being the only way of salvation for poor sinners. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Do not think that there is another way of getting to heaven, because there is not. You may think that your moral integrity will take you to heaven, but it will not. You may think that a few religious duties will take you to heaven, but they will not! And you may think that your profession will take you to heaven, but it will not. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Christ, and Christ only, is that living Way, the Way which God Himself ordained. It is not man-made religion; it is that which was ordained by the eternal Three-in-One before ever time had a being, that Christ should accomplish all that was needed in reconciling poor sinners to God, in His own suffering, death and merit. And as this precious Christ is preached, so He is believed.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." There is no believing apart from hearing. The truth must be made known in some way or the other, or faith cannot mix with it. Hence the necessity of preaching the gospel to every creature, so that there can be those who believe. This believing means a receiving of the truth in the heart, "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." So it is no small mercy if you have a heart to receive the gospel, because that is the very nature of saving faith. It is not just believing that you are a child of God; it is whether you believe the truth and whether you have a heart to that truth, and if the Spirit of God opens your heart to attend unto the things that are spoken; that is the very nature of saving faith. If the Lord gives you this saving faith, it will carry with it a sentence of justification unto life. So said the apostle when preaching in those early days of the Christian church, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." So if you believe in the things of Christ, that brings with it some sense of acceptance with God, and thereby the forgiveness of sins. You must not expect an angel to come down from heaven and tell you your sins are forgiven, but for the Spirit of God to work faith in your heart upon the things of Christ, and that will bring some sense of forgiveness of sins.

“Believed on in the world.” So that these people are not angels. Angels, it is true, look upon the things of Christ and desire to enter into them, but these people who are believers are in the world. And that is the mystery of it very often, that the Lord should have a people whom He intends to take to heaven, and yet they must remain upon this poor, sin-bitten earth, perhaps for a number of years. But I believe it is to this end, to display the wonders of His grace. It is to reflect the honour and glory of His great name. So these poor sinners are called out of nature’s darkness into His marvellous light, and are brought to believe upon Christ for their salvation; as the poet says,

“Trust Him for salvation; you need not to grieve;  
There’s no condemnation to them that believe.” (H. 1000)

And as you are brought to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, it carries with it some sense of your adoption into the family of God.

Then the Lord Jesus was “received up into glory.” It was not intended for Him to live eternally upon this earth, but He was to be “received up into glory,” whatever that means – the Lord only knows – but it is something “unspeakable,” as the apostle says, “and full of glory.” That related to the saints, but this glory which Christ had with the Father before the foundation of the world, that is to be upon, or is already put upon, the Person of the God-Man Mediator, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as He enters into this glory; because the human nature of Christ was never in heaven until after His resurrection and ascension into heaven. So the glory that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world was to be put upon Him as He entered those eternal doors that we read of in one of the psalms, for the King of glory to come in. “Who is this King of glory?” This mighty Jesus, He is the King of glory. And if we are amongst these people, the time will come when we shall see that glory. I have thought more than once of Dr. Owen when he was dying. He had just finished that wonderful work of his on the glory of Christ, and a friend came to him and said that the work had just been put to the press; and Dr. Owen said, “Friend, I shall soon see that glory as I have never seen it heretofore.” So if you and I belong to these people, the time will come when we shall enter into that place “where He unveils His lovely face,” as the poet so beautifully expresses it.

May the Lord grant that you and I may be amongst that number.  
Amen.





## ZION'S CLOUD

*By J.K. Popham (1847-1937)*

---

I do not suppose that it is needful that I should remind my brethren that Zion is under a cloud. She is. There are happily individual exceptions, and no doubt will be. The Lord make us, put us, among the exceptions. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy" (Rev. 3. 4). But speaking generally, it is too, too true that Zion is under a cloud; that her holy and beautiful house, where once the honour of God was, is now laid low.

What course, then, should Zion take in dark days, in times of trouble, and as being under a cloud? The only proper course is for her, as convinced of her state, to go as this church of old did: "Be not wroth very sore, O LORD"; "Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not"; "We are the clay, and Thou our Potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand." Didst not Thou bring us out of the land of Egypt, and plant us in the land of promise? Didst Thou not institute Thy service, and command us to obey Thee in all the things Thou commandedst us by the hand of Moses? We have gone astray, we have done wickedly; but now we come to Thee. Do not be wroth very sore; put away our iniquity, forgive it, remember it not against us; use it not as an argument against us in Thy dealings with us; do not deal with us as we have dealt with Thee.

That is the proper course for Zion; that is the proper course for every poor child of God who feels far off, and fain would be nigh again. The Lord help us to take it and follow it, and as believing it to be true, to say, "Behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people." He can see more and farther down than a poor, perplexed child of God can. The evidences we have may be very few, and hardly discernible by us; but beneath that load of sin, and beneath all that burying of all our good things by sin, the Lord can penetrate and see His own handiwork, to which He will have a desire. And now may God put this prayer in our hearts, as many as it may be suitable to, and kindly answer it for His name's sake.

---

God must needs be infinite in all places at once, not only in regard to the simplicity and purity of His nature, but in regard to His power, which being so glorious, who can set Him bounds, or prescribe Him a circuit to walk in? It is as if the drop should limit the ocean, or a star set bounds to the sun.

*Thomas Watson*

## THE VOICE OF THE CHILD JESUS

*by Hugh Martin (1822-1885)*

---

A sweet voice breaks upon our ear. It is the voice of the Child Himself.

But what? The Child's voice! The newborn Infant speaks! Yes, He is the Word of God. In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was made flesh. Surely it is the very office of the Word to speak. And shall His coming into the world make Him silent? Surely not.

But this Child in swaddling bands, lying here in the manger – He does not speak to me. His lips do not even move. No sound issues from them. And how can you say then that you hear a voice from the newborn, speechless Babe?

But I also will ask you one question. As you gaze into the manger of Bethlehem, and listen in vain, as you say, to hear the voice of Jesus – so do I now look up to the right hand of the throne of God, where Jesus now is, and I also may complain as well as you that I listen in vain, that I hear no voice from Jesus. As little sound of words do I hear coming down from the throne of God, as you now hear coming forth from the newborn King. But is Jesus therefore silent unto me? Has He nothing to say to me? And does He take no means of saying it? Am I doomed not to hear the voice of Jesus? Do I really not hear Him? Then I am not of His sheep. For His sheep hear His voice. And other sheep He has that are not yet of His fold, them also He will bring, and they shall hear His voice.

His voice is heard in the Word – in that Word of the Lord which liveth and abideth for ever. By His Word He speaks, now that He is set down on His throne of glory. By His Word also He speaks, even when lying a helpless Babe in Bethlehem. Yes – “When He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10. 5-7; Psa. 40. 6-8).

In His very coming into the world, He speaks of Himself as a sacrifice for sin. He willingly accepts, He gladly welcomes, the body prepared for Him – the body in which He is to bear our sins upon the tree. It is His Father's will that He should lay down His life, and He delights to do His will. “Lo, I come ... I delight to do Thy will, O My God.”

What wondrous love to His Father! What wondrous love to us! And how do we receive, or reply to, His love! Shall He welcome so joyfully that body in which He was to be wounded, and wearied, and grieved, and bruised, and crucified, and buried? And shall not we

welcome Him in that body in which He suffers all this for us? Is our flesh so dear to Him that He rejoices to receive the body prepared for Him? and when He thus presents to us the fulness of His Godhead, joyfully sojourning among us in our flesh, even though the penalty of doing so be the burden of our sin, and the sting of our death, and the battle with our foes, and the curse of our God, shall we not give Him joyful welcome, even when the issue of our doing so is, deliverance from the curse and from death, and from Satan and from sin? Surely this body is prepared for us as much as for Him. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." And shall we leave it to Him alone to welcome this body in which our redemption is to be accomplished? Nay, we join with Him in rejoicing at His birth. Bethlehem is the very birthplace of our hope and salvation. "Lo, we come," to see and to embrace, and to give praise for the body prepared for bearing our sins, and carrying our sorrows. And being reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, lo, we come, with Him and like Him, to do Thy will, O God. Put Thy law into our hearts as it was in His.

---

## THE PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE

*By Adolph Saphir (1831-1891)*

---

Scripture contains predictions which have been fulfilled. These predictions are marvellous, both on account of their comprehensive grandeur, containing great historical outlines and principles, and on account of their circumstantial and minute detail. The one was beyond the mind of the prophets, the other beyond their calculation.

### *Predictions of Messiah's Life*

Let us consider only one great subject of prediction, the history of the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole life of the Saviour, from His birth to His ascension and His sending forth the Spirit, may be narrated in the words of Moses and the prophets. Without referring to the four evangelists, the whole history of Christ in its great outlines, as well as its minute particulars, has been foretold by the Spirit through the Scripture.

We ask first concerning His birth. And Genesis 3 informs us, that He is to be emphatically the Seed of the woman; while Isaiah teaches us that the mother of the Saviour, the great Immanuel, is to be a virgin, and that this Child thus born, this Son given unto us, is the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

We enquire further, Whose Son is the Messiah to be? The Scripture points out Shem, for "Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem"; and still

further we are directed to Abram, and still further to Isaac (as distinguished from Ishmael), and still further to Jacob, and from among the twelve sons of Jacob, the patriarch on his deathbed singles out the tribe of Judah; out of him shall come Shiloh, and to Him shall be the gathering of the nations. But Scripture is still more definite. The son of Jesse, even David, receives the promise of the great King and Redeemer. Thus we know that the Messiah is God and Man; born of a woman, even of a virgin; a Sethite; a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of the tribe of Judah; of the house of David.

### *His Birth*

Where is He to be born? Like the wise men from the east, we would naturally suppose in Jerusalem, the holy city, the city of the great King. But Micah knows differently, and points out Bethlehem Ephratah, little among the thousands of Judah: "Out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

When is He to be born? Jacob predicts the period: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come"; and Daniel more definitely speaks of seventy periods of seven which are to elapse from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, before the coming of the Messiah the Prince.

Born in Bethlehem, He is to be taken into Egypt; as Hosea saith, "I have called My Son out of Egypt."

What is to prepare the world for His coming? What great event is to announce His advent? Isaiah and Malachi tell us it is to be a man, a messenger: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

What is to be His character? "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him.... He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench."

### *His Ministry*

What is to be His work? "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."

What is His preaching? "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek." "The Lord GOD hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary ... He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned."

How will the people receive Him? How will the rulers and guides of the nation welcome Him? "He is despised and rejected of men." The builders reject the stone.

Is He to appear as Jerusalem's king? and in what manner? Zechariah tells us: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

### *His Death*

What is to be the end of His life on earth? Daniel tells us He shall be "cut off."

Who is to deliver Him into the hands of His enemies? The psalmist tells us, one of His friends, he that eateth bread with Him; and Zechariah states that for thirty pieces of silver He shall be betrayed.

Will His disciples stand by Him in His last sufferings? No; the Shepherd is smitten, and the sheep of the flock are scattered.

How is He to die? He is the Lamb; and is to suffer a slow, painful death, and not a bone of His body is to be broken. Moses teaches us that His blood is to be shed, and that He is to be lifted up as the serpent in the wilderness. Zechariah adds another feature of His sufferings: He is to be pierced. No other mode but that of crucifixion fulfils all these descriptions.

What further happened during His crucifixion? The twenty-second Psalm tells us: "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.... I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.... My strength is dried up like a potsherd; My tongue cleaveth to my jaws.... They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture."

What further circumstances attend His death? "He opened not His mouth." "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." "He was numbered with the transgressors."

Why did He suffer? Isaiah answers: "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."

Was it only man who caused His sufferings? Isaiah saith, "It pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief"; and Zechariah saith, "Awake, O sword, against ... the Man that is My Fellow ... smite the Shepherd." And in the words of David, His soul is to cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

### *His Resurrection*

Is He to remain in the grave? David says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption";

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the comer”; while Jonah’s history prophesies the same; and Hosea speaks of the third day as the day of revival.

And after His resurrection? The sixty-eighth Psalm says, “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.” And in another Psalm it is written, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”

---

---

### THE ONLY REMEDY FOR SIN

*By Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky (1690-1774)*

---

“And thou shall call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1. 21).

Sin is the deadliest foe we have. It cast our first parents out of paradise; it defaced God’s image in man; it brought pain, sickness and death into the world, and a spiritual death into the soul; it causes a distance from God and a dislike to His holy ways; it exposes body and soul to the last judgment of a holy God, and will sink every unpardoned offender into everlasting destruction. How is this deadly foe to be conquered? Reader, be careful in this matter, and seek after a remedy that will be lasting and efficacious. Duties, prayers, tears, sacrifices, morality and partial reformations, avail nothing in this case; all below Christ Jesus will prove physicians of no value. Jesus is the only Saviour; His blood is the only atonement for sin; this sprinkled upon the heart by the Spirit, and apprehended by faith, removes the guilt and curse of sin, and speaks pardon and peace; His grace breaks the power of sin and makes us hate it. Thus is holiness secured in the heart and walk, as well as peace in the conscience. His people are all that believe in Him, and depend upon Him for pardon, peace and everlasting salvation. In that happy number, reader, may thou and I be found! May we be enabled to look to Him, to receive Him as our Lord Jesus, able and willing to save to the very uttermost! And may we walk as the redeemed of the Lord, in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life! Amen.

“He died to bear the guilt of men.  
That sin might be forgiven.  
He lives to bless them and defend,  
And plead their cause in heaven.”

## GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH

---

*Many sermons, treatises and articles have been written on the sacred subject of the incarnation of the Son of God. Sometimes it is good for the Word of God to speak for itself.*

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3. 16).

“Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1. 3, 4).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1. 1, 2, 14).

“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 1. 19 and 2. 9).

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death” (Heb. 2. 9).

“But a body hast Thou prepared Me” (Heb. 10. 5).

“That holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1. 35).

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Gal. 4. 4, 5).

“For unto us a Child born, unto us a Son is given” (Isa. 9. 6).

“And they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1. 23).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 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. 14-18).

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Cor. 5. 19).

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1. 29).

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5. 11, 12).

---

---

### IN A MANGER

*by Thomas Adams (1583-1652)*

---

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2. 7).

It is evident in Luke’s Gospel that the shepherds found the Christ Child lying in a cradle. He who sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high was lodged in a stable. He that measures the waters in His fist, and heaven with a span, was now crowned in a manger, and swaddled with a few rags. Here they find neither guard to defend Him, nor tumults of people thronging to see Him, neither crown on His head, nor sceptre in His hand, but a young Child in a cradle. They saw a Child, who, having so little external glory, they might have saved their pain and seen many in their own country far beyond Him.

Our instruction in this is that God does often strangely and strongly exercise the faith of His people, that their persuasion may not be guided by their sight, but by His Word. The eye of true faith is so quick sighted that it can see through all the mists and fogs of difficulties. Hereon these shepherds did confidently believe that this poor Child, lying in so base a manner, is the great King of heaven and earth. Thus faith that is grounded in the promises of God must believe that in prison there is liberty, in trouble peace, in affliction comfort, in death life, in the cross a crown, and in a manger, the Lord Jesus.

---

---

If the children of God did but know what was best for them, they would perceive that God did that which is best for them.

*John Mason*



## PASTORAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE SEEKING MEMBERSHIP

*Letter written by Mr. Jesse Delves to Mr. and Mrs. John Stevens  
in 1947, when they were waiting to come before the church*

---

My dear friends,

Our thoughts and prayers have been much with and for you both this week. We hope you have been favoured with some continuing help in this time of need.

Don't be surprised if you hear many opposite voices, voices that may cause much conflict, because where Christ is honoured, the enemy will make a stir. One voice may be, "Now you have presumed, you are only presuming; why do you not stay as you were?" Another: "You will have to suffer for this. Why take such a step?" Another: "They will not receive you." Another: "You will never endure; you will bring dishonour upon His name and cause if you do it."

And yet it may not be so. Perhaps you already have "the answer of a good conscience," and a measure of gospel peace. I trust it is so. But if temptation abound, may He arise and rebuke the winds and say, "Peace, be still."

After the wind, earthquake and fire Elijah heard "a still small voice." He has said, "Fear not; I will help thee." I hope a few poor sinners may not bring bondage. The Lord open your hearts and ours. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." In keeping these "there is great reward."

The step is a solemn one. I know you realise this. It is a blessed one. I hope you will realise this in the joy of the gospel in your souls and be helped through, strengthened in body, and enabled to go on your way rejoicing like the eunuch. Jesus is the Son of God – may He reveal Himself to you each in this. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."

We will (all being well) see you in The Cottage after the services tomorrow (Sunday) evening. My wife will come in quickly so you can come straight in. We will follow as soon as possible.

"I will trust, and not be afraid."

I have a heavy cold, but hope to be helped through and be home for the evening.

Accept my love and very kindest wishes

Your affectionate Pastor,

J. Delves

---

## COMMUNION WITH GOD

*By John Owen (1616-1683)*

*(Concluded from page 334)*

Now, of the things which have been delivered this is the sum: there is no grace whereby our souls go forth unto God, no act of divine worship yielded unto Him, no duty or obedience performed, but they are distinctly directed unto Father, Son and Spirit. Now by these and such like ways as these, do we hold communion with God; and therefore we have that communion distinctly, as hath been described.

This also may further appear, if we consider how distinctly the Persons of the Deity are revealed to act in the communication of those good things, wherein the saints have communion with God. As all the spiritual ascendings of their souls are assigned unto them respectively, so all their internal receivings of the communications of God unto them are held out in such a distribution as points at distinct rises and fountains (though not of being in themselves, yet) of dispensations unto us. Now this is declared two ways:-

1. When the same thing is, at the same time, ascribed jointly and yet distinctly to all the Persons in the Deity, and respectively to each of them. So are grace and peace. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1. 4, 5). The seven Spirits before the throne are the Holy Spirit of God, considered as the perfect fountain of every perfect gift and dispensation. All are here joined together, and yet all mentioned as distinguished in their communication of grace and peace unto the saints (see Rev. 1. 4, 5).

2. When the same thing is attributed severally and singly unto each Person. There is, indeed, no gracious influence from above, no illapse [entering in] of light, life, love or grace upon our hearts, but proceedeth in such a dispensation. I shall give only one instance, which is very comprehensive, and may be thought to comprise all other particulars; and this is teaching. The teaching of God is the real communication of all and every particular emanation from Himself unto the saints whereof they are made partakers. That promise, "They shall be all taught of God," inwraps [envelops] in itself the whole mystery of grace, as to its actual dispensation unto us, so far as we may be made real possessors of it. Now this is assigned,

- i. Unto the Father. The accomplishment of that promise is peculiarly referred to Him, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath

learned of the Father, cometh unto Me” (John 6. 45). This teaching, whereby we are translated from death unto life, brought unto Christ, unto a participation of life, and love in Him, it is of and from the Father. Him we hear, of Him we learn, by Him are we brought unto union and communion with the Lord Jesus. This is His drawing us, His begetting us anew of His own will, by His own Spirit; and in which work He employs the ministers of the gospel (see Acts 26. 17, 18).

ii. Unto the Son. The Father proclaims Him from heaven to be the great Teacher, in that solemn charge to hear Him, which came once (and) again from the excellent glory. “This is My beloved Son; hear Him.” The whole of His prophetic, and no small part of His kingly office, consists in this teaching; herein is He said to draw men unto Him, as the Father is said to do in His teaching (see John 12. 32); which He doth with such efficacy, that the dead hear His voice and live. The teaching of the Son is a life-giving, a spirit-breathing teaching; an effectual influence of light, whereby He shines into darkness; a communication of life, quickening the dead; an opening of blind eyes, and changing of hard hearts; a pouring out of the Spirit, with all the fruits thereof. Hence He claims it as His privilege to be the sole Master. “One is your Master, even Christ” (Matt. 23. 10).

iii. To the Spirit. “The Comforter ... He shall teach you all things” (John 14. 26). “But the anointing which ye have received,” saith the apostle, “abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him” (1 John 2. 27). That teaching unction which is not only true, but truth itself, is only the Holy Spirit of God: so that He teacheth also, being given unto us “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2. 12). I have chosen this special instance because, as I told you, it is comprehensive, and comprises in itself most of the particulars that might be enumerated, quickening, preserving, etc.

This, then, further drives on the truth that lies under demonstration; there being such a distinct communication of grace from the several Persons of the Deity, the saints must needs have distinct communion with Them.

It remaineth only to intimate, in a word, wherein this distinction lies, and what is the ground thereof. Now, this is, that the Father doth it by the way of original authority; the Son by the way of communicating from a purchased treasury; the Holy Spirit by the way of immediate efficacy.

1. The Father communicates all grace by the way of original authority: He “quickeneth whom He will” (John 5. 21). “Of His own will begat He us” (Jas. 1. 18). Life-giving power is, in respect of original authority, invested in the Father by the way of eminency; and therefore,

in sending of the quickening Spirit, Christ is said to do it from the Father, or the Father Himself to do it. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send” (John 14. 26). “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father” (John 15. 26); though He be also said to send Him Himself, on another account (see John 16. 7).

2. The Son, by the way of making out a purchased treasury: “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1. 16). And whence is this fulness? “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1. 19). And upon what account He hath the dispensation of that fulness to Him committed you may see (see Phil. 2. 8-11). “When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin ... He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53. 10, 11). And with this fulness He hath also authority for the communication of it (see John 5. 25-27; Matt. 28. 18).

3. The Spirit doth it by the way of immediate efficacy. “But 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). Here are all three comprised, with their distinct concurrence unto our quickening. Here is the Father’s authoritative quickening: “He raised Christ from the dead, and He shall quicken you”; and the Son’s mediatory quickening, for it is done in “the death of Christ”; and the Spirit’s immediate efficacy: “He shall do it by the Spirit that dwelleth in you.” He that desires to see this whole matter further explained, may consult what I have elsewhere written on this subject. And thus is the distinct communion whereof we treat both proved and demonstrated.

---

---

## THE COMFORT OF LOOKING UNTO JESUS IN DARK TIMES

---

Dear brother in Christ,

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.”

I had as it were a double text yesterday: “But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God” (1 Sam. 30. 6), and in the afternoon referring back to the morning text, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3. 17, 18). I saw something there in Habakkuk I had never seen before. In Habakkuk are three sweet fruits and two types of meat used in sacrifices. I wish I had the grace to write it all, but spiritually, we may speak of the sweets of the gospel being lost to the child of God, but not Christ to the child of God, no never – and then there is the common sense of national calamities and failures in providence. However, the sweetness and sense of Christ and His affection to His own may be lost for a season, even the sense of our pardon through Christ’s blood, shed for sinners, but *not* the child of God. He can never be lost. Like David, the child of God by grace encourages himself in the Lord *his God*, not in himself, but *in God, his God*. He can look back like David to the lion, the bear, and Goliath, etc., and see what God has done for him. But more than this, it is to *his God* he looks *up*, to all that is in the Lord Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace and the sending of Jesus to die for the chief of sinners. This sacred exercise in trials demands much heart-searching and intercession to God. We need grace. You know the path.

Our love to you both in Christ,

Andrew G. Randalls

Bournemouth

September 20th, 2021

---

---

## A DEBATE ON THE MOORS OF LANCASHIRE

*By John Kershaw (1792-1870)*

---

On another occasion, going over the road to the Rossendale Valley on a fine Lord’s day morning in May, I met two well-dressed men. They bade me, “Good morning.” I returned the salutation, and passed on. I had not gone more than a few yards when I heard them call out. I turned round, when one of them said, “If we are not mistaken, we have heard you preach at Newchurch.” I told them I had preached there. “You are a Calvinist, and we are Arminians,” one of them said, “and if you are willing, we will try which is right.” I took out my watch and said, “It is now half-past nine o’clock. I have to preach this morning at half-past ten, and have yet three miles to walk. It will not be right for me to stop

disputing in the road, and disappoint the people where I am going. They enquired when I should be at Newchurch again; they would meet me there, and argue the point. I informed them that I should, God willing, be there again that day month.

When the time came, they brought one of their preachers to argue with me. The place in which we met was crowded with people. I opened the business by recapitulating the circumstances, and then called upon my opponent to state the principle that he wished to be discussed. He then proceeded as follows: That he believed Christ laid down His life and shed His blood for the sins of all Adam's fallen race, and that life and salvation were offered to all men, so that they might all be saved if they would. I then asked him if I was to understand by his statement that he believed Christ Jesus had satisfied the demands of God's holy, just and righteous law for all and every sin of all and every individual of Adam's fallen race? He said, "Yes."

I then asked him to tell us upon what ground it was that any were condemned and sent to hell? He said, "For the sin of unbelief." I replied, "If Christ died for every sin of every individual of Adam's fallen race, He must have died for the sin of unbelief too; so that it still remains for you to prove upon what ground any are lost." This question he could not answer, and was evidently confounded, but his pride would not let him confess it. He tried to shift his ground, but I would not allow it till he had solved the question before us. I told him I would explain it to the present assembly by a metaphor, with which they would all be familiar, and leave them to judge. "If," said I to my opponent, "I owed you fifty pounds, you would have a right to demand your money; and if I was insolvent, and could not pay you, you could, according to law, throw me into gaol for debt. But if, while thus confined, a friend of mine came forward unsolicitedly to pay my debt and obtain your receipt in full for all demands, this proceeding, both according to law and justice, would secure my deliverance. Neither law nor equity could detain me for a debt that had been honourably paid." I remember when I said this a plain straightforward countryman called out, "It would not be morally honest to detain you; but be acting the part of a rogue."

I then continued, "As sinners, we are debtors to the law and justice of God. Our Lord uses this figure (see Luke 7. 41) in speaking to Simon concerning Mary Magdalene: 'There was a certain creditor had two debtors.' Christ is the great Paymaster of all His people's debts. He paid the ransom with His own blood, so that the declaration is gone forth, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.' And again, Jehovah the Father, having received satisfaction at the hands of Christ for the sins of His people, says, 'As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no

water' (Zech. 9. 11). Christ must see of the travail of His soul, surrounding His throne in glory, or He will never be satisfied. Justice neither can nor will demand two payments for one debt, first at the bleeding Surety's hands, and then again at ours. So that not a soul that Christ shed His precious blood for shall ever perish." The pride and stupidity of my opponent were such that he professed to say he could not see the force of my argument and the word of God upon which it was founded. The people separated, saying that he was fairly and honourably defeated; but the pride of his heart would not allow him to confess it.

---

### TRUE, JUSTIFYING FAITH

*By John Newton (1725-1807)*

---

"And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15. 5, 6).

Answerable to Abraham's faith is the way of justification now, by faith in the same object, and upon the same ground. The object is Christ. No other name is given, no other name is desired or regarded by those who are truly convinced of sin. He is appointed of God and proposed to them and set before them as wisdom, righteousness, and so forth. The Holy Spirit who has convinced them of sin, convinces them of righteousness, the necessity of it – that it is not in themselves and that it is in Jesus.

The ground (or warrant) is the promise, and that under no less outward discouragements than Abraham had to encounter. The guilt of sin, the power of corruption, the stress of temptation, the delay of comfort – by these things the soul is sometimes startled and put almost to a stand. But faith prevails and reasons, as Abraham: God has promised and is able also to perform – therefore I will hope against hope (see Rom. 4. 18).

We conclude, then, that a venturing upon Jesus from the invitation of gospel promises is true, justifying faith. To such, His righteousness is accounted as their own, and, notwithstanding all their fears and infirmities, they are accepted in the Beloved; their state is safe. O blessed are ye of the Lord that are seeking salvation in this way. But this faith in the lowest degree, if but as a grain of mustard seed, will have fruits: love, desire, obedience. Though in many things they come short, they will be pressing forward.

*For meditation:* Two sorts of persons then are in a dangerous state:

1. They who seek salvation by the works of the law. If they can be saved in their present way, Christ has died in vain.
2. They who talk of faith and are utterly destitute of its fruits, who have a form without the power. This is the proper description of a corpse. So James says the faith of such is dead (see Jas. 2. 26).

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

---

**Pastoral Gleanings:** A Record of the Ministry of William Fay, pastor of the church at Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel, St. Mary's Plain Norwich, 1936-1965; 308 pages; price £19.95 plus £3.25 postage and packing; obtainable from John Crowter, Haystacks, Green Lane, Potter Heigham, Norfolk, NR29 5LP.

This is a personal record by Miss Ruth Fay, daughter of William Fay, of the substance of many of the sermons, addresses, with some letters, of her father, recorded during the years of his pastorate at Zoar. Not many of our readers will remember Mr. Fay, but he is still remembered by some as a faithful, loving pastor, a truly experiential preacher and a loyal friend to our churches. His interesting and profitable autobiography, entitled *Waymarks*, was published many years ago and appeared in the 1966 *Gospel Standard* over several months.

Though brief, these "fragments" are a treasure of heartfelt religion and are warmly commended.

**Grace for Troubled Times:** Devotional Readings prompted by the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown; 372 pages; price £13 including postage and packing; edited by John Hooper, of Saltash, Devon and obtainable from him at 14 Holme Park Road, Saltash, Devon PL12 6BH or [johnhooper268@btinternet.com](mailto:johnhooper268@btinternet.com).

This book is a series of daily readings in which the editor has gathered fragments, many from the pen of others, as a guide to the Lord's people in troubled times. He published them daily from the period of lockdown, Tuesday, March 24th, to Lord's day July 5th.

The scripturally-balanced approach to the pandemic is to be commended. It begins with a quotation from Martin Luther when the bubonic plague reached Wittenberg. Though commanded by the Elector of Saxony to flee, Luther chose to remain with his wife Katie and another fellow pastor. He wrote: "I shall ask God to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, He will surely find me, and I have done what is expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbour needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above. See this is a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God."



In other extracts the author reminds us of the deeper, more serious malady of sin, and the voice of God in this judgment in calling us both personally and nationally to repentance.

There is much profitable reading and exhortation in these devotions.

---

## OBITUARY

---

**Ruby Mary Poole**, a member at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, for twenty-seven years, passed away peacefully to be with the Lord on April 3rd, 2021, aged 102.

The following is from her own writings.

“I would like to record a little of the way the Lord has led me these many years in the wilderness and to speak of His great goodness and longsuffering in spite of all my sinful rebellion and wanderings from Him during a long life. To Him belongs all the honour and glory; but to me shame and sorrow when I consider how even my very best is marred by sin and nothing worth.

“I was born on October 13th, 1918 in Hove, the third child of Sydney and Ellen Paul. [Mr. Paul was for many years a faithful deacon at Galeed and Editor of the *Friendly Companion* and the *Gospel Standard* magazines. She was named after her uncle, Reuben Paul, who was killed a few months before her birth on the Western Front – see his obituary in the *Gospel Standard*, 1919.] I lived my childhood and youth in a happy and godly home, surrounded by many comforts and privileges, and relations who feared the Lord and walked according to His ways. In spite of all this, the seeds of evil in me soon became evident, and I remember with shame the many times I deceived and grieved my parents. Determined to go my own way, I resented the restrictions put upon me and wished I could be allowed to do all the things the other children at school were allowed to do. Many times I have not told the truth as to where I was going and what I was doing; not without a guilty conscience, but I still determined to do as I wished.

“I was taken to chapel from my earliest years and sat under the ministry of Mr. J.K. Popham, but I rarely listened to anything that was said, being absorbed in my own daydreams. If I listened at all, the preaching meant nothing to me. We had many visitors at home and the conversation was on the things of God. At times I was attracted to the things I heard and the people I met, but it needed more than that to change my heart and make me willing to live a different life. I remember thinking once that I would like to be like they were, but not yet; not until I was older and had enjoyed all the things I longed to do whilst I was young.

"I cannot tell exactly when a change was made in me; it seemed very gradual. When I was in my seventeenth or eighteenth year, I found entirely new feelings and desires in me that I could not understand. The things that I ran after so eagerly seemed to lose their attraction, and my great desire became to be found amongst the Lord's people. It was years before I could hope that it was a true work of grace in my soul; but in looking back I could see that a great change had taken place and I had been turned completely round the other way. It was something that I never could have done in myself.

"The first thing I seemed to be shown was my death, and I was filled with darkness – a darkness that could be felt. I saw that God was holy and very far off and that I was a sinner. There appeared no way that I could ever approach unto Him; there was a great gulf between us. Little by little it was revealed to me that Jesus was the only way to God. It was only very dimly at first, but it gave me a little hope. I remember my surprise when I began to find that I understood what the ministers were saying and could often feel the same things in my own heart. One thing I found, and still find, is that I am completely ignorant in spiritual things, and no amount of study or learning will ever make them clear – it must only be through the teaching of the Holy Spirit in my heart that they are revealed to me. Truths learned in this way have an abiding influence.

"There was a time in my early days when, feeling my ignorance, I had a great desire to know and understand all these great truths. But Isaiah 28. 10 came to me and then, 'He that believeth shall not make haste,' and so I have found it over the years. It has been 'precept upon precept; line upon line ... here a little, and there a little' – a gradual teaching and learning; often instead of making haste I seem to go backwards.

"The early years of my adult life were full of activity. I was teaching and there were the war years and then married life. Sadly, the matters of my soul and eternity were often pushed into the background and there was not that urgency in my seeking that I would have desired. There were times when I longed to know my part in these matters and where I stood, times when my sins troubled me and times when I felt the meltings and drawings of the Spirit's work within. But these wore off and there was no bringing out into any real, firm hope. For years I felt to be like Lazarus – alive but still bound – not brought out into liberty. I felt that 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' and I could not give up.

"There were times of trouble in providence and these, I believe, were used by the Lord to bring me out more in spirit from the world, to deepen my concern and to show me my impotence and lead me to seek Him more earnestly and to put my trust in Him. Often, I found that He heard and answered my prayers even in small things and there was a little love given to Him.

"In looking back over the years, I can see how in mercy the Lord often kept me from going my own way and taking wrong steps. Very clearly, I was made to feel the danger and evil of being married to one in whom there was no work of grace. In one instance especially I was enabled to make a stand and to break off the friendship. In the Lord's own time He gave me a husband in whose heart was the fear of God. We had over forty years of married life with many joys and sorrows, many ups and downs and many mercies in spite of our wanderings and sinful neglect of the things of greatest importance.

"As my husband drew near to his end, we were able to confess together, with sorrow, that we had not always put first things first. During the last three months of his life, John was in Hove Bethesda as he needed more care than I could give on my own. The day before he died he was able to speak more than ever before of the hope that was within him, quoting the second verse of 1156 in Gadsby's: 'What mighty sum paid all my debt?' and he obviously felt it for himself. After his death I felt very encouraged and confirmed and comforted in my own heart with the evidence of the sure foundation of these truths on a dying bed.

"Some weeks later I was brought to feel that I could not rest on what my husband had received. I could not live on his religion and certainly I could not die on it. From this time there was a real concern to know these things clearly for myself, and I could give the Lord no rest until I knew my part in them. Joined to these exercises was a return of the concern about baptism which had been with me from time to time over the years. I had never been able to venture, feeling that I must have a real hope of my interest in the finished work of Christ, which I felt was lacking. Now these things came with great weight and stayed with me through the summer of 1993. I sought for clear evidences of these things personally and felt I could not settle down, short of the Lord's own word to me assuring me of 'my part in the Redeemer's blood.'

The preaching of our pastor [Mr. John Walder] at this time became very searching to me and confirmed the exercises as to the need of a personal knowledge of these truths in the experience of them in my own heart. Towards the end of October the text was, 'For such an High Priest became us,' and then for the first time, as Mr. Walder spoke of these things, I felt that Jesus was my High Priest and that my name was written in love on His heart and had been from everlasting. It was a good time and gave me a real hope. A week or two later the text was, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.' Just before the end of the sermon, Mr. Walder said, 'If it was said, "Wilt thou go with this man?" what would your answer be?' I felt that I could say, 'Yes, with all my heart, if He would have me.' I went home that Sunday morning and fell

down before the Lord telling Him that I was willing. I felt to surrender myself and all my affairs to Him and to say, 'Here I am. What wilt Thou have me to do?' I was glad to be alone and felt such a love to the Lord. My whole heart was taken up with these things. After so many years of wanderings, of hopes and fears, of seeking and not finding, I seemed to be brought more fully to feel the necessity of being assured of my interest in the work of salvation.

"A few days later, during a never-to-be-forgotten night, I felt to be led into truths, known before in my head, but now given to see my part in them and faith was given to receive them as my own. It was about 3 a.m. in the morning of Wednesday, November 3rd, 1993, that I awoke and was thinking of these things; I thought that it would be worth staying awake the rest of the night if only I might have it made plain where I stood in my soul before God. There came over me a solemn feeling of my sinnership and the weight of sin and guilt on my conscience seemed more than I could bear. I had, I believe, had convictions of my sins, especially at times, over the years, but never before had I felt the weight of them as I did then. They seemed to crush me; there was a horror of darkness on my spirit and there seemed to be no way out from under the burden; no way of escape from a holy and angry God.

"After a time I felt to be led to Gethsemane, and there I saw by faith the Lord bowed down under the awful weight of the sins of all His people which were laid upon Him, and I felt a real hope that mine were there too, and that He had borne them for me. It was opened up to me that there was a union there between the Lord and my soul as the burden of my sins was laid upon Him. From there I was led to Calvary, where I viewed Him on the cross suffering in the place of all His people and in my place. I felt to mourn over Him a little and grieve for Him, but not as fully as I would have liked. Then further I saw Him laid in the grave and rising again the third day. The words came softly into my heart: 'I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine' followed by, 'Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price,' and I felt so glad not to be my own but to be one of His redeemed ones. Then it came: 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied,' and I felt that He was satisfied with the work in my soul.

"My thoughts were filled with these things and the wonderful truths contained in the revelation. I felt to be no longer outside looking in at the election of grace (as I had so often felt), but I was inside myself and one of them. I had been brought in and put among the children; I was in the fold; and had been brought into the Ark as the dove was by Noah. These were things that I had longed to know for years, but had not been able to get any satisfaction in the matter. After about 6 a.m., I slept for a little while and then awoke in the morning. There was no great joy but

there seemed to be a solemn awe as if I had been brought just inside, and before me lay unfathomable depths which it would take all eternity for me to be led into. Later that day I seemed to be taken a step further, and saw Jesus not only as a risen Lord, but ascended up into heaven, sitting on the right hand of the Father and there interceding for His people. I felt for me too, and that the names of all His chosen, mine also, were still graven in love on His heart as He interceded on their behalf. It has been only gradually in the days and even years following that a little of the wonder and sacredness of these things, and my part in them, have been opened up to me. At times they grow dim, and seem to be covered over, and one wonders as to the reality; but still thankfully they are there underneath and I hope that I may never be left to doubt the work of the Spirit in the taking of these things and revealing them to me.

“A day or two after this special time it came to me: Now what about baptism? I could see that the barrier that I had felt in the way – that I must have a real hope of my personal interest in the finished work of Christ – had been removed and I had been given a real hope. Then it seemed that the main thing was whether it was right in the sight of God for me thus to go forward. There was a great fear of taking so solemn a step wrongly, and I asked to be kept from any wrong move and from any wrong motive. It caused great anguish of spirit to know what was right, but after a couple of days of uncertainty I felt that I must write to Mr. Walder and tell him how I had been led, although even then I did not know if I should give him the letter. However this I ventured to do, and then I was overcome with the realisation of the vast importance of my action and all that it involved; but there was also a great relief that, after so many years of uncertainty and so many fears, I had been enabled to take the step and the result I felt to leave in the Lord’s hands.

“Mr. Walder was a real pastor to me and though very unwell himself, showed me all the kindness and support that I needed. I was helped to come before the church and try and tell a little of what I believed the Lord had done for me and the hope that He had given me. I was received in much love and was quite overwhelmed with the kindness and affection of the friends. I was given great quietness at the baptism and the next morning awoke with a feeling of peace. I seemed to be surrounded with the loving approbation of the Lord in the step that He had enabled me to take. My baptism was on January 19th, 1994, when Mr. Walder preached from, ‘The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us’ (1 Pet. 3. 21). [Mrs. Poole was 75 years old when she was baptized, but was enabled to be a faithful member at Galeed, giving wise counsel to me, her young and inexperienced pastor, right down to the end. May none feel they are too old to give the Lord the glory, and walk in obedience to His commands.]

“For about two years afterwards I felt to be much favoured. I seemed to live very near to the Lord, and my heart and desires were lively towards Him. All the services seemed to contain food and comfort, and my great concern was that I might not be left to wander from Him and become cold. My feelings were expressed in the hymn:

‘But I am jealous of my heart,  
Lest I should once from Him depart.’ (H. 92)

“Sadly, I have lived to find how easily and imperceptibly we can depart and how the things of time, the pleasures and the cares, can lead us away from ‘the one thing needful.’ There is from time to time a bringing back and longing desire to be brought to the feet of Christ, there to live and learn of Him. I often plead that I may be as one who “cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved.” What better position to be in? May it be my blessed portion.”

In June 2002 she was admitted to hospital with acute appendicitis and recorded the following:

“I should like to write down a few of the things that I have felt during this time of trouble. Being unwell on Wednesday June 19th, I could not go to the evening service. Then on Friday, still unwell and in a lot of pain, but in the evening managed to get across to the Home and listened to the prayer meeting. Mr. Walder spoke from the last verse of Psalm 109: ‘For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor.’ It was a great help to me, as I felt poor and needy and in trouble. Mr. Walder spoke of the Lord being there as a Friend and being near at hand – on the right hand of the poor. That I felt to be just what I needed, and though full of confusion and scattered thoughts, the words stayed with me as a comfort and remained over the next few days, when unexpectedly I was taken into hospital on Saturday evening.

“After tests in the A&E department were all finished, at about 1 a.m. on Sunday morning, I was left on the trolley to wait for a bed. Being weary and uncomfortable I felt I must get some sleep somehow, but I could not. I was restless and miserable and in pain. Then it came softly to me: ‘What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?’ It broke me down and I said, ‘No, Lord, we have all been asleep instead.’ I was grieved that I should complain, when surrounded by so many good things, whilst He had to bear all alone and to its full extent when suffering, not for Himself, but for us. I felt to join just a little in His sufferings on my behalf. I thought also how ‘they all forsook Him, and fled,’ and He was left alone whilst I had such good friends who had brought me to the hospital and had come to see me there and get the things that I needed. It was a sweet, but sad season, and took my mind from myself and all my petty discomforts.

“When it came, ‘They all forsook Him, and fled,’ I thought on His lonely, forsaken condition and compared it with mine – surrounded and supported by kind, helpful and loving friends. I grieved again over all that He suffered and bore for poor, worthless sinners and I hope for me. Then even further He was forsaken of His Father, whereas I felt to have a Friend indeed and felt a little of the love of God surrounding me. What a contrast and what love constrained Him! Then finally His triumphant cry, ‘It is finished,’ and a little of what was contained in it – never to be fully known in this life. I felt the wonder of having a sweet hope that I was included and that all had been finished for me.

May I never forget these things, but may they be brought more and more into my experience and may I ‘live to Him who died for me.’”

Here her writings end.

After her husband died, Mrs. Poole took an active interest in the Gospel Standard Baptist Library which her father had commenced in 1949. Initially she helped Mr. B. Snell and then became interim Librarian until Miss M. Hyde was appointed in 2003. She was also involved with the Brighton Bethesda Home, being on the Local Committee, and visited regularly. By 2008 she was finding it increasingly difficult to manage alone with her physical infirmities. In December she decided to become a resident in Bethesda soon after her 90th birthday. She was there for twelve years and was often a help to the other residents. Until 2018 she was regular in attendance at Galeed Chapel, but increasing weakness prevented that, and she was thankful for the services relayed to the Home.

Latterly both her sight and hearing failed considerably, but she was given much grace to bear patiently her infirmities. Her mind and memory were clear to the end. Many years before in 1951 she had given birth to a stillborn son – an event not recorded in her writings – and the Lord had spoken those words to her: “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are *My* everlasting arms” (Deut. 33. 27). This was how the words were given to her, and she proved the truth of them during her life, and felt in those last months she “was being carried.” In the end, she was brought rapidly down over a few hours, remaining conscious almost to the end, as she peacefully fell asleep in Jesus on April 3rd, 2021, aged 102 years.

The funeral was conducted by myself as her pastor, on April 30th, 2021, at Galeed Chapel and she was buried with her husband in Hove cemetery.

Matthew J. Hyde



### JESUS ONLY

---

Only a little Babe,  
 Low in a manger laid,  
 As helpless and as weak  
 As other infants made;  
 But faith, with reverent, bended knee,  
 In Him can God's salvation see.

Only a patient Man,  
 Treading this earth below,  
 In poverty and pain,  
 In weariness and woe;  
 But faith beholds God's law revealed,  
 By His obedience all fulfilled.

Only a suffering One  
 On an accursèd tree;  
 His enemies deride  
 His dying agony:  
 Faith, gazing with adoring eyes,  
 Beholds death conquered as He dies.

Only an empty tomb,  
 The place where Jesus lay;  
 Say, who has dared to come  
 And take my Lord away?  
 Faith stoops to view the place, and cries,  
 "Since He is risen, I too shall rise!"

Jesus, Thy life and death  
 Are all in all to me!  
 Through these my soul shall stand  
 Accepted, pardoned, free;  
 Saved by Thy righteousness and blood,  
 Faultless before the throne of God.

E.C.

---

In the goodness of God, the *Gospel Standard* has been maintained through another year of its 187-year history. Whilst we feel to come very far short of our predecessors, our desire is to contend for the same truths they held dear, and which we believe are the foundation of the hope of true believers. Our warm thanks are extended to the those who have given unstinting support and help to enable the magazine to be published each month. The Lord knows the present and future needs of this ministry and we look to Him to guide us for His own honour and glory. "Brethren pray for us."



THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD

---

Interim Editor: G.D. Buss

---

**Vol. CLXXXVII 2021**

---

*Obtainable from:  
Gospel Standard Publications,  
12(b) Roundwood Lane,  
Harpenden, Herts. AL5 3BZ*

# INDEX

## EDITOR'S PIECES

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The Doorpost and Door of Salvation .....                | 129 |
| Election: God's Method of Salvation .....               | 280 |
| The Five "I's" of the Word of God .....                 | 15  |
| "For Your Sakes He Became Poor" .....                   | 353 |
| A Lily among Thorns .....                               | 97  |
| God Manifest in the Flesh .....                         | 367 |
| "He Shall Cover Thee with His Feathers" .....           | 193 |
| Joshua: A Type of Christ .....                          | 225 |
| "Let Him Take Hold of My Strength" .....                | 289 |
| "Let There be Light" .....                              | 321 |
| Nehemiah the King's Cupbearer .....                     | 65  |
| Obed-Edom .....   | 33  |
| An Opening Word .....                                   | 1   |
| The Pleasantness of Christ's Name to the Believer ..... | 257 |
| Mr. J.K. Stehouwer .....                                | 351 |
| A Tale that is Told .....                               | 18  |
| <i>Sermons and Addresses</i>                            |     |
| A Suitable Prayer for the New Year (Psa. 119. 33) ..... | 4   |
| The Lord Reigneth (Psa. 99. 1, 2) .....                 | 237 |

## GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETY AND BETHESDA FUND

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Sermon: "For Such a Time as This" (Esth. 4. 14) ..... | 161 |
| Morning Prayer Meeting (Address by G.W. Hyde) .....   | 174 |
| Business Meeting .....                                | 176 |
| Bethesda Meeting .....                                | 248 |

## GOSPEL STANDARD TRUST

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Annual General Meeting (2020) ..... | 53 |
|-------------------------------------|----|

## HYMNS AND POEMS

|                             |   |     |
|-----------------------------|---|-----|
| <b>Anon.</b> .....          | Five Words .....                                | 192 |
| <b>Author Unknown</b> ..... | Pleading for Mercy .....                        | 320 |
| <b>B.M.</b> .....           | Cast Down, but Not Destroyed .....              | 32  |
| <b>E.C.</b> .....           | Jesus Only .....                                | 384 |
| <b>Grant, W.</b> .....      | Prayer of the Destitute .....                   | 64  |
| <b>Jempson, E.</b> .....    | The Suffering Saviour .....                     | 128 |
| <b>J.K.</b> .....           | A Cry from the Ends of the Earth .....          | 160 |
| <b>Kent, J.</b> .....       | The Sinner's Welcome at the Door of Mercy ..... | 224 |
|                             | The Sinner's Welcome at the Mercy Seat .....    | 288 |
| <b>Newton, J.</b> .....     | Rejoice the Soul of Thy Servant .....           | 255 |
|                             | "That Rock was Christ" .....                    | 96  |
| <b>Swain, J.</b> .....      | For Ever .....                                  | 352 |

## LETTERS

|                              |  |     |
|------------------------------|--|-----|
| <b>Bourne, M.</b> .....      | Moved with Fear .....                                    | 115 |
| <b>Charles, T.</b> .....     | God in Christ Receiving Sinners .....                    | 212 |
| <b>Delves, J.</b> .....      | Pastoral Encouragement to those Seeking Membership ..... | 369 |
| <b>Keyt, J.</b> .....        | Lord, Increase My Faith .....                            | 41  |
| <b>Newton, J.</b> .....      | The Gradual Increase of Gospel Illumination .....        | 242 |
| <b>Pepler, K.</b> .....      | A Letter to One about to be Baptized .....               | 246 |
| <b>Popham, J.K.</b> .....    | Wholesome Advice to a Young Minister .....               | 75  |
| <b>Prickett, F.J.</b> .....  | The Trinity .....  | 243 |
| <b>Randalls, A.G.</b> .....  | The Comfort of Looking unto Jesus .....                  | 372 |
| <b>Warboys, R.C.T.</b> ..... | A Recollection of the Lord's Dealings .....              | 82  |

## MEMOIRS AND EXPERIENCES

|                                  |   |          |
|----------------------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Author Unknown</b> . . .      | Things which are Despised hath God Called<br>(John Banks) . . . . .   | 252      |
| <b>Beaton, D.</b> . . . . .      | Hector Macphail (1716-1774) . . . . .                                 | 348      |
| <b>Buss, J.C.</b> . . . . .      | He Feared God above Many (J.J. Farley) . . . . .                      | 314      |
| <b>Campbell, M.</b> . . . . .    | Valiant for Truth (Donald Duff) . . . . .                             | 272      |
| <b>Dye, A.</b> . . . . .         | How Shall They Preach Except They be Sent? . . . . .                  | 16       |
| <b>Fay, W.</b> . . . . .         | Waymarks . . . . .  | 58       |
| <b>Gosden, F.L.</b> . . . . .    | Early Experience of F.L. Gosden . . . . .                             | 217      |
| <b>Harley, S.</b> . . . . .      | Sukey's Prayer . . . . .  | 182      |
| <b>Kershaw, J.</b> . . . . .     | A Debate on the Moors of Lancashire . . . . .                         | 373      |
|                                  | God's Sovereignty not a Hindrance to a<br>Coming Sinner . . . . .     | 108      |
|                                  | A Testimony to the Sweetness of the<br>Doctrine of Election . . . . . | 110      |
| <b>A Lover of Zion</b> . . . . . | Old George (George Ramsbottom) . . . . .                              | 27       |
| <b>Lamain, W.C.</b> . . . . .    | Called to Give an Account . . . . .                                   | 42       |
| <b>Pavlik, J.G.</b> . . . . .    | A Prison Blessing . . . . .   | 92       |
| <b>Warburton, J.</b> . . . . .   | John Warburton of Trowbridge's Wife . . . . .                         | 124, 155 |
| <b>Wise, W.</b> . . . . .        | The Lord's Dealings with Wilfred Wise . . . . .                       | 185      |

## MISCELLANEOUS

|                                   |   |        |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------|
| <b>Adams, T.</b> . . . . .        | In a Manger . . . . .                               | 368    |
| <b>Banfield, M.G.</b> . . . . .   | The Blood of Sprinkling Experienced . . . . .       | 247    |
| <b>Berridge, J.</b> . . . . .     | The Believer as Christ's Epistle . . . . .          | 22     |
| <b>Bogatzky, C.H.V.</b> . . . . . | The Only Remedy for Sin . . . . .                   | 366    |
| <b>Boston, T.</b> . . . . .       | Christ the True and Everlasting Priest . . . . .    | 335    |
|                                   | The Providence of God Considered . . . . .          | 276    |
| <b>Bridges, C.</b> . . . . .      | A Brother Offended . . . . .                        | 114    |
|                                   | The Longings of a Living Soul . . . . .             | 281    |
| <b>Brooks, T.</b> . . . . .       | The Confirmation of the Covenant of Grace . . . . . | 106    |
| <b>Bryan, R.</b> . . . . .        | Looking unto Jesus . . . . .                        | 343    |
| <b>Calamy, E.</b> . . . . .       | Prayer in Troubled Times . . . . .                  | 84     |
| <b>Campbell, M.</b> . . . . .     | The Wings of a Dove . . . . .                       | 203    |
| <b>Charles, T.</b> . . . . .      | The Tares and the Wheat . . . . .                   | 339    |
| <b>Crouch, W.</b> . . . . .       | God's Handwriting in the Believer's Heart . . . . . | 265    |
| <b>Gosden, J.H.</b> . . . . .     | The Church of God . . . . .                         | 24, 47 |
|                                   | 88, 121, 284, 311, 347                              |        |
| <b>Gospel Magazine</b> . . . . .  | Divine Election to Salvation . . . . .              | 86     |
| <b>Green, J.S.</b> . . . . .      | Therefore Let us Keep the Feast . . . . .           | 116    |
|                                   | God's Thoughts of Love Made Known . . . . .         | 271    |
| <b>Grew, O.</b> . . . . .         | The Lord our Righteousness . . . . .                | 76     |
| <b>Hawker, R.</b> . . . . .       | God's Accepted Time . . . . .                       | 85     |
|                                   | In the Hand of a Mediator . . . . .                 | 216    |
|                                   | A Pressing Case and a Silent Saviour . . . . .      | 283    |
|                                   | Reflections on Psalm 23 . . . . .                   | 306    |
|                                   | The Tears of the Man Christ Jesus . . . . .         | 143    |
|                                   | The Waters of Jordan . . . . .                      | 338    |
| <b>Law, H.</b> . . . . .          | Benjamin . . . . .                                  | 307    |
|                                   | The Cleansing of the Leper . . . . .                | 144    |
|                                   | The Plague of Leprosy . . . . .                     | 117    |
| <b>Macrae, K.</b> . . . . .       | The Secret Exercises of a Gospel Minister . . . . . | 23     |
| <b>Martin, H.</b> . . . . .       | The Voice of the Child Jesus . . . . .              | 362    |
| <b>Newton, J.</b> . . . . .       | True, Justifying Faith . . . . .                    | 375    |
| <b>M'Cheyne, R.M.</b> . . . . .   | The Christian in Captivity . . . . .                | 265    |
| <b>Owen, J.</b> . . . . .         | The Carnal Mind . . . . .                           | 210    |
|                                   | Communion with God . . . . .                        | 297    |

|                         |   |     |
|-------------------------|---|-----|
| <b>Philpot, J.C.</b>    | The Circumference of God's Promises . . .                                 | 20  |
|                         | An Echo from the Past . . . . .   | 277 |
|                         | God the Great Teacher and Leader . . . . .                                | 329 |
|                         | The Word of His Grace . . . . .   | 49  |
| <b>Popham, J.K.</b>     | Zion's Cloud . . . . .  | 361 |
| <b>Ramsbottom, B.A.</b> | New Year Sixty Years Ago – and Today . . .                                | 14  |
| <b>Rowland, D.</b>      | The Engaged Heart of Christ for His People .                              | 245 |
| <b>Sadler, I.A.</b>     | Let Us Examine Ourselves in the Light of<br>God's Word . . . . .          | 204 |
| <b>Saphir, A.</b>       | The Doctrine of Scripture . . . . .                                       | 344 |
|                         | The Prophecy of Scripture . . . . .                                       | 363 |
| <b>Scudder, H.</b>      | Prayer's Acceptance . . . . .   | 209 |
| <b>Sibbes, R.</b>       | The Source and Certainty of Promises to<br>the Church of Christ . . . . . | 213 |
|                         | It is Good to Draw Near to God . . . . .                                  | 236 |
| <b>Spurstowe, W.</b>    | Harvest of Promise . . . . .  | 335 |
| <b>Stockton, O.</b>     | Establishing our Own Righteousness . . .                                  | 148 |
| <b>Vincent, T.</b>      | To Love Christ . . . . .  | 223 |
| <b>Vogan, M.</b>        | The Importance of Christian Marriage . . .                                | 153 |
| <b>Watson, T.</b>       | Christ's Intercession . . . . .   | 149 |
| <b>Windridge, F.C.</b>  | Establishing our Own Righteousness . . .                                  | 148 |

#### SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

|                         |   |     |
|-------------------------|---|-----|
| <b>Curtis, S., snr.</b> | The Lord's Watchman (Ezek. 33. 7) . . . .                           | 323 |
| <b>Fawcett, J.</b>      | Character of the Righteous Man (Psa. 34. 19)                        | 301 |
| <b>Green, J.S.</b>      | Partakers of the Heavenly Calling (Heb. 3. 1)                       | 290 |
| <b>Macfarlane, D.</b>   | The Good Work Begun (Phil. 1. 6) . . . .                            | 35  |
| <b>Morris, R.J.</b>     | Believer's Baptism (Acts 8. 36, 37) . . . .                         | 259 |
| <b>Pavlik, J.G.</b>     | The Good Cheer of the Forgiveness of<br>Sins (Matt. 9. 2) . . . . . | 69  |
| <b>Popham, J.K.</b>     | War on God and the Bible (John 8. 24) . .                           | 227 |
| <b>Ramsbottom, B.A.</b> | Christ the Resurrection and the Life<br>(John 11. 25, 26) . . . . . | 99  |
| <b>Sawyer, C.</b>       | Great is the Mystery of Godliness<br>(1 Tim. 3. 16) . . . . .       | 355 |
| <b>TenBroeke, G.L.</b>  | What I Do Thou Knowest Not Now (John 13. 7)                         | 131 |
| <b>Warburton, J.</b>    | A Prayer of David (Psa. 51. 10-12) . . . .                          | 195 |

#### OBITUARY AND NOTICES OF DEATH

|                       |     |                     |        |
|-----------------------|-----|---------------------|--------|
| Oldham, D. . . . .    | 288 | Roe, N.H. . . . .   | 320    |
| Pickett, M.T. . . . . | 64  | Ruse, M.A. . . . .  | 189    |
| Poole, R.M. . . . .   | 377 | Short, M.W. . . . . | 31, 94 |

#### BOOK REVIEWS

Brotherly Love – Memoirs of Daniel Combridge and John Marshall, ed. by M.J. Hyde, 93; A Call to the Church in the Pandemic, by D. Campbell, 223; Collected Sermons, Poetry and Letters by Herbert Dawson, 159; Encouraging the Fearful Heart – An Account of Benjamin Hunt, His Family and His Friends, ed. by M.J. Hyde, 93; The Epistle to the Hebrews, by A. Saphir, 319; Entering Through Much Tribulation; Life and Writings of John R. Broome, 63; An Exposition of the Last Words of David, by M. Luther, 255; From the Mouth of Lions – Sermons on the Book of Daniel, by H.M. Cartwright, 30; Grace for Troubled Times, ed. by J. Hooper, 376; Pastoral Gleanings, by W. Fay, 376; The Priesthood of Christ, by P. MacBride, 127; Rahab: Woman of Faith, by M. Philpott, 255; Valiant for Truth, by D.A. Thompson, ed. by J.P. Thackway, 319; Walking in the Light, by H.M. Cartwright, 30; With an Everlasting Love – Selected Sermons of H.M. Cartwright, 30; Worship and Witness in Crisis, ed. by M. Vogan and M.J. Hyde, 287.